



VOLUME 1

Draft Meath County Development Plan 2020-2026

WRITTEN STATEMENT

MEATH:
EUROPE'S **BUSINESS**
READY REGION



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The Meath County Development Plan 2020-2026 sets out the policies and objectives and the overall strategy for the development of the County over the plan period 2020-2026. The Plan is being prepared at a time when the national economy has emerged from a sustained period of contraction and is showing strong signs of continued growth. Unemployment rates have fallen to their lowest rates since 2008. Consumer confidence is improving, and economic forecasts are positive for the future. Despite the foregoing positive signs, concern and uncertainty regarding the potential economic impact of Brexit has been a key consideration in the drafting of the Development Plan.

This Plan provides a positive vision for Meath which will enable the county to continue to make a significant contribution to national economic growth recovery by promoting sustainable development and facilitating stable economic growth thus delivering long term benefits for the citizens of the county.

The Strategic Vision of the Development Plan is as follows:

'To improve the quality of life of all citizens in Meath by creating an environment that supports a vibrant growing economy and a well-connected place to live, learn and do business'.

1.1 County Overview

The administrative area of Meath covers an area of over 230,000 hectares and is the second largest county in Leinster. It adjoins Dublin to

the south and this geographical proximity and the strong functional relationship between the two counties results in Meath being a vital supporting partner in the recent growth of the Greater Dublin Area. This locational advantage has enabled the county to play a major part in the development of the National Gateway, the nation's most economically dynamic and progressive area.

Meath has a population of over 195,044¹ people accommodated in a network of attractive towns, villages and the rural area. It possesses a diverse range of landscapes, including 10 kilometres of coastline, the drumlin hills of north Meath, rich pastures, tracts of peatland and raised bog in the southwest and the central upland area that includes Tara - the ancient capital of Ireland. This landscape reflects the changing influences of its population over time; from the megalithic sites at Newgrange and Oldcastle, to the Norman castle ruins at Trim, the landed estates at Slane, Dowth and Oldbridge, to modern day dynamic settlements such as Navan, Drogheda, Dunboyne and Ashbourne.

The county benefits from a wealth of natural and man-made resources. It is supported by a well developed road and rail infrastructure system which provides access to international transport networks at Dublin Airport and Dublin Port and the remainder of the country. The fertile soils provide the basis for a thriving agricultural and food sector, and the natural and built heritage enhances the quality of life for the people of the county and has long enticed visitors to Meath.

1.2 Legislative Framework

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 enacted legislative requirements,

¹ 2016 Census

to enable the co-ordinated and timely incorporation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the relevant RSES into each City or County Development Plan. Section 11(1) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended, sets out legal provisions which either suspended or deferred county development plan processes, or require plans to commence variation or review processes within six months of the making of the RSES.

Meath County Council had commenced the preparation of the new County Development Plan with a Pre-Draft Consultation process in December 2016. The 2018 Planning Act required that the Plan review be deferred pending the completion of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy process. The Strategy was made on the 28th June 2019, in accordance with section 24(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), accordingly the review process recommenced.

This Draft Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and fully complies with the mandatory requirements for preparation of a Development Plan. These consist of, inter alia, objectives for the zoning of land, the provision of infrastructure, the conservation and protection of the environment, and the integration of the planning and sustainable development with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population. It is also a requirement to prepare a 'core strategy' for the County, which must be consistent, as far as practicable, with National and Regional development objectives as set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF) which on the 16th February 2018, replaced the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

As stated above the NSS has been replaced by the NPF which was launched on the 16th February 2018. The purpose of the NPF is to act as a strategic development framework, setting out the long-term context for Ireland's physical development and associated progress in economic, social and environmental terms. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) replaced the Regional Planning Guidelines and are discussed in more detail in Section 1.5.2 below.

In accordance with European and National legislation, the Council carried out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and an Appropriate Assessment (AA) under the Habitats Directive, which informed the preparation of this Development Plan. These assessments are undertaken in order that the potential impacts of the objectives contained in the Plan on the environment can be evaluated. This process informs the content of the Plan and ensures that the built environment responds appropriately to sensitivities and requirements of the wider natural environment.

In addition, the Plan has had to have regard to other relevant environmental legislation and guidance such as, the Water Framework Directive, Floods Directive, Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008, Shellfish Directive, Waste Water Treatment Directive, the Wildlife Acts, National Monuments Acts and Waste Management Acts. Thus it is considered that the development objectives in the Plan are consistent, in as far as practicable, with the conservation and protection of the environment.

1.2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment

This Draft Plan was subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as required

under the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004. SEA is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before the decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The SEA process seeks to *'provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.'*²

The results of the SEA process have been fully incorporated into the preparation and making of this Plan. The resulting Environmental Report has been published as a separate document in conjunction with this Plan and is included in Volume 4.

1.2.2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

The Office of Public Works, as the lead agency has statutory responsibility for flood risk management, is responsible for the overall implementation of the Floods Directive. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was undertaken of the Plan area having regard to the appropriate guidelines³. Flood Risk Assessment was integrated into the SEA process. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been published as a separate document in conjunction with this Plan and is included in Volume 4.

1.2.3 Appropriate Assessment

Article 6(3) of European Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats

Directive) requires Competent Authorities, in this case Meath County Council, to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site, but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. The assessment examines the implications of proceeding with the plan or project in view of the site's conservation objectives.

A Natura Impact Report has been published as a separate document in conjunction with this Plan and is included in Volume 4.

1.2.4 Ministerial Guidelines

Ministerial Guidelines issued to Planning Authorities regarding their functions under the Planning Acts have been fully considered in the making of this Plan in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.

1.3 The Review Process

The review process of the Meath County Development Plan officially commenced on 14th December 2016. The first stage was the Pre Draft Consultation Phase. A Strategic Issues Paper was prepared for the purpose of raising awareness of the nature of both the Development Plan and the review process

itself. Submissions were accepted from the public during the Pre Draft Consultation Phase which ran from the 14th December 2016 to 17th February 2017. Preliminary consultations also took place with relevant stakeholders including; providers of energy, telecommunications, transport, education, etc., the Elected Members

² European Directive 2001/42/EC

³ Ministerial Planning Guidelines on The Planning System and Flood Risk Management 2009

of Meath County Council, the Planning and Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee and all Meath County Council Departments. Six public events were held during this period and a total of 282 submissions were received.

A report by the Chief Executive was prepared detailing the outcome of the Pre Draft Consultation phase in accordance with Section 11(4) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended). On the 23rd February 2017, the Strategic Policy Committee for Planning gave policy guidance in relation to the Development Plan with particular reference to broadband provision, supporting community groups and the promotion of “live-work” community models of development.

Directions were given by the Elected Members regarding the preparation of the Draft Development Plan on the 24th April 2017.

1.4 Preparation of Draft Development Plan

1.4.1 Main policy considerations

The preparation of this Development Plan has been influenced by a number of strategic International, National, Regional and Local policy documents as illustrated in Figure 1.1 details of same are contained within the appendices to this Plan. Primarily the Development Plan is required to comply with the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and the requirements of the Planning Act 2000 as amended and accompanying Regulations.

Under Section 9(6) of the Planning and

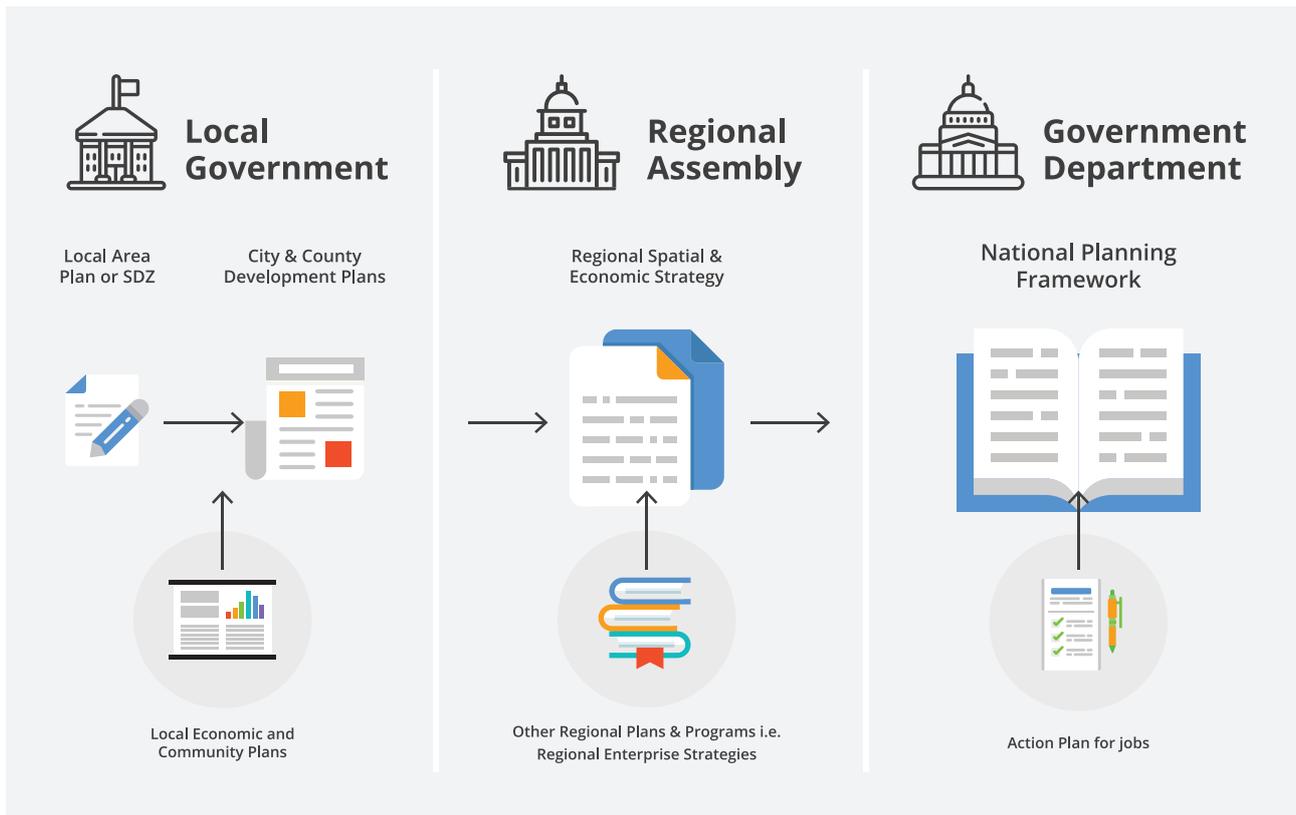
Development Acts 2000, as amended, Development Plans must be consistent, as far as is practicable, with national plans, policies or strategies that the Minister for the Housing, Planning and Local Government determines relate to proper planning and sustainable development. The Minister can issue guidelines to Planning Authorities regarding their planning functions and Planning Authorities must have regard to these.

In addition, as a Planning Authority within the Greater Dublin Area, the Plan must be consistent with the Transport Strategy of the GDA.

Finally, this Plan must have regard to the Development Plans of adjoining Local Authorities. The Local Authorities adjoining County Meath are Louth, Kildare, Westmeath, Monaghan, Cavan, Offaly and Fingal.

1.4.2 National and Regional Guidance

The chart below demonstrates the integrated relationship between the various components of policy making at National, Regional and Local Level.



1.4.3 National Policy

Project Ireland 2040

Project Ireland 2040 is the Government's overarching policy initiative to make Ireland a better country for all citizens. This policy initiative is set out in two documents as follows:

- i) The National Planning Framework (NPF), which sets out the planning strategy for Ireland until 2040.
- ii) The National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-27, which sets out details of infrastructure investment until 2027.

The investment programme set out in the National Development Plan is closely aligned to the 10 National Strategic Outcomes detailed in the NPF. This will ensure that investment

priorities and capital expenditure will be consistent with the underlying principles of the planning strategy set out in the NPF.

National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework seeks to deliver regional parity between the EMRA region and the remainder of the Country in terms of population. In order to comply with this requirement reduced population growth targets have been allocated to the EMRA region relative to the other Assembly areas. Consequently the existing growth trend of this region has been adjusted in the RSES to ensure compliance with National policy. The County Development Plan is mandated to implement this downward population growth trajectory. The regional growth strategy set out in the NPF represents a significant change to current

trends and growth patterns, referred to in the document as 'business as usual'. In order to implement this strategy population growth in the Eastern and Midland Region will be curtailed by implementing a policy of 'regional parity' whereby the projected growth of the Eastern and Midland Region must be at least matched by the combined growth of the Northern and Western and Southern Regions⁴. The population target for the Eastern and Midland Region is for an additional 490,000-540,000 people to be living in the region by 2040.

One of the overriding objectives (from an economic and quality of life perspective) of this Plan is to redress the current high commuter levels from the County specifically in towns such as Navan, East Meath and Ratoath where the population has grown rapidly, without equivalent increases in jobs. In order to achieve this objective a strategic and targeted approach has been applied to the development of economic opportunities within the County.

This plan has identified 6 additional key strategic employment sites within the County which support the development of compact settlements linked by multi-modal corridors and are in accordance with the criteria for employment growth as set out in Section 4.4 of the NPF. The economic development of the County and the policy direction employed by the Council, which was strongly influenced by the policies of the NPF and the RSES, is discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of this Plan.

National Development Plan 2018-2027

The NDP sets out the investment priorities that will underpin the successful implementation of the new NPF. This will guide national, regional and local planning and investment decisions in Ireland over the next two decades, to cater

for an expected population increase of over 1 million people.

1.4.4 Regional Policy

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly was established on 1st January 2015. The Region covers nine counties containing twelve local authorities namely – Longford, Westmeath, Offaly, Laois, Louth, Meath, Kildare, Wicklow, Fingal, South Dublin and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Councils and Dublin City Council. The Region includes 3 sub regions or Strategic Planning Areas (SPAs), namely the Midland, Eastern and Dublin SPAs. Meath is located in the Eastern SPA with Kildare, Wicklow and Louth.

The RSES is a strategic plan which identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives.

The RSES vision is as follows:

"To create a sustainable and competitive Region that supports the health and wellbeing of our people and places, from urban to rural, with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunities for all"

Due to the scale and diversity of the Eastern and Midlands Region the RSES sets out a vision for future growth and development at both a Strategic Planning Area (SPA) level and a regional level. The RSES has a much greater focus on promoting economic development. This greater economic focus is intended to

⁴ National Policy Objective 1a and 1b of the NPF

strengthen links between planning policy and economic trends and realities on the ground, and identify regional attributes that are deemed necessary to promote improved economic performance such as physical infrastructure and services, community development facilities, the general quality of the environment and other assets and amenities. The RSES economic policies are strongly aligned with the policy direction of the Meath Economic Strategy including the 'live work' community model, emphasis on addressing the high levels of outbound commuting from the Eastern SPA and identification of strategic employment sites.

1.4.5 Local Policy

Meath Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 required the establishment of Local Community Development Committees (LCDC's) within all Local Authorities. The Meath Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) was established in 2014 to develop, coordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. County and City Development Boards (CDBs) were abolished in June 2014 under the 2014 Act. One of the primary functions of the LCDCs is to develop, implement and monitor a six-year Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for the Local Authority area.

The Development Plan and the LECP effectively operate parallel to one another whereby the LECP provides a supporting framework for the economic development and local community development of Meath, the County Development Plan provides an overarching strategy and statutory policy support for the

proper planning and sustainable development of the County at a spatial level. Consequently, the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan must be complementary to and consistent with the high-level goals and objectives of the LECP.

EMRA has a statutory remit in respect of the alignment of the LECP policies with County Development Plans.

Meath County Council Corporate Plan 2015-2019

The Meath County Council Corporate Plan 2015-2019 mission statement is to *'drive the economic, social, cultural and environmental growth of our County in a balanced manner that is inclusive of all our citizens'*. This plan's vision for Meath is *'to lead economic development, deliver efficient and good value services, and represent the people and communities of County Meath, as effectively and accountably as possible'*.

The Corporate Plan sets out six organisation wide objectives to guide and shape the direction of the functions of Meath County Council. These objectives are summarised below:

1. Deliver excellent services
2. Lead economic development
3. Build strong influential partnerships
4. Engage the larger community
5. Nurture a staff excellence culture
6. Develop system and process capability

These objectives and those of the Meath Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021, have contributed to formulation of the vision and strategic direction of the Development Plan, set out in Chapter 2, the Core Strategy and Chapter 4 Economy and Employment. The review process for the Corporate Plan has recently commenced.

Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022

The Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022 sets out clear, concise, innovative and evidence based measures aimed at accelerating the economic transformation, revitalisation and sustainable development of County Meath from 2014-2022.

The measures recommended within the Economic Development Strategy have succeeded in enabling County Meath to fulfil its economic potential and to prosper as a successful, diverse and vibrant social, civic, commercial, and residential centre that is recognised locally, nationally and internationally as a highly attractive and distinctive location in which to conduct business.

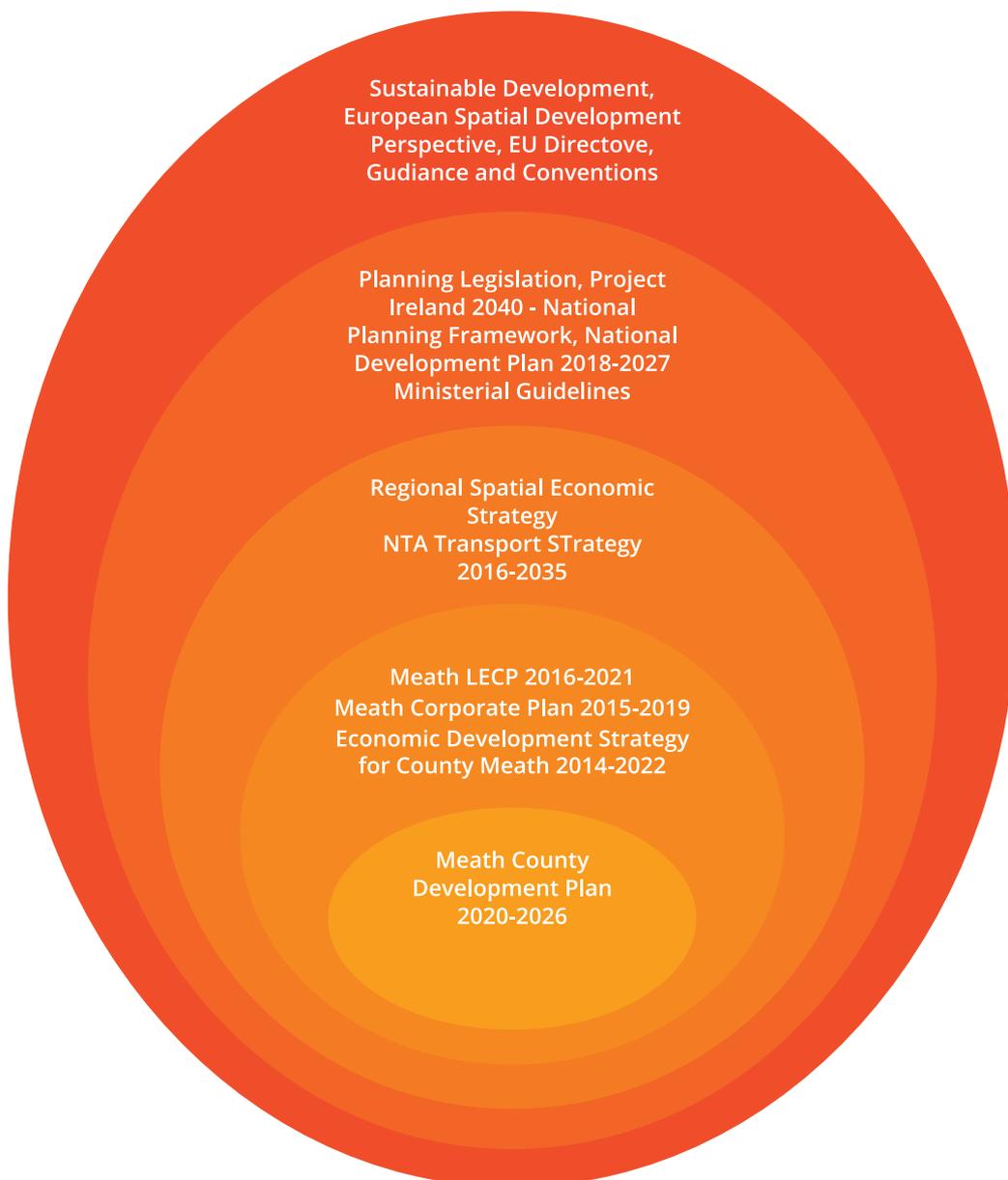


Figure 1.1: Strategic policy influences on the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2020-2026

Strategic Employment Sites

Building on the momentum of the successful implementation of the Economic Strategy and the identification of 5 strategic employment sites, a number of additional strategic employment sites have been selected which reference those areas with the highest incidence of outbound commuting combined with high quality skill set profile.

In the case of Maynooth, the opportunities presented to develop synergies with Maynooth University accord with the RSES policy direction to focus on technology and innovation poles located at universities when identifying sites for enterprise.

The sites comprise a combination of new and existing zoned lands. The intention in designating these sites as strategic employment sites is to facilitate an approach to the marketing of the sites which was adopted with the sites designated in the Economic Strategy. This focus is required to stimulate development on these lands.

These additional Strategic Sites are as follows:

- Trim Rd lands, Navan (identified as white lands (the subject of a current variation to the Navan Development Plan) and additional lands to the north;
- Maynooth Environs (employment land);
- Ratoath, lands between the existing built up area of Ratoath and Fairyhouse/Tattersalls Equestrian complexes, for the creation of an equestrian based employment hub (existing employment land, additional lands identified);
- Kells, lands opposite Headfort Golf Club (existing employment land);
- Laytown, lands adjacent to Laytown Train

Station (existing employment land, additional lands identified);

- Enfield, lands to the east of the built up area of Enfield (existing employment land);
- Dunshaughlin, lands to the south of the town which will facilitate the delivery of a key route to the M3 Motorway.

1.5 Table of Contents of the County Development Plan 2020-2026

The County Development Plan consists of a written document with supporting appendices and maps, as set out in the table of contents. There are Four volumes contained in the Meath County Development Plan:

1. Volume 1 Written Statement
2. Volume 2 Written Statements & Maps for settlements
3. Volume 3 Book of Maps
4. Volume 4 Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment & Flood Risk Assessment Appendices, Glossary.

Volume 1, the written statement, contains the policies and objectives of the Development Plan and comprises 11 chapters.

- Chapter 1 Introduction provides background information to the Development Plan.
- Chapter 2 Core Strategy sets out the overall vision for the county and the core principles underlying the development strategy in the Plan.
- Chapters 3 to 10 expand on the development strategy for the county, giving an in depth policy direction for housing, economic development, movement, infrastructure,

⁵ 2016 POWSCAR data

⁶ July 2019

social issues, built and natural heritage, rural development and climate change. Each of these chapters includes a written statement in which strategic themes, policies and objectives for each topic are provided.

- Chapter 11 provides detailed development management standards. This chapter sets out the criteria which will be used by the Council in assessing planning applications. They support the various policies and objectives which are provided throughout the Plan.

Volume 2 contains the Written Statements and maps for the settlements as follows:

ASHBOURNE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Ashbourne
Gormanstown
Kentstown
Kilbride
Stamullen

KELLS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Athboy
Baile Gibb
Carlanstown
Carnaross
Crossakiel
Drumconrath
Kells
Kilmainhamwood
Moynalty
Nobber

Oldcastle
Rathcairn

LAYTOWN/BETTYSTOWN MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Bettystown/Laytown/Mornington/Donacarne
Donore
Duleek
Julianstown
Slane

NAVAN MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Navan

RATOATH MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Dunboyne (& Clonee)
Dunshaughlin
Kilcock Environs
Kilmessan
Maynooth Environs
Ratoath

TRIM MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Ballivor
Clonard
Enfield
Kilbride
Kildalkey
Longwood
Rathmolyon

Summerhill
Trim

Volume 3 contains the maps associated with Volume 1, which includes:

Settlement Hierarchy
Key Transportation Corridors, Nodes & Network
Rail Reservation Maps
Road Upgrades National & Regional
Access to National Roads – Exceptional Circumstances
Bru Na Boinne World Heritage Site
Architectural Conservation Areas
Natural Heritage Designations (Natura 2000)
Public Rights of Way
Views and Prospects Maps
Rural Area Types Development Pressure
Tree Preservation Order's (TPO)
Gaeltacht Areas Rathcairn & Gibbstown
Management of Future Access to Strategic Corridors
Dublin Airport Safety Zones
SEVESO Sites and Consultation Distances

Finally the Appendices will include: details of all relevant Legislation, Strategic Policy Guidance, the Council's approach to the implementation of Ministerial Guidelines in the Development Plan, Housing Strategy, Retail Strategy, Landscape Character Assessment, Record of Protected Structures, Architectural Conservations Areas, Protected Views and Prospects and all other

relevant maps and information pertaining to the preparation of the Draft Plan.

1.5.1 Existing Suite of Local Area Plans

A Local Area Plan is currently in place for the following settlement centres: Ashbourne, Bettystown/Laytown/Mornington East/Donacarney, Dunshaughlin, Dunboyne, Ratoath and the Southern Environs of Drogheda.

A written statement and land use zoning objectives map to establish a framework for inter alia the future LAP's, to support economic development and to provide a basis for continued operation of the development management process pending the completion of the LAP's (in the case of Drogheda the UAP) has been included in Volume 2 for each settlement centre.

1.6 Interpretation

In interpreting this document in all cases should any conflict arise between the written word and accompanying maps the written word shall take precedence.

Should conflict arise between any maps and the written word, the written word shall take precedence.

1.6.1 Protocols

In all cases the following protocols apply:

- The Council refers to Meath County Council.
- The Plan refers to the County Development Plan 2020-2026.
- The County refers to County Meath.

CHAPTER 2

Core Strategy

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of the Core Strategy¹ is to set out an evidence based strategy for the future spatial development of the Plan area. The Core Strategy is required to demonstrate that the Plan is in accordance with National and Regional planning policy outlined in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region.

The strategy includes details of the settlement hierarchy and where future growth is to be distributed in the County together with details of population and household projections and the quantum of lands to be zoned for residential and mixed uses. An overview of the quantum of lands zoned for employment uses is also provided.

2.2 Core Strategy Vision

The Core Strategy Vision of the Meath County Development Plan is:

“To continue to support the creation of socio-economically progressive vibrant, dynamic, and healthy communities throughout the County and ensure that future growth is based on the principles of sustainable development that delivers a high quality living and working environment that meets the needs of all residents, in accordance with National and Regional Guidance.”

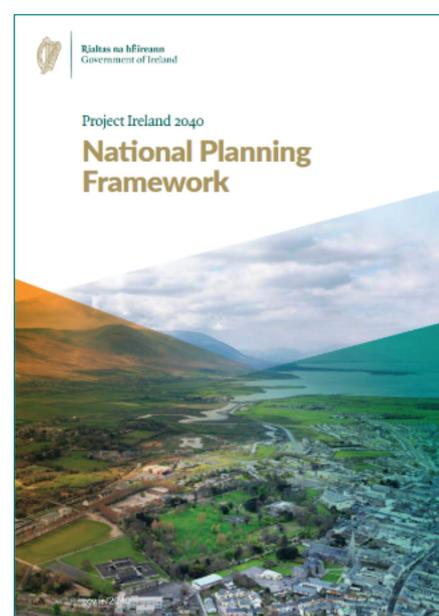
2.3 National and Regional Planning Policy

2.3.1 Project Ireland 2040

2.3.1.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the successor to the National Spatial Strategy (NSS). It was published in 2018 and is a 20 year strategy setting out the growth strategy for the country up to 2040. The NPF was given a statutory footing under the Planning and Development Amendment Act 2018.² The objectives of the NPF as set out in the Act are as follows:

- i) To establish a broad national plan in relation to the strategic planning and sustainable development of urban and rural areas.
- ii) To secure balanced regional development by maximising the potential of the regions.
- iii) To secure the co-ordination of regional spatial and economic strategies and city and county development plans.



¹ Section 10(1A) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

² Sections 20A, 20B, and 20C of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018

The vision/goals of the NPF are expressed as 'National Strategic Outcomes' built around the themes of wellbeing, equality, and opportunity.

The strategy set out in the NPF focuses on building 'centres of scale' and addressing peripherality. At a national level Dublin (the National Gateway) will remain the principal economic driver of the country and will continue to develop as an international city of scale. As part of the strategy of promoting regional growth and building 'centres of scale' outside of Dublin, ambitious growth targets have been allocated to the cities of Cork, Galway, Limerick, and Waterford. Below these 5 cities the regional roles of Athlone in the Midlands, Sligo and Letterkenny in the North-West and the Letterkenny-Derry and Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry cross border networks are also identified. The importance of the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor in harnessing future economic growth, supporting regional development, and strengthening the urban structure in the

northern and eastern parts of the country is also acknowledged.

The regional growth strategy set out in the NPF represents a significant change to current trends and growth patterns, referred to in the document as 'business as usual'. In order to implement this strategy population growth in the Eastern and Midland Region will be curtailed by implementing a policy of 'regional parity' whereby the projected growth of the Eastern and Midland Region must be at least matched by the combined growth of the Northern and Western and Southern Regions.³ The population target for the Eastern and Midland Region is for an additional 490,000-540,000 people to be living in the region by 2040.

The NPF strategy is required to be ambitious and to succeed it will require a significant up-scaling of growth in the other regions. Based on their current growth levels, it is clear that the challenges presented by this task should not be underestimated.

	Growing Our Region	Building Accessible Centres of Scale	Compact Smart Growth
Eastern and Midland Region	+490,000-540,000 people	Dublin City and Suburbs- +235,000-290,000 people	30% of new housing to be delivered on infill/ brownfield lands
	+320,000 jobs	Growth of other towns to be determined by Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies within overall National Framework	

Table 2.1: Targeted Pattern of growth in the Eastern and Midland Region to 2040

³ National Policy Objective 1a and 1b of the NPF

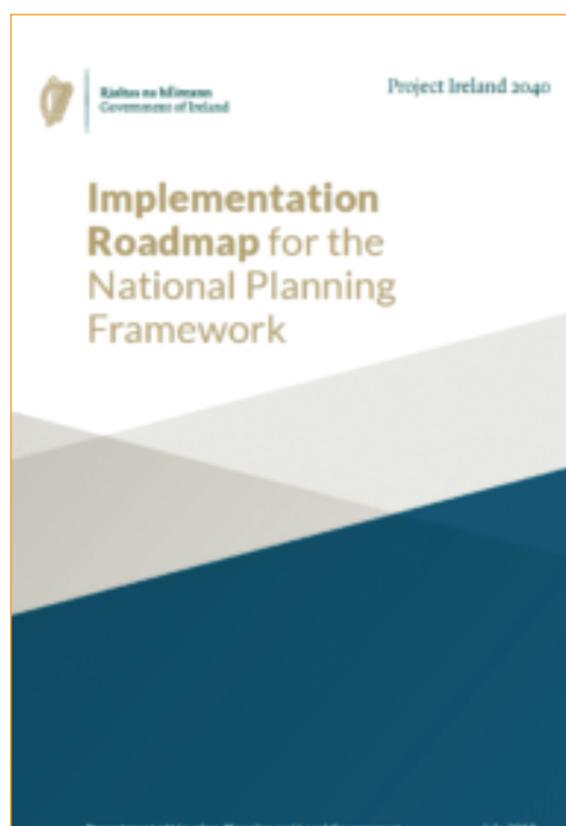
Securing compact and sustainable growth is an important element of the growth strategy. This will be achieved by concentrating on delivering growth within the existing built-up footprint of settlements by focusing on the re-use of previously developed 'brownfield' land, the development of infill sites, and the re-use and redevelopment of existing sites and buildings. It is an objective that at least 30% of all new homes in settlements outside the 5 cities and suburbs will be within the existing built up footprint⁴.

2.3.2 Implementation Roadmap for the NPF

In recognition of the time it will take for Development Plans and current growth patterns to shift from the 'business as usual' approach towards a pattern of more compact growth, the NPF Implementation Roadmap, published in July 2018 has factored in a 'transition period' that takes account of current land use zonings and extant permissions. This period of transition is to operate until 2026 with the intention that growth would slow in the Eastern and Midland Region post 2026. At this time, it is intended that a comprehensive assessment of the first full round of City/County Development Plans prepared under the NPF and RSESs will be carried out to identify if the National and Regional Policy Objectives are being successfully implemented.

As part of the process of bridging the gap between what City and County Plans have made

provision for and the growth trajectory set out in the NPF, a transitional set of population projections for 2026 and 2031 were published. It is anticipated that these projections will assist in facilitating a smoother transition to the growth strategy set out in the NPF⁵. Consequently the outer parameter of growth trends for this plan period will be to 2031 as set out in the RSES, where it is indicated that in instances where there are excess residential lands consideration should be given to the prioritisation/sequential development of lands which may not be forthcoming in the plan period, having regard to the 2031 roadmap targets.⁶



County	2016	2026	2031
Meath	195,000	216,000-221,000	225,500-231,500

Table 2.2: Transitional Population Projections to 2031

⁴ National Policy Objective 3c of the NPF

⁵ Appendix 2 of the Implementation Roadmap for the NPF

⁶ Section 4.3 of the RSES 'Taking Account of Existing Plan

2.3.2.1 Headroom⁷

The transitional population projections set out in Appendix 2 of the Implementation Roadmap for the NPF includes 'headroom' provision. Further 'headroom' not exceeding 25% can be considered in counties where population growth

is projected to be at or above the national average baseline. Meath is included in the list of counties where this additional 'headroom' can be applied. The Roadmap indicates that this headroom can only be considered in the 2026 projection.

County	2016	2026	2026 population including 25% headroom	2031 ⁸
Meath	195,000	216,000-221,000	221,250-227,500	225,500 231,500

Table 2.3: Transitional Population Projections including headroom

2.4 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

As part of the changes to Regional Government structures introduced under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 the 8 Regional Authorities in the country were dissolved and replaced with 3 Regional Assemblies. The Regional Assemblies were established in January 2015. Meath is located in the Eastern and Midland Region.

One of the principal functions of the Regional Assembly is to prepare and oversee the implementation of a Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). The RSES provides the link between the NPF and the City/County Development Plans and the Local Economic and Community Plans.⁹ The RSES has replaced the Regional Planning Guidelines.

Within the Eastern and Midland Region there are 3 Strategic Planning Areas; Dublin, Eastern, and Midland Strategic Planning Areas.

The objective of the RSES as set out in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 is to support the implementation of the NPF and the economic policies and objectives of the Government.¹⁰



⁷ Paragraph 4.14 of the 2007 Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities recommended that Planning Authorities make enough land available to meet the residential needs of the population for the next nine years, which is 50% more lands than that required during the six year lifetime of a Development Plan. This was to ensure there is an element of choice and to deal with any factors inhibiting the release/development of lands. This additional 50% of lands is referred to as 'headroom'.

⁸ The Implementation Roadmap for the NPF does not include provision for an additional 25% headroom in 2031.

⁹ A Local Economic and Community Plan is a six year strategy that sets out the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic and community development of a local authority area. The Meath LECP 2016-2021 is available from the following location: [County Meath Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021](#)

¹⁰ [Section 23 of the Planning and Development \(Amendment\) Act 2018](#)

2.4.1 Profile of the Eastern and Midland Region

The Eastern and Midland Region has a diverse and varied settlement structure consisting of densely populated urban areas around Dublin and a more rural, dispersed pattern of development in the Midlands.

The region had a population of over 2.3 million people in 2016, which equates to 49% of the population of the country. Population growth in the region is not evenly distributed, with over 2 million people or 87% of the total population living in the Dublin and Eastern Strategic Planning Areas.

The highest population growth in the region between 2006-16 was recorded in the Eastern Strategic Planning Area, where the population increased by 17.4% or 102,000 people.

The regional economy is continuing to perform strongly, with 830,000 jobs located in the region in 2016. Approximately 70% (578,000) of these jobs were located in Dublin, reflecting the dominance and strength of the capital for economic growth and investment.

The success of the Dublin economy can also be attributed to the interdependent relationship between the capital and surrounding counties, particularly in the Eastern SPA where a significant number of people working in Dublin reside, in part due to historic and ongoing residential availability and affordability issues. The combined population of these Strategic Planning Areas has assisted in creating a critical mass of population that is required to support the growth of the Dublin economy and wider region.



Figure 1.1 EMRA Strategic Planning Areas

Fig 2.2: Strategic Planning Areas Eastern and Midland Region

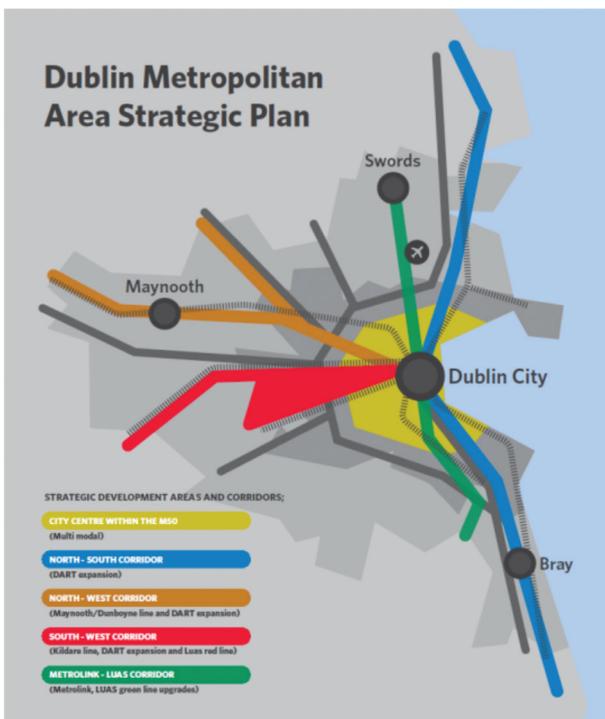
2.4.2 Overview of the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region

The RSES sets out the strategic framework for the economic and spatial development of the Eastern and Midland Region up to 2031.

The primary objective of the RSES is to support more sustainable settlement patterns that focus on compact growth, makes the most efficient use of land and infrastructure, and takes an integrated approach to development that provides employment opportunities and improvements to services alongside population and residential growth.

The Growth Strategy builds on the policy direction taken in the Regional Planning Guidelines of directing growth to a number of designated settlements across the region. There are 3 policy zones identified in the strategy as follows:

- Dublin City and Metropolitan Area



- Core Region
- Gateway Region

2.4.2.1 Dublin City and Metropolitan Area

Dublin City and Suburbs consists of the continuous built up area of Dublin and transcends across all 4 Local Authority Areas in County Dublin. It includes settlements such as Blanchardstown, Ballymun, and Howth in Fingal, Clondalkin and Tallaght in South Dublin and Dundrum and Dun Laoghaire in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.

The NPF projects that there will be an additional 235,000-290,000 people living in Dublin City and Suburbs by 2040. This will be achieved by concentrating growth within the existing built up footprint of the City and Suburbs area.¹¹

The Metropolitan Area extends beyond the City and Suburbs to include major settlements that have strong connections and synergy with the city such as Swords, Dunboycne, Maynooth, Leixlip, Bray, and Greystones. 1.4 million people lived in the Metropolitan Area in 2016, which was 60% of the population in the Eastern and Midland Region. As part of the strategy of concentrating development towards the city area, the NPF included provision for the preparation of a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) that sets out a high level and long term strategic vision for the Metropolitan Area. This MASP was prepared as part of the RSES. The Dublin MASP identifies strategic growth corridors based on their capacity to deliver compact, sustainable, and sequential growth and their proximity to existing and proposed public transport. There is a strong emphasis on aligning land use and transportation planning in order to co-ordinate policy making and investment and create more compact,

¹¹ National Policy Objective 3b of the NPF sets a target of at least half (50%) of new homes in the City and Suburbs to be delivered in the existing built up area.

sustainable communities. In addition the requisite infrastructure requirements needed to release these lands for development have been identified.

2.4.2.2 Core Area

The Core Area consists of the peri-urban areas in the commuter catchment around Dublin, which extends into Louth, Meath, Westmeath, Kildare, and Wicklow. Key settlements include Drogheda, Balbriggan, Navan, Naas, Newbridge, and Wicklow Town.

Future growth in the Core Area is to be focused on consolidated, compact growth in key employment and service centres, with smaller settlements to grow at a more sustainable rate. There will also be a focus on improvements to services and amenities in settlements that have experienced significant population growth in order to improve the quality of the living and working environment.

2.4.2.3 Gateway Region

The Gateway Region comprises the remainder of the Eastern and Midland Region beyond the Metropolitan and Core Areas. Settlements in this part of the Region are more dispersed and rural. There is a focus on Athlone and Dundalk functioning as regional drivers for the economic growth of this part of the region. Other key settlements include Longford, Mullingar, Portlaoise, and Tullamore.

2.4.2.4 Economic Strategy

The Economic Strategy is positive in outlook and is focused on continuing to build on the progress made in the economy in recent years. Whilst Dublin is the primary driver of the national economy, the strategy also acknowledges the capacity of key settlements

throughout the region to support and deliver economic growth. The importance of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor in harnessing and driving economic growth is also recognised.

As part of the cross-cutting theme in the RSES of 'place making' and creating quality urban environments, there is an emphasis on improving the alignment between population and employment growth in order to create more sustainable settlements where people can enjoy a better quality of life. This will be delivered by integrating land use and transport planning and supporting high density, compact growth, particularly along high quality public transport corridors where more sustainable travel patterns can be encouraged. The strategy also acknowledges the importance of improving connectivity and planning for and anticipating future infrastructure demands in order to maintain the competitiveness and attractiveness of the region as a place to invest, thereby stimulating economic growth and the continued delivery of targeted employment.



Map 2.1: Policy Areas in the Eastern and Midland Region

2.4.3 The influence of the RSES on shaping future growth in Meath

It is a mandatory requirement that there is consistency in the spatial planning hierarchy between national, regional, and local plans. This Development Plan will therefore be aligned, in so far as is practicable, with the national and regional policy objectives set out in the NPF and RSES.

The key elements of the growth strategy of the RSES that will influence future growth and development in Meath are as follows:

- Metropolitan Growth – the MASP has identified strategic development areas in Dunboyne and Maynooth (along the north-western corridor of the Metropolitan Area) that have the capacity to deliver significant residential and employment growth. The build out of these lands will increase the critical mass of population in the Metropolitan Area, creating more compact and sustainable patterns of growth. Kilcock has been identified as a Self-Sustaining town by Kildare County Council. Given that Kildare are the lead Local Authority in relation to the town, it is necessary that Meath's designation aligns with that of Kildare.
- Outside of the Metropolitan Area, future growth will be directed towards key designated settlements including the Regional Growth centre of Drogheda and the Key Town of Navan. The RSES recognises the level and range of services and amenities available in these settlements and their potential to continue their development as important residential, employment, and service

centres in the County and wider region.

- Below the designated settlements there are a number of small-medium sized towns that play an important role in providing employment and services to the settlement and their wider catchment. There will be a greater focus on sustainable growth in these settlements including infill and brownfield development in addition to support for an improvement in the provision of amenities and services. The growth in employment provision is a key objective for these settlements in order to create 'live work' communities.
- There will be a focus on investment in rural towns, villages and rural nodes to combat the decline of rural areas. The regeneration of vacant and under-utilised sites alongside the roll out of a 'New Homes in Small Towns and Villages' initiative between local authorities, infrastructure agencies, and local communities will provide opportunities to boost economic development and rejuvenate rural communities.¹² In the open countryside a distinction is made between areas under urban influence i.e. within the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment, and areas outside of these catchments.¹³ This is reflected in an updated Rural Development Pressure Map and updated rural housing policy.

The settlement hierarchy as set out in the RSES is as follows:

¹² National Policy Objectives 18a and 18b in the NPF

¹³ National Policy Objective 19 of the NPF and Regional Policy Objective 4.78 of the RSES

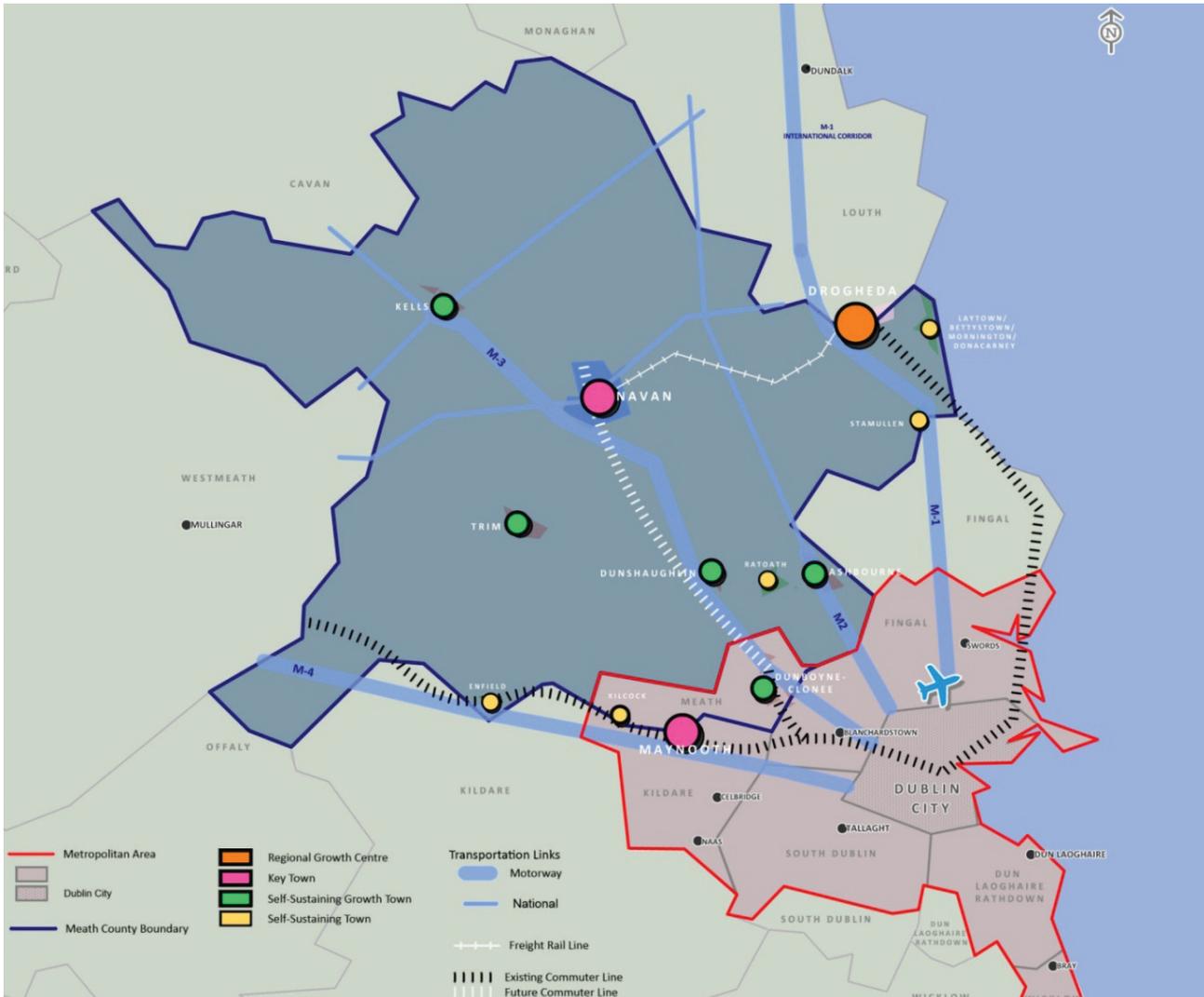
Settlement Typology	Description	Location
Dublin City and Metropolitan Area	International business core with a highly concentrated and diversified employment base and higher order retail, arts, culture and leisure offer. Acts as national transport hub with strong inter and intra-regional connections and an extensive commuter catchment.	Dublin City and suburbs Dunbooyne/Dunbooyne North/ Clonee Maynooth Kilcock
Regional Growth Centres	These 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 to complement the Regional Growth Centres.	Navan, Maynooth
Self-Sustaining Growth Towns	Towns with a moderate level of jobs and services – includes sub-county market and commuter towns with good transport links and capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining.	Ashbourne, Dunshaughlin, Kells, Trim, Dunbooyne/ Dunbooyne North
Self-Sustaining Towns	Towns with high levels of population growth and a weak employment base which are reliant with other areas for employment and/or services and which require targeted 'catch-up' investment to become more self-sustaining.	Laytown Bettystown- Mornington-Donacorney, Ratoath, Enfield, Stamullen, Kilcock
Towns and Villages	Towns and villages with local service and employment functions	Towns – Athboy, Duleek, Oldcastle Villages – Ballivor, Longwood, Clonee
Rural	Rural villages less than 1,500 and the wider rural region	Carlanstown, Carnaross, Clonard, Crossakiel, Donore, Drumconrath, Gibbstown, Gormanstown, Julianstown, Kentstown, Kilbride, Kildalkey, Kilmainhamwood, Kilmessan, Moynalty, Nobber, Rathcairn, Rathmolyon, Slane, Summerhill

Table 2.3 Settlement hierarchy for Meath

2.5 Core Strategy Map

The Core Strategy Map (Map 2.3) set out below provides a conceptual overview of the spatial

planning strategy for the County. This map illustrates the designated growth centres and strategic transport corridors in the county, set within the context of the wider region.



Map 2.3: Core Strategy Map

2.6 Short-Medium Term Outlook of the Plan

The preparation of this Plan comes at a time when growth has returned to the Irish economy. This has followed a prolonged period of stagnation and uncertainty during which the

economy experienced volatility and change. Associated with this economic growth is an increased demand for housing. Whilst the output of housing has increased, it remains substantially below that required in a normally functioning market. This has resulted in demand for housing continuing to outstrip supply,

particularly in the Greater Dublin Area, and has led to rising house prices and rents and unprecedented levels of homelessness across the region and the State.

As the economy continues to improve, it is anticipated that the increase in employment will result in an increase in inward migration, which will place further pressures on the demand for housing. It is therefore essential that there is an adequate supply of suitable housing of various types available to facilitate the growth in the economy and to ensure that the output of housing is maintained at a sustainable level that meets the needs of a growing population whilst also addressing the 'pent up' demand for housing following a prolonged period of inactivity.

Whilst this Development Plan is based on the assumption that there will be a continuation of positive economic growth consideration must also be given to the potential impact of Brexit on the Irish economy. It is widely accepted that whatever form of Brexit that is eventually agreed there will be considerable economic implications for the entire country. This impact will be particularly prevalent in the border counties. There are many Meath based companies that will also be exposed to these risks including agri-food, fisheries, haulage companies, the pharma-chemical industry, and retail businesses. The tourism sector is also exposed to additional risks.

Taking this into account it is important that this Plan is sufficiently robust to allow flexibility that would facilitate businesses to respond to future challenges surrounding Brexit and the uncertainties it would have on the local, national and international economy

2.7 Objectives of the Core Strategy

As part of the approach of achieving consistency with the NPF and the RSES the objectives of the Core Strategy are as follows:

- To demonstrate how the Meath County Development Plan is consistent with national and regional planning strategies, guidelines and policies including national and regional population projections.
- To provide the policy framework for the settlement strategy and Local Area Plans, particularly in relation to land use zoning and population distribution.
- To ensure the co-ordination of infrastructural investment with settlements identified for future growth.
- To facilitate the population growth of Meath up to a projected population of 227,500 in the plan period and ensure the distribution of this population is targeted towards the growth centres identified in the RSES.

2.8 Layout/Content of the Core Strategy

The Core Strategy is required to address the following 3 areas:

- Population Targets
- Future Household targets and land requirements
- Settlement hierarchy/Population and household distribution

The legislative requirements in respect of the

¹⁴ Census 2016 recorded 82,346 immigrants arriving in Ireland in the year to April 2016 in comparison to 53,267 in April 2011. [Population and Migration Estimates published by the CSO in August 2019 estimate the number of immigrants to the State to be 88,600 between April 2018 and April 2019](#)

content of Core Strategies¹⁵ are clearly set out and require an evidence based approach with regard to population and household allocation and distribution and land use requirements. There would appear, to date, in the approach to Strategic Housing Development¹⁶ to be a significant disconnect between the requirements as set out in a core strategy and the units permitted as part of these applications. It will be necessary to address this apparent lack of co-ordination particularly in the context of the suite of development plans reviewed post adoption of the RSES in order to ensure continued public faith in the planning system to deliver a co-ordinated effective response to the current housing crisis.

2.8.1 Guiding principles for Core Strategies

In its 'Guiding Principles for Core Strategies' the RSES requires Local Authorities to have regard to the settlement hierarchy in the preparation of the Core Strategy.¹⁷ There is also a recognition that the implementation of the Growth Strategy of the NPF at a regional and county level will result in inconsistencies with existing plans, particularly with regard to the quantum of land zoned for residential use.

The RSES provides the following options¹⁸ to address the issue of excess residential lands:

- Apply prioritisation measures which takes account of the sequential development of lands which are suitable for housing but may not be forthcoming in the plan period
- De-zone the land

There is also an acknowledgement that there are instances where there are settlements with long term development potential that are not being brought forward for development. Rather

than being dependent on the release of these lands for residential development, the RSES indicates that Local Authorities should consider other suitable lands with better prospects for delivery in the short term whilst also pursuing the more strategic lands through an Active Land Management Strategy.

In identifying the residential land requirement for this Plan and addressing the issue of excess lands consideration will be given to both options set out above. An evaluation of all undeveloped residential lands in each settlement has been carried out. The prioritisation/phasing of residential lands will only be utilised in the larger settlements where population growth is to be concentrated i.e. Regional Growth Centre, Key Town, or Self-Sustaining Growth Towns and only where there are fundamental reasons which support the requirement to phase such lands.

It is proposed to include a reserve of residential lands that will not be available for development until after 2026 only in the following settlements:

¹⁵ Section 10(2A) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

¹⁶ See Section >>> Development Management Guidelines and Standards Chapter 11

¹⁷ Section 4.3 of the RSES 'Defining a Settlement Typology'

¹⁸ Section 4.3 of the RSES 'Taking Account of Existing Plans'

Settlement	Reason for including a reserve of residential land
Dunboyne	To ensure there is a long term strategy and to provide clarity as to the direction of future growth and development in the Metropolitan Town.
Navan	As the Key Town and the largest settlement in the County, it is important to have clarity and direction for the medium and long term growth of the town. In addition, the delivery of a rail line to Navan is a cross-cutting theme of this Plan. It is therefore integral to have a development strategy that demonstrates the town has the capacity to support the population increase associated with a rail based settlement.
Dunshaughlin	To demonstrate the town has the capacity to accommodate a critical mass of population associated with a rail link delivered as part of Phase II of the Navan Rail Project.
Kilcock Environs	To provide clarity in regard to the long term growth of this Metropolitan settlement.

Table 2.4: List of settlements where a 'reserve' of residential lands is to be retained

2.8.1.1 Joint Urban Area Plan for Drogheda

In recognition of the requirement for a co-ordinated strategy to maximise the growth potential of Drogheda, which is designated as a Regional Growth Centre in the NPF, Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 4.11 in the RSES sets out the requirement for the preparation of a Joint Urban Area Plan for the town between Meath and Louth County Council.

Whilst there have been a number of meetings between Senior Officials from Meath and Louth County Councils, at the time of writing the timeframe for the preparation of this Joint Urban Area Plan had not been agreed. It is acknowledged that any amendments to the land use zoning strategy for the Southern Environs of Drogheda would be premature pending the preparation of this Joint Plan. However the Council also recognises that Drogheda is one of the principle areas for population and economic

growth in the Eastern and Midland Region outside Dublin.

Taking this into account it is important that land use availability is reflective of its position in the settlement hierarchy and its anticipated role in the future growth and development of the Region, which is to act as a regional driver of economic growth. The 'Residential Phase II' designation on the A2 'New Residential' lands in the Southern Environs of Drogheda has therefore been removed with these A2 'New Residential' land retained and being made available for development.

This 'transitional arrangement' will ensure there is sufficient land available to facilitate population growth and economic development based on its designation as a Regional Growth Centre. As part of the Joint Urban Area Plan process a more detailed examination of the quantum of residential and employment zoned lands, in addition to open space and community

infrastructure, will be carried out. Pending the completion of this process the Council will closely monitor development activity in the area.

2.8.2 Population Projections

The RSES includes population projections for each Strategic Planning and Local Authority

area in the region for 2026 and 2031. These projections were set out in the Implementation Roadmap for the NPF and were based on a demographic and econometric model developed by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) as part of the preparation of the NPF.

	Census 2011	Census 2016	Projected population 2026	Projected population 2031
Eastern Strategic Planning Area	653,984	689,000	759,000-777,000	789,000-813,500
Eastern and Midland Region	2,209,463	2,328,517	2,566,500-2,619,000	2,668,000-2,740,500
Meath	184,135	195,044	216,000-221,000	225,500-231,500

Table 2.5: Regional and County population projections for 2026 and 2031

The Implementation Roadmap also recognises that there are parts of the country where projected population growth is at or above the national average. Meath is included in this list of counties. Provision is made for the allocation of an additional 25% headroom up to 2026 in these counties.

There is no allowance for this additional 25% headroom to be applied to the 2031 projection.

The population figures from Census 2016 indicate that population growth in Meath was broadly in line with that projected in the RPGs with the county experiencing a 5.9% increase in population over the five year period 2011-2016. The population of Meath is growing at a slightly faster rate than both the region as a whole and the Eastern Strategic Planning Area where the

increase was 5.4% and 5.3% during the same period.

Further analysis of the population figures for Census 2016 reveals that Meath and Fingal were the only Local Authority Areas that met the 2016 population targets set out in the RPGs.

Taking account of the recent pattern of population growth in Meath it would be prudent to utilise this additional headroom available in order to provide flexibility in a scenario where population growth would be higher than that projected. This is particularly relevant when consideration is given to the level of immigration presently being experienced in comparison to that projected in the research and projections that informed the National Planning Framework. This Research Paper projected an

average net-immigration of 8,000 persons per year between 2017-2021 and 12,500 persons per year from 2021 to 2040. In comparison figures published by the CSO estimate a net immigration of 34,000 persons in 2018 and

33,700 persons in 2019. These figures indicate that the country's population is increasing at a faster rate than anticipated in the NPF.¹⁹

Inclusive of this additional headroom, the population projection up to 2026 is as follows:

	Census 2011	Census 2016	Projected population 2026	Projected population 2031 ²⁰
Meath	184,135	195,044	221,250-227,500	225,500- 231,500

Table 2.6: Population projection for Meath to 2026 including headroom

The population projection for Meath is therefore 227,500 in 2026.

Taking account of the fact that the RSES is a 12 year strategy, the NPF Implementation Roadmap also included population projections for 2031. The RSES refers to the period 2026-2031 as the medium term and provides a population projection of between 225,500 and 231,500 for Meath by 2031. This figure does not, however take account of the additional 25% headroom allocated up to 2026.

2.8.3 Analysis of existing and projected growth rates

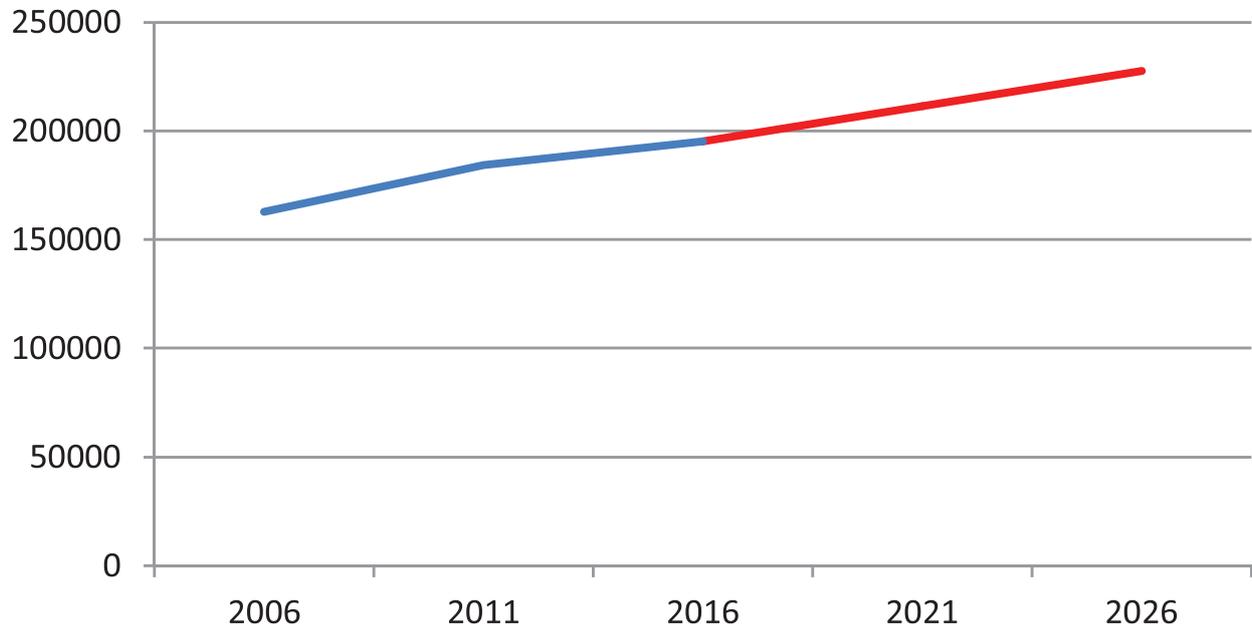
There was a rapid growth in population in Meath between 2006-11 when the population increased by 13%. During the following 5 year period (2011-16) a more moderate increase of 5.9% was recorded. This growth was reflective of the prevailing economic circumstances at the time whereby the national economy was performing strongly up to 2008, following which there was a curtailment of growth due to the global recession. Over the 10 year period between 2006-16 the total population increase was 20%. This equated to an annual average population increase of 3,221 persons.

	Population increase 2006-16	Average annual increase 2006-16	Projected increase 2016-26	Projected annual average increase 2016-26
Meath	32,206	3,221	32,456	3,246

Table 2.7: Population growth in Meath 2006-2026

¹⁹ See page 43 of the 'Prospects for Irish Regions and Counties' published by the ESRI and the CSO 'Population and Migration Estimates' published in August 2019
²⁰ The Implementation Roadmap for the NPF does not provide for an additional 25% headroom in 2031

Population growth Meath 2006 - 2026



Between 2016-2026 it is projected that the population of Meath will increase by 16.5%. This equates to an annual average population increase of 3,246 persons, which is equivalent to the annual average increase between 2006-16.

The graph above sets out the projected growth in the County up to 2026 and confirms that the pattern of growth will be along a similar trajectory as that experienced between 2006-16.

2.9 Housing

2.9.1 Introduction

The collapse of the property market in 2008 and the associated economic fallout resulted in the stagnation of household construction in the County and across the State. Housing figures published as part of census 2016 indicate that

in the period 2011-16 just 952 residential units were constructed in Meath. This represented a 1.4% increase in the housing stock, with the total housing stock in the 2016 Census recorded at 70,649 units, rising from 69,697 in 2011. This slow down in house building followed a sustained period of unprecedented growth in the housing stock in the County. The charts overleaf highlight the contrasting trends in the housing market in Meath over the past 20 years with a rapid acceleration in house building from 1996-2006 followed by an equally rapid decrease from 2006-2015. From 2014 when the economy began to recover house building slowly began to increase, albeit from a very low base.

The lack of any significant residential development over the past decade resulted in residential construction lagging behind population growth.

Total Housing Stock 1991 - 2016

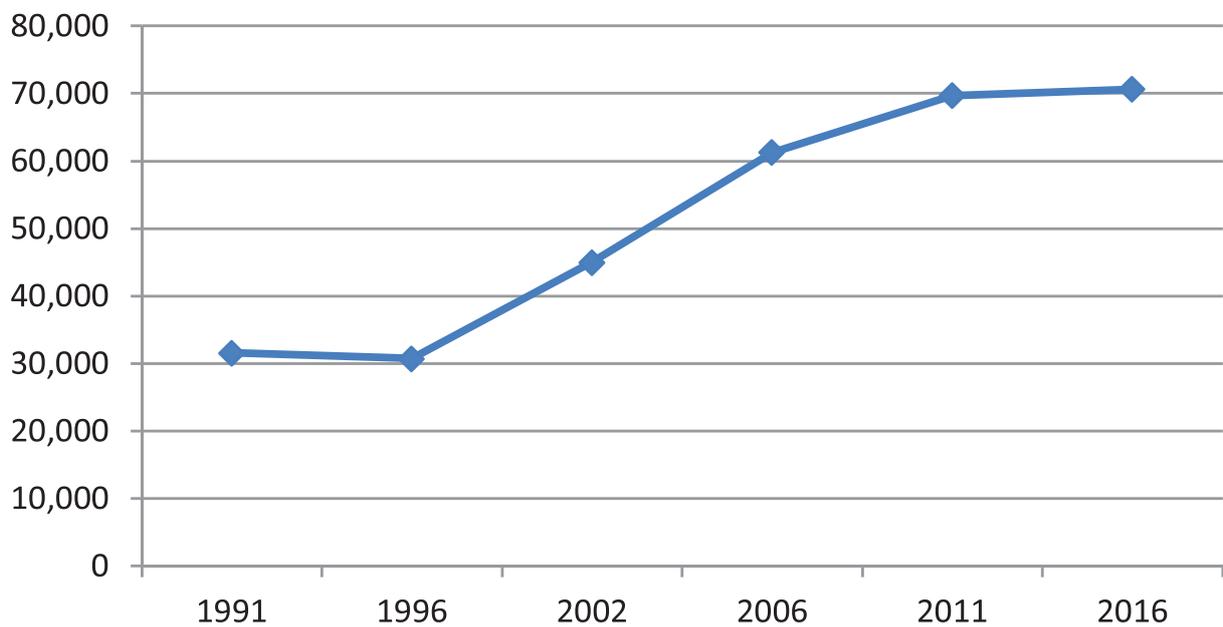


Fig 2.2: Total Housing Stock in Meath 1991 - 2016

House completions Meath 1996 - 2018

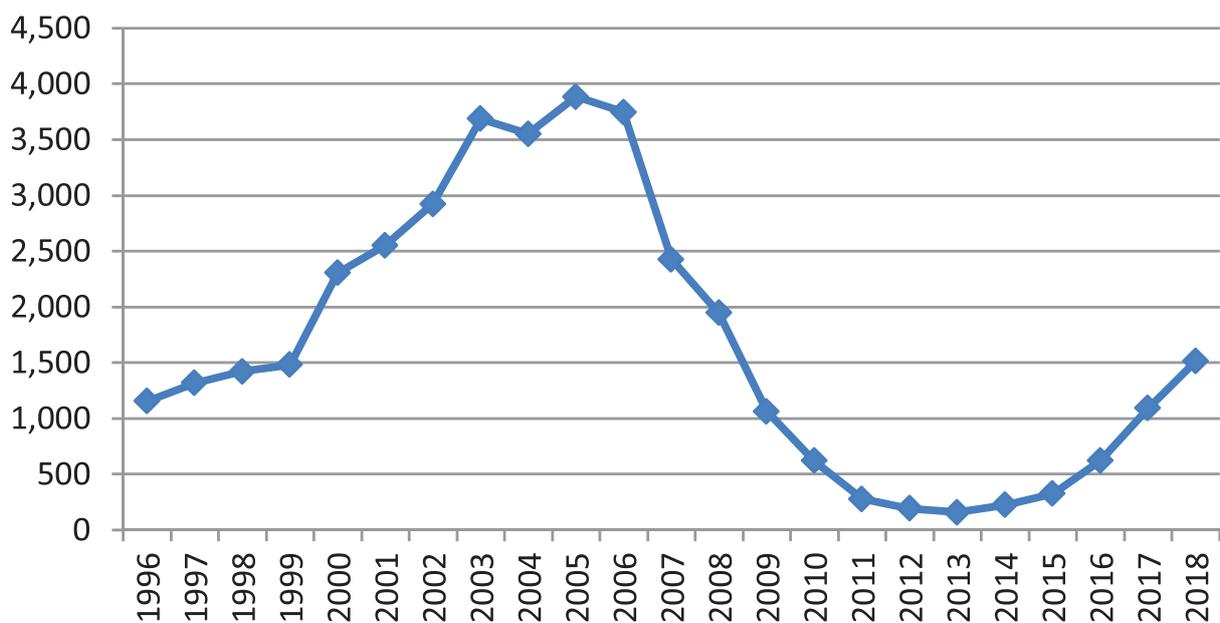


Fig 2.3: New dwelling completions Meath 1996 - 2018

This has placed pressure on the existing housing stock, with increased rents, house prices, and homelessness evident within the County and across the region. As the economy continues to recover the demand for additional housing in the County and wider region will continue. The Government has responded to this challenge by publishing a number of initiatives including the following:

- *Rebuilding Ireland: An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness*, published in July 2016, committed to increasing housing supply to a baseline level of 25,000 units per annum by 2020.
- Housing has been identified as one of the priority areas for investment in the National Development Plan, with a capital investment of €4.2 billion available for social housing in the period 2018-2021. This funding will support the delivery of 40,000 new social housing units.²¹
- A €200 million *Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)* was announced by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community, and Local Government in 2017. This funding will provide critical infrastructure that would facilitate an accelerated delivery of housing in key development sites where there is a high demand for housing.
- In locations with above average rental increases over a consistent period Rent Pressure Zones have been designated. Annual rent increases within Rent Pressure Zones are limited to 4%. At the time of writing the entire County was designated a rent pressure zone.
- The Land Development Agency was established in 2018. This Agency will have an initial capital budget of €1.25 billion and

has an objective to deliver 150,000 homes over the next 20 years. The functions of the Agency are as follows:

- a) Co-ordinating appropriate State lands for regeneration and development and opening up key sites which are not being used effectively for the delivery of housing.
- b) Driving strategic land assembly, working with both public and private sector land owners to smooth out peaks and troughs of land supply, stabilising land values and delivering increased affordability.

40% of all housing delivered by the agency must be social/affordable with 10% to be social housing and 30% to be affordable.

The immediate focus of the agency is on managing the regeneration and delivery of housing on under-utilised State owned lands. In the longer term the Agency will assemble strategic land banks from a mix of public and private lands and make them available for residential use in a controlled manner. This represents an exciting opportunity for dynamic partnerships with Local Authorities to address housing and regeneration issues. There are a number of land parcels in State Ownership in Meath with potential to deliver housing. The Department of Education lands in Ashbourne, (where part of this landholding was acquired by Meath County Council for the development of social housing) is an example of such lands.

This section of the Core Strategy will focus on the projected housing demand in Meath up to 2026 and will be divided into the following sub-sections:

- The housing targets for 2016 and 2022 set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines.

²¹ [National Development Plan 2018-2027](#)

- Current activity in residential construction.
- Projected housing demand for the County up to 2026.

2.9.2 Housing allocation in Regional Planning Guidelines 2016-2022

The RPGs included a housing allocation for each Local Authority in 2016 and 2022. This allocation was calculated on the basis of projected population growth and the average household occupancy in each Local Authority, with a vacancy rate of 6.5% also factored in to the calculation.

The stagnation in household construction following the collapse of the construction sector during the recession resulted in the output of housing being significantly below that anticipated in the RPGs. Between 2006-11 the housing stock in Meath increased by 8,440 units. This level of output fell dramatically between

2011-16 when the increase was just 952 units. During this period the vacancy rate decreased by 2% (1,300 units) to 6.9%, indicating that existing properties in the County's housing stock were brought back into use.

The RPGs projected there would be 79,729 households in Meath in 2016. The actual figure was 70,649 units, which was 9,080 units below the allocation. The 2022 projection was 95,458 units, which would represent an increase of 24,809 units above the number of households in 2016. Taking account of the current levels of output this projection will not be achieved.

Figure 2.4 clearly indicates household completions in Meath since 2008 have been significantly below that projected in the RPGs and is further evidence of an abnormal/dysfunctional housing market. The signs of recovery are also evident with year on year increases in the number of units completed since 2014.

	Census 2002	Census 2006	Census 2011	Census 2016	RPG Target 2016	RPG Target 2022
Population	134,005	162,831	184,135	195,044	195,898	210,260
Housing	44,972	61,257	69,697	70,649	79,729	95,458
Occupancy rate		2.66	2.89 ²²	2.96	2.62 ²³	2.35

Table 2.8 RPG Population and Housing Targets up to 2022

²² Vacant units taken into account in the calculation as recommended in the RPGs

²³ As set out in Appendix of the RPGs

Household completions in Meath vs projected annual output in RPGs

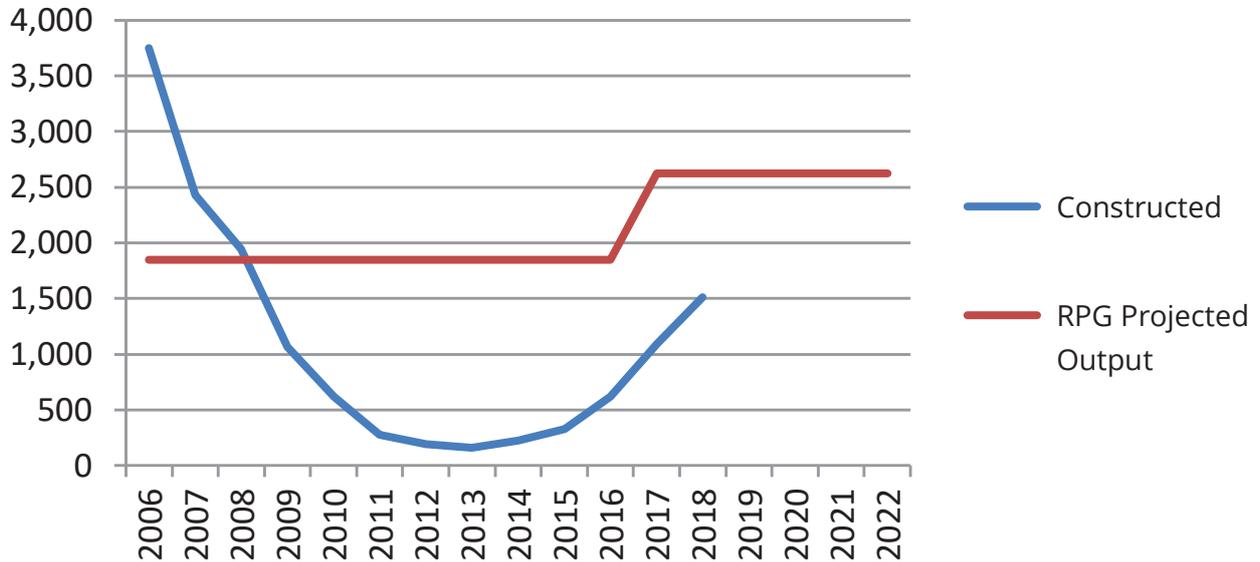


Table 2.4 RPG Population and Housing Targets up to 2022

2.9.3 Recent Activity in Residential Construction

The continuation of the economic recovery, the associated increase in employment, and improved consumer confidence has resulted in increased activity in residential construction, particularly in the southern and eastern parts of the County.

This has been particularly evident from 2014, with year on year increases in the number of Commencement Notices received for multi-unit residential developments. These Commencement Notices are being translated into completed units. The CSO Report 'New Dwelling Completions' 2011-18 recorded that there were 1,512 residential units completed in Meath in 2018. This represents an increase of almost 40% on 2017 when 1,091 units were completed. In comparison to other parts of the

region Meath is one of the most active counties behind Fingal (2,140 units), Dublin City (1,843 units), and South Dublin (1,654 units).

2.9.4 Household growth and the RSES

The RSES acknowledges the need to increase the delivery of housing across the country and projects that at least half of all new homes to be built nationally up to 2040 will be required in the Eastern and Midland Region.²⁴

The RSES is a much broader strategy than the RPGs in that it is less specific at a County and settlement level with regard to household growth. No household allocation or projected occupancy rates have been provided at County/ Local Authority level with the document focusing primarily on population growth.

²⁴ Section 9.3 RSES Housing and Regeneration

The Strategy builds on the policy of delivering more compact and consolidated growth established in the RPGs by including an objective requiring that 30% of all new homes will be within the existing built up area of settlements.²⁵

The absence of any household projections or occupancy rates presents a challenge in preparing an evidence based strategy. This is particularly pertinent given the 'pent up' demand for housing in the County following a prolonged period of undersupply. The RSES indicates that the updated Development Plan Guidelines to be published by the DHPLG will provide guidance with regard to future household provision. These Guidelines were not published at the time of writing and consequently the calculation/projection of future household requirements is based on the interpretation of existing available data in the absence of said national guidance.

In addition to the Development Plan Guidelines reference is also made to the preparation of Housing Need Demand Assessments (HNDA) in the RSES. The requirement to prepare a HNDA stems from National Policy Objective 37 in the NPF.²⁶ A HNDA estimates the number of additional housing units required to meet existing and future demand. Its purpose is to provide an evidence based rationale for housing policy and allow Local Authorities take a strategic approach to housing need and demand across all tenures. In the absence of the publication of any guidance documents and associated data and supporting material regarding the preparation of a HNDA it is not considered appropriate or practicable to prepare a HNDA at this time. In the interim period the Housing Strategy will continue to inform Housing Policy in the County.

2.9.5 Projecting Housing Demand up to 2026

As previously indicated, the absence of guidance at a national and regional level regarding projected household requirements and occupancy rates presents a significant challenge with regard to quantifying the total number of households and land required to meet the housing needs of the County during the Plan period.

For example, it is unclear as to whether or not it is anticipated that future occupancy rates will decline over the next decade following an increase between 2011-16. In addition it is difficult to quantify the additional housing required in the County to 'catch up' with demand.

The average occupancy rate gradually declined between 1996-2006 and began to increase during the recession. The improving economic conditions will facilitate in time a return to lower occupancy rates. For the purposes of this Core Strategy it is assumed that the average occupancy rate will decrease from 3 in 2016 to 2.5 in 2026.

Based on an average occupancy rate of 2.5 persons per household in 2026 and a population of 227,500 persons living in Meath in the same year, it is projected that the total housing stock in the County in 2026 would be 91,000 units. Vacancy rate has been factored in to this occupancy rate. This projection would result in a requirement for an additional 20,351 residential units in Meath over the 10 year period 2016-26. This would equate to an annual average output of 2,035 units per annum. This is not considered to be an unrealistic figure, particularly in the context of the anticipated housing requirements set out in the NPF and Rebuilding Ireland.²⁷

²⁵ Regional Policy Objective 3.2 RSES

²⁶ National Policy Objective 37 of the NPF

²⁷ Section 6.6 of the NPF 'Housing' indicates that between 2018 and 2040 an average output of 25,000 new homes will be required every year whilst Rebuilding Ireland seeks to increase the overall supply of new homes to 25,000 per annum by 2020.

Year	2016	2026
Population	195,044	227,500
Housing stock	70,649	91,000
Increase from 2016		+20,351

Table 2.9: Projected household requirement in Meath up to 2026

2.9.6 Securing Compact Growth

One of the underlying principles of the growth strategy in the NPF and RSES is securing more compact development. This is a continuation of the policy approach set out in the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines where there was a requirement for a sequential approach to be taken to the delivery of housing with priority given to the regeneration of infill/brownfield sites.

There is a target in the NPF and RSES to deliver at least 30% of all new homes in towns outside of the cities to be located 'within and close to the existing built up area' of settlements.²⁸

This Plan recognises the social and economic benefits of the redevelopment of brownfield lands, particularly in relation to urban regeneration, and will continue to support the delivery of compact growth and the regeneration of under utilised sites in towns and villages throughout the County.

An analysis of the potential capacity of infill and brownfield lands zoned for residential, town centre, or mixed use developments in all settlements indicates that approximately 6,272 units could be delivered on these lands. This equates to 31% of the household allocation for the County. The development of these lands will make an important contribution to the

creation of more sustainable communities in the County and will support the implementation of the national and regional policy objectives of creating more compact settlements.

	Potential capacity of lands
Brownfield/Infil ²⁹	6,272
Greenfield	14,079

Table 2.10: Brownfield and Infill development targets

2.10 Population and Household Distribution

The distribution of future population and household growth in this Plan is based on the key principles of the NPF and RSES of delivering more compact growth, improving the alignment of population and employment growth, and concentrating growth in the large urban centres that have a comprehensive range of services and public transport provision with the capacity to support growth.

Development therefore will be primarily concentrated 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

²⁸ National Policy Objective 3c of the NPF and Regional Policy Objective 3.2 of the RSES

²⁹ This includes greenfield sites in the 'existing built up area of settlements'

settlements.

The growth strategy of this Plan is also closely aligned with the Meath Economic Development Strategy 2014-2022, which supports the consolidation of development in the larger settlements in order to facilitate the economic growth of the County and broaden its employment base thereby reversing the continuing trend of outbound commuting to Dublin.

The distribution of future population and housing growth in the County has taken the following into account:

- Compliance with the RSES;
- The settlement hierarchy for the County as detailed in Table 2.3, which advocates an emphasis on:
 - a) Dunboyne and Maynooth as centres within the Dublin Metropolitan area with capacity to deliver sustainable 'live work' communities
 - b) Promoting sustainable growth in Drogheda as a designated Regional Growth Centre,
 - c) Supporting employment and residential growth in Navan as the County's designated Key Town,
- The need to address employment creation in existing urban areas which have experienced substantial levels of residential growth to address significant outbound commuting.
- Climate Change and sustainability, particularly the availability of public transport.
- In small towns and villages accommodating local growth at a scale appropriate to the settlement size and function.
- In rural nodes and the open countryside accommodating locally generated housing needs
- The delivery of Phase II of the Dublin-Navan Rail line
- The availability of social and physical infrastructure.

As mandated by the NPF and RSES, the growth strategy for the County will focus less on 'targets' and 'numbers' and more on identifying settlements that have the capacity and greatest potential for growth on a sustainable platform. In addition there will be greater co-ordination between land use zoning and infrastructure availability through the implementation of the 'Tiered Approach to Land Use Zoning' set out in the NPF.³⁰ The development and implementation of this 'Tiered Land Use Zoning' will require a close working relationship with various agencies including Irish Water, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, the National Transport Authority, and the Railway Procurement Agency in identifying any deficits in infrastructure and the availability of funding to carry out the necessary investments and upgrades.

The delivery of housing will be supported through the implementation of the Active Land Management Strategy for the County in addition to the promotion and identification of infill and brownfield sites for redevelopment and strategically located green field sites that would support the principles of consolidated growth.

2.10.1 Focus of Growth in the Metropolitan Area

The primary focus of future growth in the Metropolitan Area of Meath will be in Dunboyne³¹ and Maynooth. Dunboyne is located along the North-West Strategic Residential and

³⁰ Appendix 3 of the NPF

³¹ This includes lands at Dunboyne North and Clonee'

Employment Corridor as set out in the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP). It is a strategically located multi-modal settlement that has benefitted from substantial investment in road and rail infrastructure over the last decade.

The strategic location of the town makes it one of the most important settlements in the County for economic growth. This has been endorsed through high profile developments of significant FDI employment in the area by Facebook, Takeda, and Aramark (Avoca). It is an objective of this Plan to build on these recent investments and continue to attract economic investment to the town.

The Dublin MASP has identified the potential for the Strategic Development Areas in Dunboyne to deliver significant residential and economic/employment generating development. It is a vision of this Plan that the development of these lands will create a sustainable 'live work' community in Dunboyne where there are jobs close to where people live and people can enjoy a balanced and healthy lifestyle in an attractive environment.

Maynooth is identified as Key town in the Metropolitan area in the RSES. The RSES recognises the northern environs of Maynooth, which are located in Meath, as an important location for economic and residential development that will support the future development of the town and the delivery of the Maynooth Outer Relief Road, which is a key piece of infrastructure in the sustainable growth of the town. A Joint Local Area Plan for Maynooth is to be prepared by Meath and Kildare County Councils. This Plan will provide a co-ordinated framework for the future development of Maynooth.

The RSES includes provision for the redistribution of up to 20% of the population

growth targeted for Dublin City and Suburbs to the Metropolitan Key Towns of Bray, Maynooth, and Swords.³² These allocations will be determined by the MASP Steering Group comprising of representatives of the Metropolitan Local Authorities, independent of the projection provided for each County in the NPF Implementation Roadmap. At the time of writing this Group had not been established, however in order to factor a potential allocation for Maynooth Environs into this Plan, a preliminary population allocation of 1,000 persons has been allocated to the this area. This will be subject to review and change when the MASP Steering Group has been established and is fully operational.

2.10.2 Focus of Growth in the Core Area

As part of the policy of promoting consolidation and compact growth, future growth in the Core Area will be concentrated in the higher tier settlements in the hierarchy. Drogheda has been identified as a Regional Growth Centre in the RSES, with the Southern Environs identified as having an integral role in the development of Drogheda as a Regional Growth Centre, with these lands having the capacity to deliver residential and economic development in strategic locations.

The designated Key Town of Navan is the largest settlement and primary growth centre in the County. A key corporate priority for the Council over the plan period is to secure the delivery of the rail to Navan. This Plan will continue to support the economic development of the town which will strengthen its position as a centre of regional enterprise and employment. Alongside the economic growth of the town, residential lands will be released for development which

³² Section 5.7 of the MASP 'Housing Delivery'

will increase the critical mass of the population required to support the delivery of a rail line to the town.

In the Self-Sustaining Growth Settlements of Ashbourne, Kells, Trim, and Dunshaughlin there will be a focus on consolidation and the provision of employment opportunities in tandem with population growth in order to allow these centres to become more self-sufficient. The availability of infrastructural services and community infrastructure will also be an important factor in determining the quantum of new housing and population growth that these settlements could absorb.

The focus of growth in the Self-Sustaining Towns of Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington-Donacarney, Ratoath, Enfield, and Stamullen will be on attracting employment and investment in services alongside a limited population growth and a more balanced delivery of housing. As a core economic policy response which will allow “economic catch-up” as envisaged in the RSES, strategic employment zones have been identified in a number of these towns.

The remaining allocation (20.2%) will be directed to the Small Towns, Villages, Rural Nodes, and Open Countryside. Any growth in these centres will primarily be locally based with a shift away from commuter led development with greater emphasis on the creation of sustainable communities whereby the expansion of the settlements is proportionate to the availability of services. Development in rural nodes will be assessed on a case by case basis while also ensuring compliance with the Core Strategy.

2.10.3 Rural Areas

The NPF and RSES recognise the economic and social contribution that rural areas make at a

local, national, and regional level in providing employment, access to high quality amenity areas, delivering high quality agricultural produce, and providing raw materials and aggregates used in the construction of our urban centres. The challenges facing these areas, which include urban generated pressures, an ageing population, connectivity, and access to infrastructure and new technologies are also recognised.

In recognition of these challenges national and regional policy has placed an emphasis on creating more sustainable rural communities by focusing on the regeneration of rural towns and villages particularly in locations that have experienced decline. Support is also provided for the development of a ‘New Homes in Small Towns and Villages’ initiative to provide services and serviced sites in rural settlements.³³

The NPF and RSES make a distinction between rural areas under urban influence i.e. within the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment, and rural areas outside these catchments.³⁴ There is a requirement in the RSES for Local Authorities to identify areas of strong urban influence in the hinterlands of settlements on this basis.³⁵

This Plan supports the strengthening of rural communities and the sustainable development of rural areas in accordance with national and regional policy. Full details of the Rural Settlement Strategy are set out in Chapter 9 of this Plan.

2.10.4 Distribution of Population and Households in the County

Table 2.11, the ‘Core Strategy Table’, sets out the population projections and household allocation

³³ Regional Policy Objective 4.78 of the RSES

³⁴ The NPF defines a commuter catchment as the area from which at least 15% of the relevant settlement workforce is drawn.

³⁵ Rural Development Pressure Map is in Volume 3 (Map 9.1)Plan

for each settlement up to 2026. This table provides details of the most recent population, population projections, the development activity in each settlement between 2016-2019, the number of unbuilt permitted units, and the household allocation for each settlement between 2020-2026.

The multi-faceted nature of settlement growth and the various socio-economic factors associated with the growth of towns and villages makes it extremely challenging to provide an exact figure for a population to grow to at a specific time. Rather than focusing on the population projection as a 'target' the figures provided in Table 2.11 should be regarded as a guide as to the level of growth anticipated in that settlement during the plan period. The emphasis will instead be on the delivery of the objectives of the NPF and RSES, and in particular the creation of balanced, sustainable growth.

It is acknowledged that due to various circumstances there are some settlements that may grow at a rate faster than anticipated and others which will develop at a slower rate. As part of the monitoring and implementation process of this Plan the Council will analyse settlement growth within the County,

particularly following the publication of Census 2021 data. This exercise will form a significant element of the formal 2 year statutory review.

As part of the strategy of securing compact growth, an analysis of the potential number of units that could be delivered in the built up area of each settlement was carried out. This figure is set out in column H of the table. This includes lands zoned as 'New Residential', 'Existing Residential', 'Mixed Use', or 'Town Centre' uses. The quantum of lands zoned 'New Residential' in each settlement has also been provided.

The total household allocation for the County between 2016-2026 is 20,351 units. Approximately 3,682 units were constructed between 2016-2019 (see column E), leaving an allocation of 16,669 units to be built during the Plan period 2020-2026 (column G).

Volume 2 of this Plan includes a Written Statement and zoning map for each settlement in the County. These Written Statements set out the strategy as to how the core strategy will be implemented in each of these settlements.³⁶

Chapter 9 sets out the relevant policies and objectives in respect of residential development in rural nodes and the open countryside.

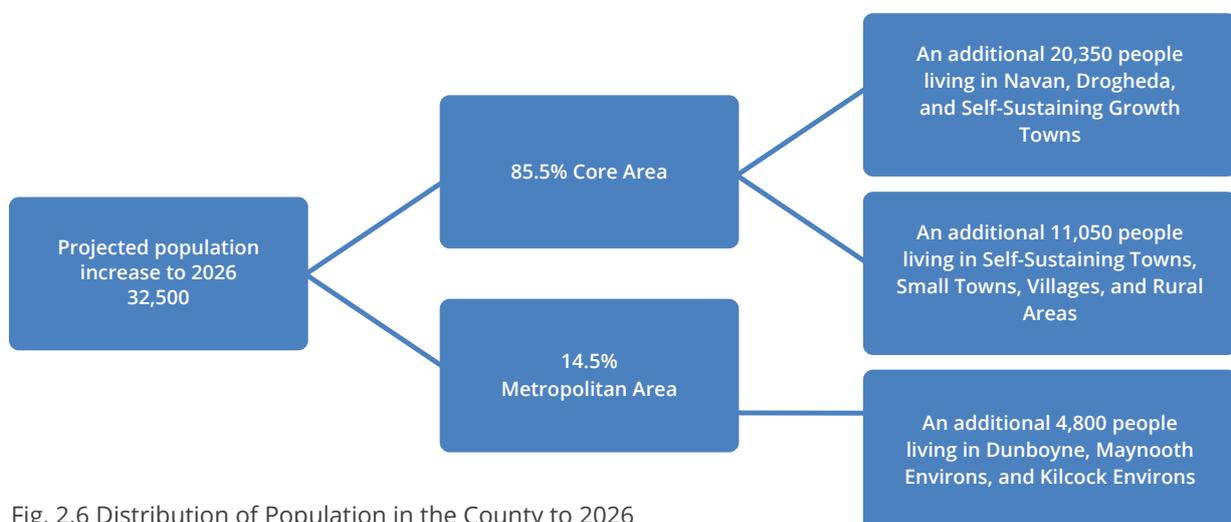


Fig. 2.6 Distribution of Population in the County to 2026

³⁶ Following the adoption of this Plan it is intended to prepare a Local Area Plan for each of the following settlements: Navan, Dunboyne/Clonee, Ashbourne, Trim, Kells, Laytown/Bettystown/Mornington/Donacorney, Dunshaughlin, Duleek, Enfield, Stamullen and Ratoath. A Joint Local Area Plan for Maynooth is to be prepared with Kildare, a Joint Urban Plan is to be prepared for Drogheda.

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E	Column F	Column G	Column H	Column I
Settlement	Population 2016	Projected population increase to 2026	Projected population 2026	Approximate households completed 2016-2019	Extant units not yet built	Household allocation 2020-2026 ³⁷	Potential units to be delivered on infill/brown-field lands ³⁸	Quantum of land zoned for residential use (ha)
Regional Growth Centre								
Drogheda	6,527	3,300	9,827	113	572	1,631		178.73
Key Town								
Navan	30,173	5,100	35,273	781	924	2,884	1,936	83.6
Maynooth	0	1,000 ⁴⁰	1,000	0	0	500	0	21.36
Self-Sustaining Growth Town								
Dunboyne	7,272	3,300	10,572	48	119	2,002	1,180	73.32
Ashbourne	12,679	3,200	15,879	632	209	1,349	351	33.47
Trim	9,194	2,250	11,444	31	437	1,333	812	44.27
Kells	6,135	1,000	7,135	48	391	452	400	19.3
Dunshaughlin	4,035	2,200	6,235	470	1,156 ⁴¹	1,003	82	32.8

³⁷ This figure does not include the units completed 2016-2019. The calculation of the household allocation has factored in the 'pent up' demand for housing which has resulted in an increase in the average household occupancy rate for existing households. As the housing market continues to normalise and supply begins to meet demand it is anticipated that the average household occupancy rate for both existing and new households will begin to decrease.

³⁸ This includes both greenfield and brownfield sites in the built up area of each settlement and consists of lands zoned for town centre, mixed use, and residential development. For clarification these units have been included in the Household allocation.

³⁹ This does not include the 38.1ha SDZ at Clonmagadden. This SDZ will span over multiple Development Plans. Taking this into account in addition to the fact that a review of the Planning Scheme is required, the SDZ has not been included in the Household allocation for Navan.

⁴⁰ Half of this population allocation (500 persons) is taken from the MASP allocation. This is provided for in section 5.7 of the Dublin MASP 'Housing Delivery'. This is a preliminary figure, with the final figure to be agreed with the MASP Implementation Group. At the time of writing the MASP Implementation Group had not been established.

⁴¹ Under a Strategic Housing Development application permission was granted for 913 units. This is a 10 year permission where it is envisaged the lands will be developed across multiple Development Plans. Taking this into account 600 (two-thirds) of the 913 units have been included in the Household allocation during this Development Plan.

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E	Column F	Column G	Column H	Column I
Settlement	Population 2016	Projected population increase to 2026	Projected population 2026	Approximate households completed 2016-2019	Extant units not yet built	Household allocation 2020-2026 ³⁷	Potential units to be delivered on infill/brown-field lands ³⁸	Quantum of land zoned for residential use (ha)
Self-Sustaining Towns								
Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington East	11,872	1,500	13,372	689	518	746 ⁴²	264	25.15
Ratoath	9,533	1,500	11,033	175	72	803	101	25.74
Enfield	3,239	1,000	4,239	45	135	474	84	15.75
Stamullen	3,361	500	3,861	1	215	290	58	11.8
Kilcock	93	500	593	100	180	180	0	8.79

Small Towns								
Athboy	2,445	350	2,795	34	127	200	100	16.37
Duleek	4,219	500	4,719	36	85	336	250	10.9
Oldcastle	1,383	350	1,733	16	0	166	110	9.78

Villages								
Baile Ghib	81	50	131	0	0	20	0	2.52
Ballivor	1,809	100	2,009	0	0	40	40	1.93
Carlans-town	664	100	764	14	1	40	32	1.72
Carnaross	159	50	209	1	0	20	13	1.17
Clonard	347	50	397	0	0	20	20	1.01
Clonee	826	200	1,026	83	24	60	60	0.8
Crossakiel	181	50	231	0	0	20	8	0.67
Donore	760	100	860	4	2	50	6	2.76
Drumcon-rath	345	50	395	0	2	20	11	0.86

⁴² Includes provision for 30 no. social housing units

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E	Column F	Column G	Column H	Column I
Settlement	Population 2016	Projected population increase to 2026	Projected population 2026	Approximate households completed 2016-2019	Extant units not yet built	Household allocation 2020-2026 ³⁵	Potential units to be delivered on infill/brown-field lands ³⁶	Quantum of land zoned for residential use (ha)
Gormanston	375	50	425	0	2	20	0	2.16
Julianstown	681	75	756	0	21	30	28	1.21
Kentstown	1,179	100	1,279	1	39	70	38	3.4
Kilbride	87	75	162	19	0	35	19	0.7
Kildalkey	708	50	758	1	0	20	6	1.5
Kilmainhamwood	316	50	356	4	0	20	20	1.35
Kilmessan	654	250	904	0	97	100	17	3.82
Longwood	1,581	200	1,781	16	68	104	20	1.22
Moynalty	96	50	146	0	1	20	6	0.64
Nobber	344	50	394	0	0	20	10	3.49
Rathcairn	156	75	226	2	0	35	0	3.43
Rathmolyon	334	225	559	17	80	90	87	4.68
Slane	1,369	225	1,469	4	37	90	85	5.84
Summerhill	878	100	978	28	6	40	18	6.38
Rural nodes and open countryside	68,948	3,125	72,079	300	c.300	1,336	N/A	N/A
Total	195,044	33,000	228,000	3,713	5,820	16,669	6,272	663.56

Table 2.11: Core Strategy Table, Population and Household distribution to 2026

Settlement	Projected population increase to 2026	% of total population growth	Approximate households completed 2016-2019	Household allocation 2020-2026 ⁴³	Quantum of land zoned for residential use (ha)
Regional Growth Centre	3,300	10.1%	113	1,631	178.73
Key Towns	6,100	18.8%	781	3,384	104.96
Self-Sustaining Growth Towns	11,950	36.8%	1,278	6,561	203.16
Self-Sustaining Towns	5,000	13.8%	910	2,313	87.23
Small Towns	1,200	3.7%	86	702	37.05
Villages, Rural Nodes, and Open Countryside	5,450	16.5%	494	2,301	52.43

Table 2.12: Summary of population and household distribution in each settlement category

2.11 Economic Development

The Council set out an ambitious framework for economic development in the County in the Economic Development Strategy for Meath 2014-22.⁴⁴ The overriding objective of this Strategy is to facilitate more jobs within the County thereby improving the jobs ratio and reducing the volume of outbound commuting. This Plan will continue the implementation of this Strategy and will seek to build on the successes achieved to date.

The direction and underlying principles of this Core Strategy are consistent with the national and regional economic policy set out in the NPF and RSES in that it advocates that future growth should take place on a sustainable platform that concentrates development in local and regional centres of growth that have the capacity to accommodate significant development in a consolidated urban environment.

The concept of the 'live-work' community model also emerged from the spatial implementation

phase of the Strategy and will continue to be promoted as a model of best practice in place making and the creation of balanced and healthy communities. This concept is strongly endorsed in both the NPF and the RSES.

The 5 strategic centres of employment were identified for growth in the Economic Strategy are Navan, South Drogheda, Dunboyne North, Ashbourne, and Kells. Having regard to the need to generate employment opportunities in centres which have experienced high levels of population growth without commensurate employment development and high levels of outbound commuting it is proposed to identify further 7 strategic employment sites as follows: Kells, Ratoath, Dunshaughlin, Laytown, Maynooth, Navan and Enfield.

Full details of the Economy and Employment Strategy are set out in Chapter 4 of this Plan.

2.12 Retail Development

A Retail Strategy for the County has been prepared as part of this Plan. This Strategy is

⁴³ Does not include the units completed 2016-2019

⁴⁴ Economic Development Strategy for Meath 2014-2022

consistent with the Retail Hierarchy for Meath as set out in the Regional Retail Strategy for the GDA 2008-2016. It has also been informed by the DECLG Retail Planning Guidelines (2012).

The aim of this Strategy is to sustain and improve the retail competitiveness of the County, address expenditure leakage, and ensure an equitable and sustainable distribution of retail floorspace across the County. An evidence based approach has been taken to the requirement of any additional lands for convenience or comparison floorspace and has been based on projected changes to the local population, consumer spending, and turnover potential.

Full details of the Retail Strategy are set out in Chapter 4 Economy and Employment and Appendix 4 Retail Strategy.

2.13 Climate Change

Whilst Climate Change policies and mitigation measures are set out at a National and International level Local Authorities have a central role in the implementation of these policies and in promoting behavioural and attitude change towards climate change.

An Adaptation Strategy has been prepared for this Plan as part of the requirements of the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2012). This Strategy will ensure that this Plan will appropriately address adaptation to climate change.

Climate change is a cross cutting theme of the Plan, Chapter 10 Climate Change discusses climate change in detail.

2.14 Core Strategy and SEA/AA

A Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment has been prepared in tandem with the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has had regard to both assessments with any changes/recommendations incorporated into the strategy.

2.14.1 Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

CS POL 1

To promote and facilitate the development of sustainable communities in the County by managing the level of growth in each settlement to ensure future growth is in accordance with the Core Strategy and County Settlement Hierarchy in order to deliver compact urban areas and sustainable rural communities.

2.14.2 Objectives

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

CS OBJ 1

To secure the implementation of the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy, in so far as practicable, by directing growth towards designated settlements, subject to the availability of infrastructure and services.

CS OBJ 2

To ensure that sufficient zoned lands are available to satisfy the housing requirements of the County in designated settlements over the lifetime of the Plan.

CS OBJ 3

To ensure the implementation of the population and housing growth household allocation set out in the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy, in so far as practicable.

CS OBJ 4

To achieve more compact growth by promoting the development of infill and brownfield/ regeneration sites and the redevelopment of underutilised land within and close to the existing built up footprint of existing settlements in preference to edge of centre locations.

CS OBJ 5

To deliver at least 30% of all new homes in urban areas within the existing built up footprint of settlements.

CS OBJ 6

To strengthen the social and economic structure of rural towns and villages by supporting the re-use of existing buildings and the regeneration of under-utilised buildings and lands.

CS OBJ 7

To operate an Order of Priority for the release and development of residential lands with any lands identified as being 'Post 2026' not available for development until after 2026 in settlements where 'Post 2026' lands have been identified.

CS OBJ 8

The existing Southern Environs of Drogheda Local Area Plan 2009 (The LAP) shall remain the statutory plan for the Southern Environs of Drogheda until such a time as it is replaced with a Joint Urban Plan for Drogheda in conjunction with Louth County Council having regard to the requirements of the Report of the Drogheda Boundary Review Committee (February 2017), the National Planning Framework, and the Eastern and Midland Region Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. This plan shall be read together with the County Development Plan 2020-2026. The County Development Plan 2020-2026 shall take precedence if a conflict arises between the Plans and the conflicting provision of the LAP shall cease to have effect.

CS OBJ 9

To prepare new local area plans for the following settlements within the lifetime of this Plan: Navan, Dunboyne, Ashbourne, Trim, Kells, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington East-Donacarne, Duleek, Enfield, Athboy, Oldcastle, Stamullen.

CS OBJ 10

To prepare a Joint Vision and Urban Area Plan for Drogheda in partnership with Louth County Council within the lifetime of this Plan in accordance with the requirements of Regional Policy Objective 4.8 of the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region and the recommendations set out in the Report of the Drogheda Boundary Review Committee published in February 2017.

CS OBJ 11

To prepare a Joint Vision and Local Area Plan for Maynooth in partnership with Kildare County Council within the lifetime of this Plan in accordance with the requirements of Regional Policy Objective 4.35 of the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region.

CS OBJ 12

To ensure that all settlements, in as far as practicable, develop in a self-sufficient manner with population growth occurring in tandem with the provision of physical and social infrastructure.

CS OBJ 13

Support the implementation of the National Climate Change Strategy and the National Climate Change Adaption Framework Building Resilience to Climate Change 2012 through the County Development Plan and through

the preparation of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders.

CS OBJ 14

To support the economic growth of Meath as set out in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022.

CS OBJ 15

To continue to promote economic development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.

CS OBJ 16

To support the creation of 'live work' communities, in which employment and residential accommodation are located in close proximity to each other and strategic multi-modal transport corridors, and to reduce long distance commuter trends and congestion.

CS OBJ 17

To work closely with government departments and agencies to assist in the delivery of critical infrastructure that would facilitate the economic growth of the county with particular reference to the development of the rail to Navan.

CHAPTER 3

Settlement and
Housing Strategy

3.1 Introduction

This Chapter seeks to transpose the high level objectives of this Plan as detailed in the Core Strategy into a more local context by setting out a strategy for the future direction of settlement growth in the County. It will identify the settlements where growth will be prioritised and will inform infrastructure investment decisions required to facilitate this growth.

The settlement structure in Meath consists of different categories of settlements ranging from small rural villages to large urban towns. These settlements have an important function at a local, County, and regional level, dependent on their position in the settlement hierarchy; in supporting jobs, providing services and a mix of housing options, and acting as a focal point for community networks and activities.

This Plan recognises the importance of creating a strong network of settlements where there are a broad range of services, amenities and job opportunities as this will contribute to a more balanced and healthy quality of life for our communities.

A settlement hierarchy for the County has been developed to take account of the role and function of each settlement and is positively aligned to the new hierarchical format set out in the RSES.

The second part of this chapter outlines the housing policy in the County over the lifetime of the Plan, which focuses on the creation of sustainable communities and takes into account the key findings of the Housing Strategy and current Government policy in relation to the delivery of housing in the country.

3.2 Settlement and Housing Strategy Vision

To facilitate the sustainable growth of the towns and villages throughout the County by promoting consolidation and compact development in an attractive setting that provides a suitable mix of housing and supporting amenities and ensuring co-ordinated investment in infrastructure that will support economic competitiveness and create a high quality living and working environment.

3.3 Context

To set the context of the Settlement Strategy an overview of recent trends in population and employment growth in the County will be provided. This information has been extrapolated from Census data which is a useful source of up to date information that has assisted in the preparation of an evidence based growth strategy for this Plan.

3.3.1 Population Growth and Distribution

The population of Meath in 2016 was 195,044. This represents a 5.9% increase (10,909 persons) on the 2011 population, which was 184,135. This rate of increase was slower than the previous 5 year inter-censal period when the population increased by 13% (21,304 persons) from 162,831 to 184,135. This slower rate of growth is reflective of the changing economic circumstances in the country before and after 2008.

The total population increase over the 10 year

period 2006-16 was 32,213 persons, which equates to a 19.8% increase. This was the third highest growth rate recorded in the Eastern and Midland Region behind Laois (26.3%) and Fingal (23.3%).

In 2016 there were 2,328,517 people living in the Eastern and Midland Region. The population of Meath accounted for 8.4% of the regional population at this time. The Eastern Strategic Planning Area, which consists of the counties of Meath, Kildare, Louth, and Wicklow, had a population of 688,857 in 2016, 28.3% of whom resided in Meath.

At a County level, the population in the urban areas of Meath are increasing at a higher rate than rural areas, with an 8.9% increase recorded in aggregate town areas in comparison to a

1.9% increase recorded in aggregate rural areas between 2011-16.¹ This has resulted in the proportion of the total population residing in urban areas increasing by 1.6%, from 57% to 58.6%. Inversely the proportion of the population living in rural areas has decreased from 43% to 41.4%.

The influence of Dublin on settlement growth remains apparent with commuter based settlements in the south and south-east of the County (including Ashbourne, the East Meath Settlements, and Enfield) experiencing the highest levels of population growth. In 2016 Ashbourne was the fastest growing town in the County with the population increasing by 11.7% to 12,679. This was twice the rate of growth recorded in Navan, which increased its population by 5.7% to 30,173.

Settlement	Population 2011	Population 2016	Actual change	% change
Ashbourne	11,355	12,679	1,324	11.7%
Trim	8,268	9,194	926	11.2%
Enfield	2,929	3,239	310	10.6%
Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington-Donacarne	10,889	11,872	983	9%
Stamullen	3,130	3,361	231	7.4%

Table 3.1: Settlements in Meath that recorded highest levels of growth 2011-16

Map 3.1 overleaf details the population change in the County by Electoral Division (ED) between 2011-16. The dark blue colour depicts the highest levels of growth (between 8.6-20.4%). Over half of the EDs experienced population growth of between 2.7-8.5%. As expected, the highest growth levels were primarily experienced in the east and south-east of the County. Trim also experienced high levels of growth whilst there was also strong localised

growth to the south-west of Kells.

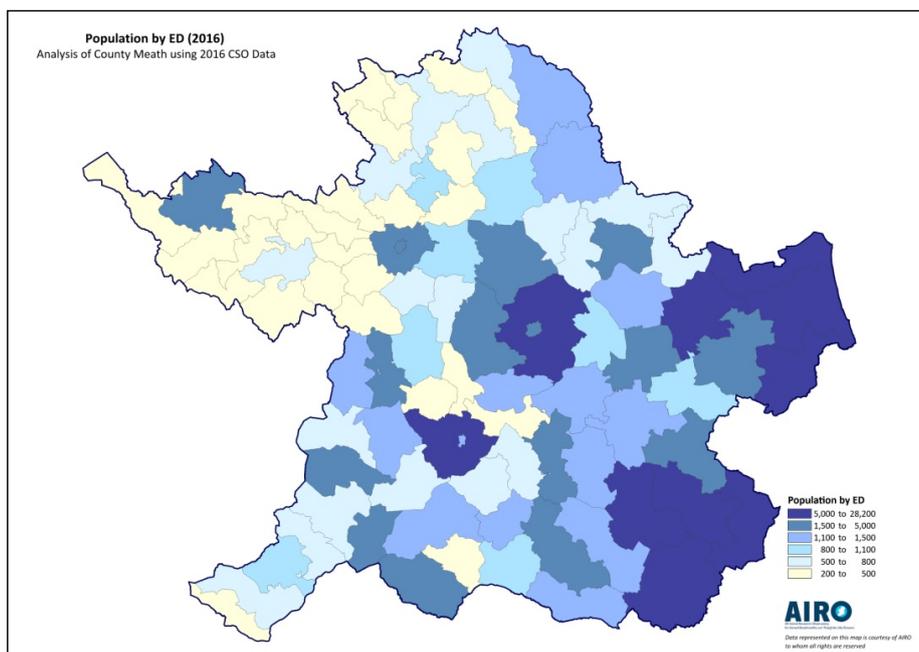
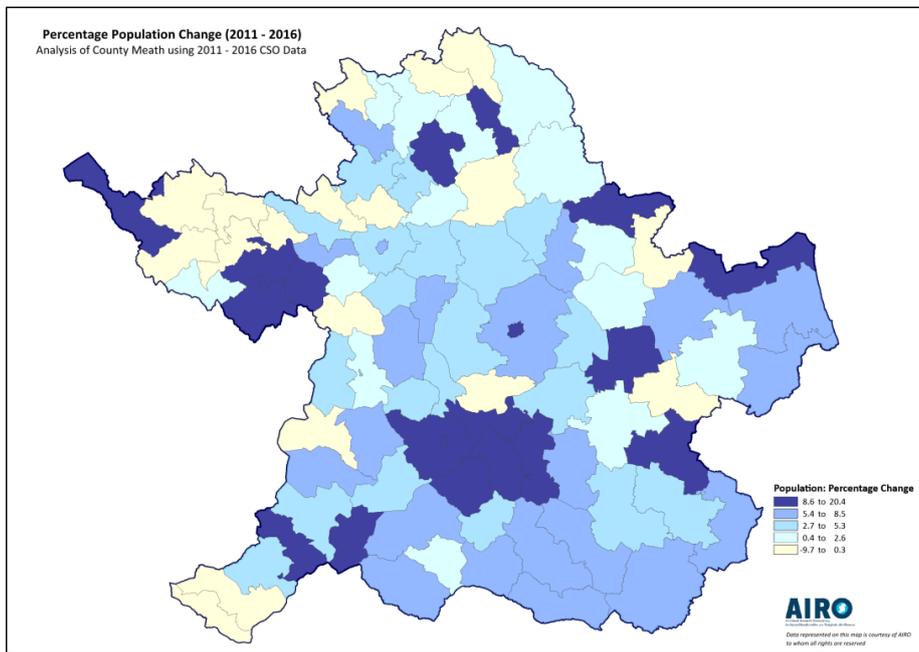
The ED 'Navan Rural' recorded the highest numerical growth with an additional 1,460 persons or 5.5% increase. This was followed by St. Mary's which includes South Drogheda and East Meath where there were an additional 1,095 persons. The EDs of Donaghmore (764 additional persons) and Kilbrew (610 additional persons) (both of which include the town of

¹ The census defines 'Aggregate Town Areas' as settlements with a population of 1,500 persons or more. 'Aggregate Rural Areas' refers to the population outside of 'Aggregate Town Areas'.

Ashbourne), Ratoath (521 additional persons) and Trim Rural (788 additional persons) also recorded significant growth.

The ED 'Castlejordan' in the south-west of the County bordering Offaly experienced the biggest decline in population with a decrease of 44 persons resulting in a total population of 427 persons living in the ED in 2016.

The population of the County at Electoral Division (ED) level is set out in Map 3.2 below. The darker colours represent the EDs with the highest population. As would be expected, these are within and adjacent to the main urban centres. The EDs with a lower population are in more rural locations in the northern and western parts of the County.

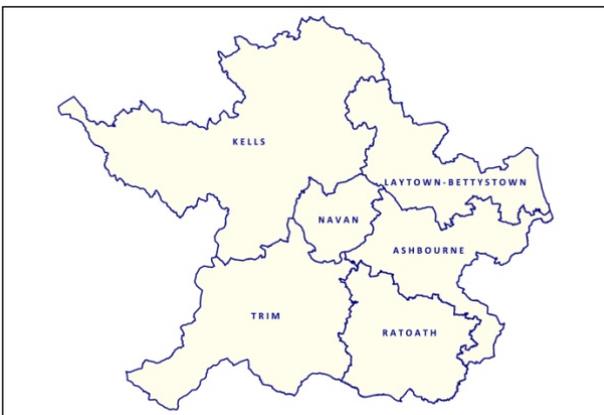


The urban centres of Navan, Trim, and Kells recorded the highest densities in 2016, with a concentration of over 2,000 persons per km² in Navan and Trim, and 1,990 persons per km² in Kells.

A breakdown of the population in each Municipal District is set out in Table 3.2 below. The more rural Municipal Districts cover a wider land area than those Municipal Districts with a more urbanised population.

Municipal District	Population 2016
Ashbourne	29,178
Kells	32,398
Laytown-Bettystown	33,752
Navan	34,931
Ratoath	33,590
Trim	31,195
Total	195,044

Table 3.2: Population by Municipal District 2016



3.3.2 Age Profile

The age structure of a population is influenced by patterns of natural increase and migration. In order to analyse recent trends in the age

profile of the County a population pyramid for the County and the State based on 2016 Census data has been prepared (Fig. 3.1 and 3.2 overleaf). These pyramids are useful in highlighting the differences in age cohorts.

The average age in the County in 2016 was 35.2 (33.8 in 2011) in comparison to 37.4 for the State (36.1 in 2011). 83.4% of the population in the County is below the age of 65. This compares with an average of 79.6% for the State. Child dependency² in the County is the highest in the State with 39% of the population under the age of 14 in comparison to an average of 32.3% for the State.

Old dependency³ in the County increased from 13.5% in 2011 to 16.6% in 2016. However this remains substantially below the figure for the State, which stood at 20.4%.

This Plan will take into consideration the future needs of the population, based on its age profile, particularly with regard to infrastructure provision. This includes the requirement for childcare and education facilities for the younger population and the healthcare, transport, and residential needs of older people. The Economic Strategy will also identify the benefits of a young and well educated population in providing a source of labour to potential investors in the County.

² Persons aged 0-14 (Source: CSO Census 2016)

³ Persons aged 65+(Source: CSO Census 2016)

Figure 3.1 Age Structure State 2016

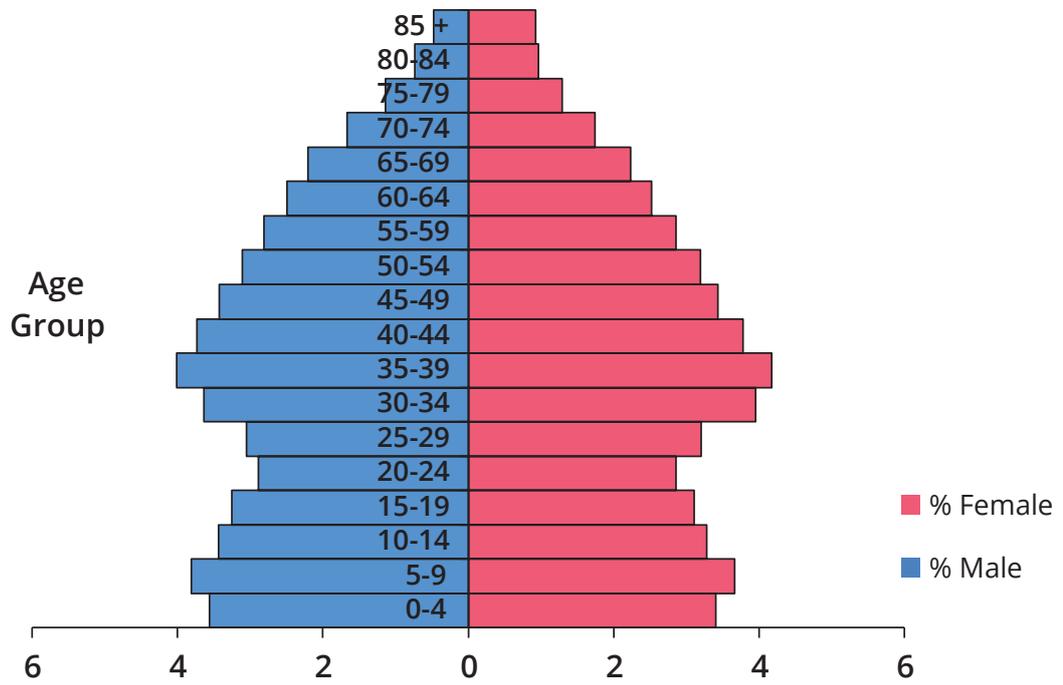
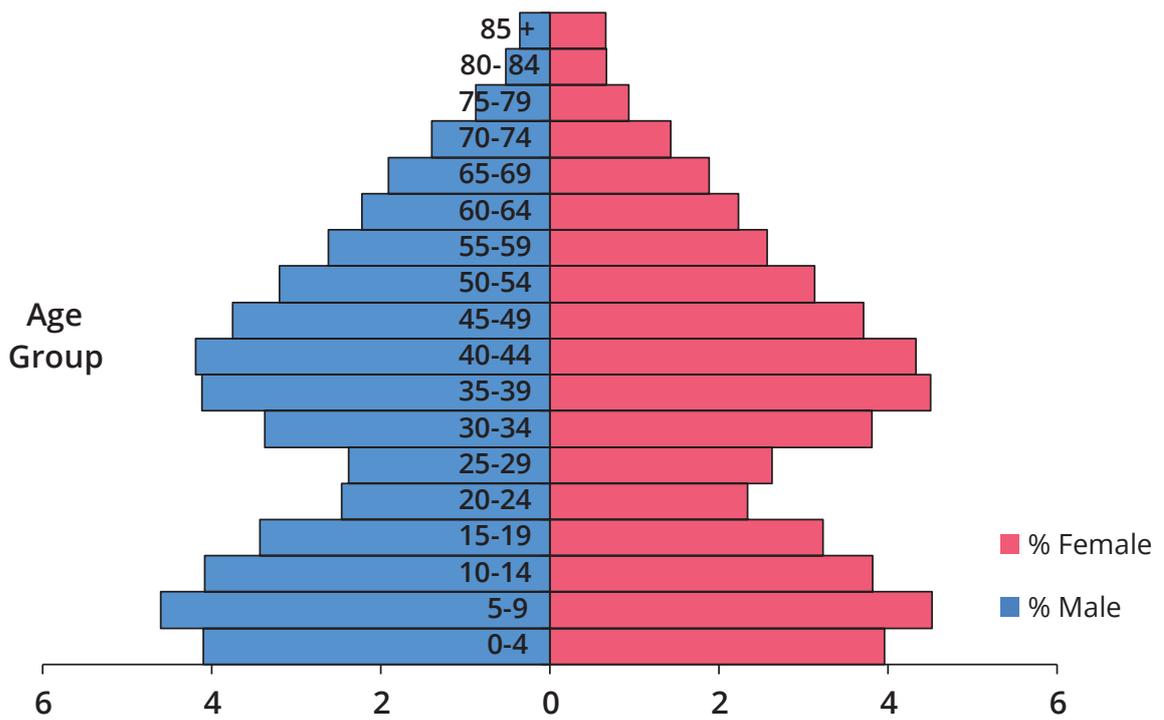


Figure 3.2 Age Structure Meath 2016



3.3.3 Employment

One of the underlying objectives of this Plan is to broaden the economic base of the County and increase employment in order to reduce the volume of outbound commuting and create more sustainable settlements. Whilst it is not uncommon for people to work in a different location than where they live; the distance travelled, the journey time, and mode of transport can have a considerable impact on quality of life and sustainability of the receiving environment at a macro and micro level.

At present there is an imbalance in Meath between the location of jobs and where people live. In 2016 there was a resident workforce of 82,605 persons in the County while the total number of jobs recorded in the County was 50% of this figure at 41,757. This equates to a Job: Resident Workforce of 0.505⁴, which is confirmation of the high volume of outbound

commuting for employment. Some of the key employment statistics for the County are set out in Table 3.3 below.

Labour force participation rate	64.2%
Resident workforce 2016	82,605
Total jobs 2016	41,757
Jobs: Resident Workers 2016	0.505
Outbound commuting 2016	55%

Table 3.3: Key Employment statistics Meath

POWSCAR data from Census 2016 provides useful information at a local level with regard to employment trends in settlements. Figure 3.1 overleaf sets out details of the resident workforce and number of jobs at a Municipal District (MD) level in 2016 whilst Figure 3.2 overleaf provides these details for the key settlements in the County.

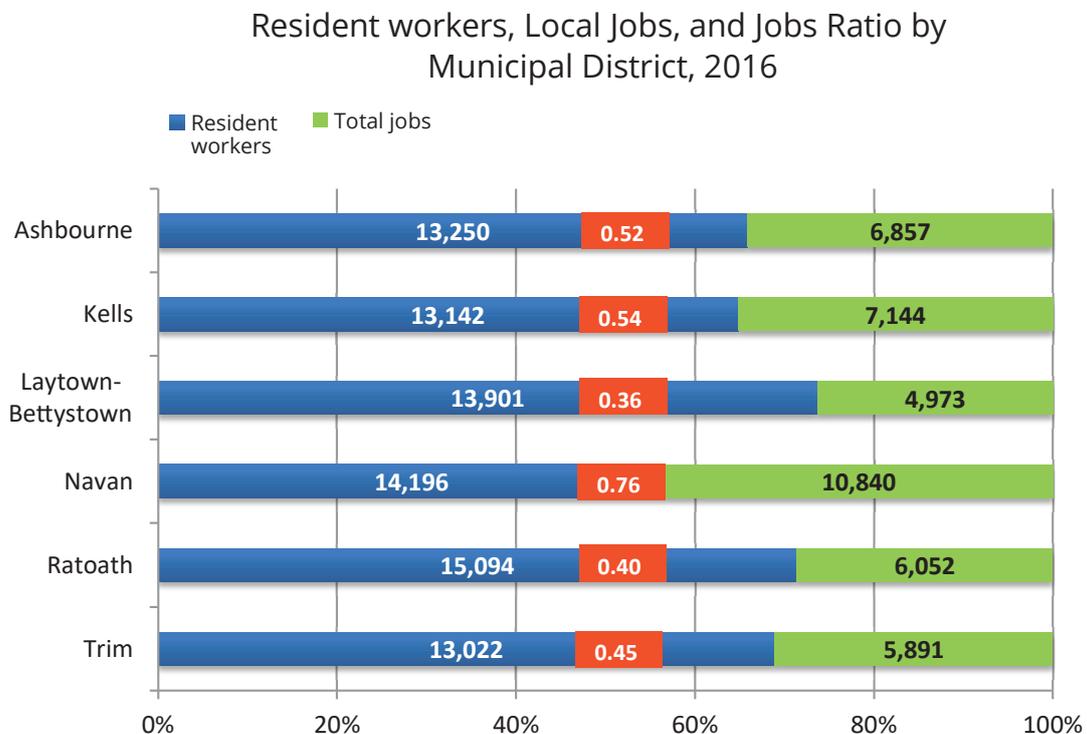


Fig. 3.3: Resident workers, Local Jobs, and Jobs Ratio in each Municipal District in Meath in 2016

⁴The 'Data and Indicators' section in the Appendices of the RSES indicates a Jobs:Resident workforce ratio of 0.7 or greater represents an area has a strong economic function.

Whilst the resident workforce in each Municipal District is broadly the same, it is clear that there is a disparity in the location of jobs between each Municipal District. As would be expected, the Navan MD has the highest proportion of jobs. What is of interest is the fact that the Kells MD, which is characterised as being rural in character, has the second highest number of

jobs in the County. With 3 of the 6 Municipal Districts in the County having a jobs:workforce ratio of less than 0.5, the dependence on outbound commuting for employment is evident. This is particularly prevalent in the Laytown-Bettystown MD where there is a jobs:workforce ratio of 0.36, which is the lowest in the County.

Resident Workers, Local Jobs, and Jobs Ratio 2016

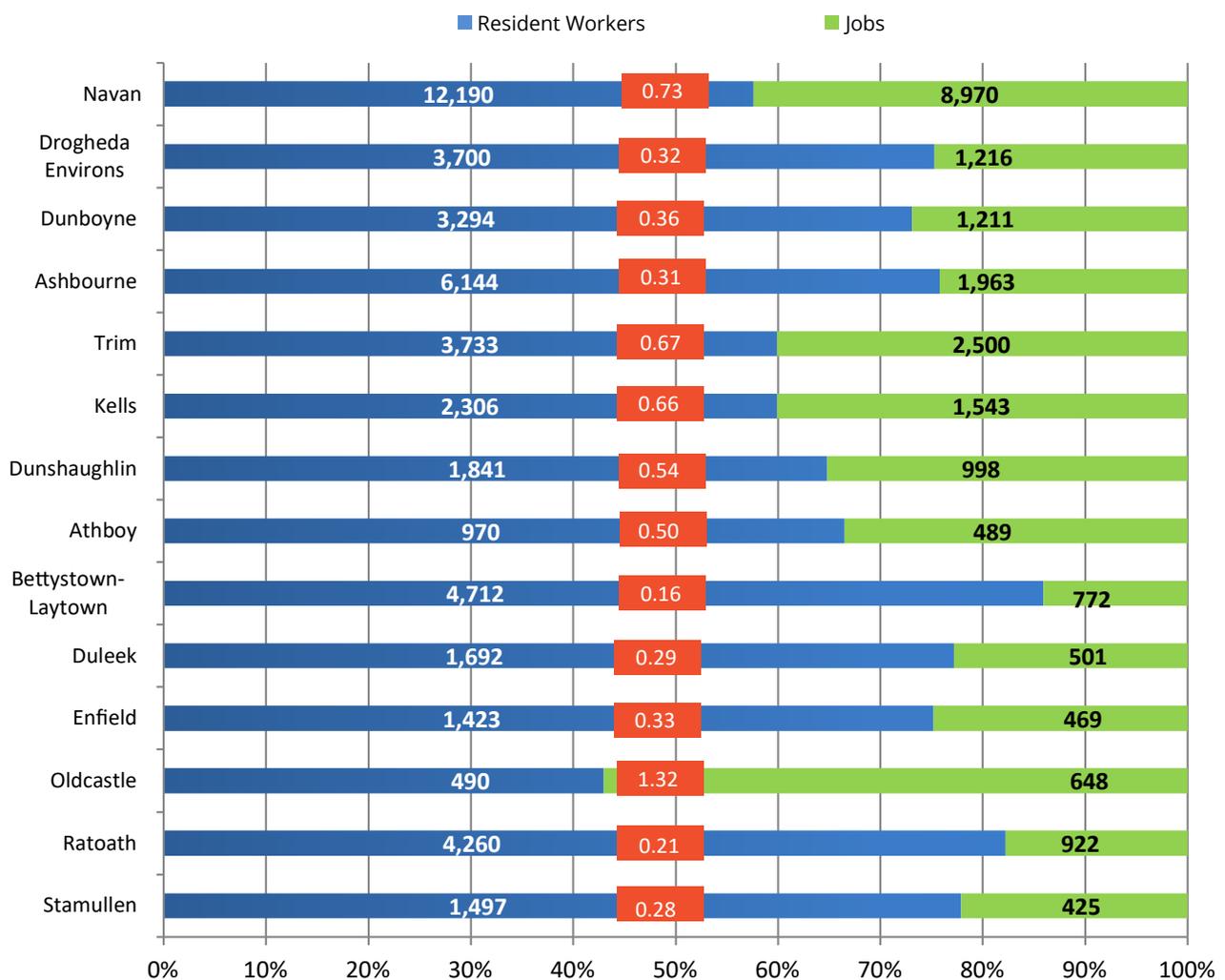


Fig. 3.4: Resident workers, Local Jobs, and Jobs Ratio in key settlements in Meath in 2016

An analysis of this data at a settlement level (as set out in Fig 3.4 on the previous page) confirms that Navan is the principal employment centre in the County with almost 9,000 jobs located in the town. This equates to 21.5% of the total jobs in the County. With 2,500 jobs and a jobs ratio of 0.67 Trim is the second largest centre for employment in the County.

The importance of Oldcastle as a centre of employment in its wider catchment is evident by the fact that it has a jobs ratio of 1.322. This is the only settlement in the County where there is a net in-flow of workers.

Ashbourne, South Drogheda and Dunboyne have a solid employment base however relative to the resident workforce in these towns the total number of jobs is quite low, resulting in each of these settlements having a jobs ratio of c.0.3. The strategic location of these towns adjacent to and within the Dublin Metropolitan Area (Ashbourne and Dunboyne) and along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor (South Drogheda) provides opportunities to increase employment and economic activity.

The settlements with the lowest jobs ratio are in the southern and eastern parts of the County where there are high volumes of outbound commuting towards Dublin for employment. This includes the East Meath settlements of Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington-Donacorney (Census Town) where the lack of any significant employment base has resulted in the town developing as a commuter settlement. Ratoath is also a settlement where the population has increased in the absence of any significant economic development.

3.4 Settlement Strategy

As part of the ambition to continue to secure

economic growth and increased productivity in the County it is essential there is a clear and coherent strategy in place outlining how and where this growth will take place. This Settlement Strategy will support the strengthening of urban structures and networks in the County and the creation of an attractive living and working environment that will make the County an attractive location for economic investment. It also recognises the complementary role of settlements in the County in supporting growth and providing services.

This Strategy will also attempt to address some of the challenges facing towns and villages which include job creation, town/village centre renewal, lack of amenities and services, sustainable transport, and pressure from commuter driven development.

3.4.1 Alignment of Settlement Strategy with the NPF and RSES

Placemaking, compact growth, active land management, and addressing the impact of climate change are some of the key themes of the growth strategy in both the NPF and RSES. There is also an underlying objective to create attractive and 'liveable' environments where more people will choose to live.

The Settlement Strategy of this Plan has taken cognisance of these themes and will support the implementation of the National and Regional Strategic Outcomes and Policy Objectives for population and settlement growth set out in the NPF and RSES.

As part of the strategy of aligning the spatial policy with the capital spending programme the Government established an Urban and Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF)

under Project Ireland 2040. These Funding Programmes aim to stimulate residential and commercial development in under-utilised lands and areas in towns and villages across the country. They are closely linked to the National Policy Objectives in the NPF with regard to:

- Strengthening urban structures.
- Encouraging population growth in strong employment and service centres of all sizes.
- Reversing the stagnation or decline of smaller urban centres, by identifying and establishing new roles and functions and enhancement of local infrastructure and amenities.
- Addressing the legacy of rapid unplanned growth, by facilitating amenities and services catch-up, jobs and/or improved sustainable transport links to cities, together with a slower rate of population growth in recently expanded commuter settlements.
- Supporting a continuation of balanced population and employment growth in self-contained settlements.

This Plan will follow these principles in its approach to urban development. To assist in the implementation of these policy objectives the Council has successfully obtained funding for various projects under the Urban and Rural Regeneration and Development Funds which will support urban regeneration, provide additional services and amenities, make town and village centre living more appealing, and make these areas more attractive for private investment.

3.4.1.1 Compact Growth

There is an objective in the NPF and RSES that

at least 30% of all new homes will be delivered within or close to the existing built up areas of settlements. The Council acknowledges the social and economic benefits of more compact settlements therefore this Plan will continue to support the sequential approach to the delivery of housing with priority given to infill development and the regeneration of brownfield sites. This will be achieved through an active land management strategy which includes:

- Continued proactive implementation of the Vacant Site Levy
- The identification of opportunity/under utilised lands
- The identification of potential constraints inhibiting the development of zoned lands
- Ongoing monitoring of the implementation of Planning permissions.

3.4.1.2 Sense of place

In addition to achieving compact growth, it is important that a sense of place is created in the local environment that strengthens the connection between people and the place they live and work. This will improve the interaction people have with local amenities, create a local identity, thereby assisting in building a community.

To assist in improving the sense of place in settlements, the Council has embarked on the preparation of a significant programme of public realm Plans. It is intended to implement these Plans over the life of this Plan.

Further details regarding the public realm and urban design standards are set out in sections 11.5 and 11.6 of Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives.

3.4.2 Settlement hierarchy

The RSES includes a settlement hierarchy which sets out the settlement structure for the Region. This settlement hierarchy identifies the Regional Growth Centres and Key Towns. The position of the remaining settlements in this hierarchy is to be established in the Development Plan process.

When grouping towns into each 'Settlement Type' consideration was given to recent trends in population, employment, and household growth, the level of services available in the settlements, and their ability and appropriateness to accommodate future growth. The settlement hierarchy for Meath is set out in Table 3.4 below.

Settlement Type	Description	Settlement
Regional Growth Centre	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.	South Drogheda Environs
Key Town	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.	Navan Maynooth
Self-Sustaining Growth Towns	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.	Dunboyne Ashbourne Dunshaughlin ⁵ Kells, Trim
Self-Sustaining Towns	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 Duleek Stamullen Kilcock
Towns and Villages	Towns and villages with local service and employment functions.	Towns – Athboy, Duleek, Oldcastle, Villages – Ballivor and 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, Summerhill

Table 3.4: Meath Settlement hierarchy

⁵ Section 3.4.8 of this Plan 'Self-Sustaining Growth Towns' sets out the reasons for including Dunshaughlin as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town in the Settlement Hierarchy

3.4.3 Future Settlement Growth

The primary focus of growth in this Settlement Strategy will be towards the Metropolitan Settlements (Dunboyne and Maynooth Environs), the Regional Growth Centre (Southern Environs of Drogheda), and the Key Town of Navan. The concentration of development in these locations will strengthen the urban structure of the County and support the creation of a critical mass of population in key locations which will assist in creating economies of scale for businesses, investors and infrastructure service providers whilst also providing opportunities to improve the level of community facilities available.

The Self-Sustaining Growth Towns have a solid employment base with capacity to accommodate further expansion. There will be a greater emphasis on achieving a greater balance between employment and population growth in these settlements. Rapidly growing settlements such as Ashbourne, which is the second largest town in the County, will continue to perform an important function in the provision and delivery of services on the edge of the Metropolitan Area.

The Self-Sustaining Towns in the County have experienced rapid population and household growth in the absence of supporting employment, services, and amenities proportionate to this growth. These settlements have developed as commuter towns and remain under considerable pressure for development.

The focus in these settlements will be on managing residential growth and ensuring there is a greater emphasis on consolidation and the delivery of employment land and social and physical infrastructure.

The Small Towns and Villages will continue to have an important function in supporting local growth and providing access to local services that will ensure the more rural parts of the County can continue to develop on a sustainable platform.

Chapter 9 of this Plan 'Rural Development Strategy' sets out the settlement policy in respect of rural areas in the County, including rural nodes.

3.4.4 Written Statement for each Settlement

As part of this Plan Written Statements and Land Use Zoning Maps have been prepared for all settlements in the Settlement Hierarchy (see Table 3.4)⁶. The Written Statements and Zoning Maps contained in Volume 2 of this Plan will inform these Local Area Plans.

3.4.5 Local Area Plans

There is a mandatory requirement under section 19 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), to prepare a Local Area Plan for the following settlements:

- Navan, The Southern Environs of Drogheda⁷, Dunboyne, Ashbourne, Kells, Trim, Ratoath, and the census town Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington East-Donacarne

In addition to the mandatory requirements under the Act regarding Local Area Plans, Planning Authorities can also prepare a Local Area Plan for any part of its functional area. In this regard it is also proposed to prepare a Local Area Plan for the following settlements:

- Athboy, Dunshaughlin, Duleek, Enfield, Oldcastle, and Stamullen

⁶ The Written Statements and Land Use Zoning Maps are in Volume 2 of this Plan.

⁷ As previously indicated a Joint Urban Area Plan for Drogheda is to be prepared in conjunction with Louth County Council.

The reasons a Local Area Plan is to be prepared for these settlements can be summarised as follows:

Athboy is a compact settlement with distinct heritage qualities. A Local Area Plan will provide an opportunity for a detailed strategy to be prepared that will identify specific uses and opportunities that will respect the historical value of the settlement. A public realm Plan is currently being prepared for the centre of the town which will be implemented over the life of this Plan.

Dunshaughlin is a settlement that is presently experiencing significant residential growth primarily due to its connectivity with Dublin via the M3. The settlement has benefitted from recent investments in water and waste water infrastructure. In addition the town is located along the route of the proposed future rail line to Navan. The Local Area Plan will focus on the facilitating employment growth, the delivery of road infrastructure facilitating access to the M3, and the provision of social and community amenities that will support the development of a balanced and sustainable settlement.

Duleek is an important settlement for enterprise and employment in the eastern part of the County that has the capacity to generate additional employment in the existing business park and facilitate residential growth on a number of infill sites. A detailed analysis of the potential opportunities for Duleek and how any future growth will be co-ordinated will be set out in a Local Area Plan.

Oldcastle is an important employment and service centre in north-west Meath with the highest jobs ratio in the County. The town has a catchment extending into the rural hinterland of Meath and neighbouring counties of Cavan and Westmeath. Oldcastle is a traditional market

town with an urban fabric of high quality. There are significant opportunities for the town to function as a tourism hub given its location proximate to Sliabh Na Calliagh. The Local Area Plan will focus on expanding the employment base of the town that will meet the needs of the local community and surrounding hinterland. A public realm Plan is being prepared for the centre of the town which will be implemented over the life of this Plan.

Enfield is located on a multi-modal corridor with excellent road and rail access to Dublin via the M4 motorway and the Dublin-Longford commuter rail line. This infrastructure provides an opportunity to develop the employment base of Enfield based on the principles of sustainable transport provision. A Local Area Plan is required to identify future infrastructural requirements in the town and to set out a coherent growth strategy.

Stamullen is strategically located along the international Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. It is a local service centre that performs an important economic function to the local community. A Local Area Plan will focus on strengthening the employment base in the town and improving the accessibility of the town to the M1 via the City North Business Park and identifying a long term solution to waste water constraints.

3.4.6 Regional Growth Centre

Drogheda has been identified as 1 of 3 Regional Growth Centres in the Eastern and Midland Region in the NPF. It is a settlement with significant growth potential due to its location along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, the existing service and employment provision in the town, and its capacity to accommodate further growth.

The RSES sets out a strategic framework for Drogheda that will support the continued development of the town and allow it to function as a driver for regional growth. This growth strategy includes a population target of 50,000 for the town by 2031.

The Southern Environs of Drogheda is located in Meath. In 2016 this area had a population of 6,527, which was 16% of the total population (40,956).

In recognition of the importance of preparing a coherent and co-ordinated strategy that will ensure the town can develop to its maximum potential, the RSES requires the preparation of a Joint Urban Area Plan (UAP) for Drogheda by Meath County Council and Louth County Council.⁸

The RSES recognises the contribution that the Southern Environs of Drogheda can make to the economic development and the creation of a sustainable community due to the availability of enterprise and employment lands in strategic locations close to residential areas.

3.4.7 Key Towns

Key Towns are settlements with a strong employment base and a broad range of services that serve a wide catchment area. Navan has been identified as the Key Town in Meath in the RSES. It is the County town and primary retail and employment centre. In 2016 over 20% of all jobs in Meath were located in Navan.

One of the key objectives of this Plan is to attract further economic investment to Navan in order to strengthen its position as a primary centre for employment in the County. It is recognised that 'Placemaking' can make a significant contribution to attracting investment by enhancing the urban environment and

improving the interaction people have with the local environment. In this regard the Council recently published a public realm plan and public transport strategy for the town 'Navan 2030' which sets out a strategy for the renewal of the town centre together with public transport improvements. In addition the Council was successful in a number of funding applications under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund that will reinvigorate the urban core of the town. This includes the Flowerhill Regeneration Project, Railway Street Regeneration Project and County archive, and a housing focused Active Land Management Project.

Whilst Navan is well connected to Dublin via the motorway network and a frequent bus service, improvements in connectivity are essential to the economic development of the town. There is no rail service to Navan at present, however as part of the 6-year review of the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-35, the National Transport Authority has committed to reviewing the requirement for the extension of the railway from the M3 Parkway to Navan in the Transport Strategy for the GDA 2016-35. The advancement of the delivery of this rail line is a key objective of this Plan. The RSES recognises the importance of this project in the economic development of the town and therefore supports its implementation.⁹

Maynooth is also identified as a Key Town in the RSES. Whilst the town is located within the administrative boundary of Kildare County Council, there are Environs lands along its northern boundary located in County Meath. These lands are considered to be a natural extension to the town.

In order to ensure a co-ordinated approach is undertaken to the future development of

⁸ Regional Policy Objective 4.11 of the RSES sets out the requirements for the Joint Urban Area Plan

⁹ Table 8.2 Rail Projects for the Region

Maynooth Regional Policy Objective 4.35 of the RSES requires that a Joint Local Area Plan is prepared by Meath and Kildare County Council.¹⁰

The Maynooth Environs lands will be a focal point for employment and complementary residential uses. The development of these lands will facilitate the delivery of the Maynooth Outer Relief Road (MOOR) which is strongly supported in the RSES. This is a critical piece of infrastructure in the future growth and development of Maynooth.

3.4.8 Self-Sustaining Growth Towns

Self-Sustaining Growth Towns are those settlements that have a solid employment base and a broad range of services and have the capacity to accommodate additional growth on a sustainable platform.

There are 5 settlements in the County identified in this category; Dunboyne, Ashbourne, Kells, Trim, and Dunshaughlin. The Metropolitan settlement of Dunboyne is a strategically important settlement in Meath. It is an important centre for economic growth in the County due to its location in the Dublin Metropolitan Area and along a multi-modal corridor. The town has enjoyed recent successes in attracting inward investment. 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 with strategically located lands zoned for residential use in proximity to the rail stations available for development.

Ashbourne is the second largest town in the County. The rapid expansion of the town from a

small village to a large urban centre is primarily related to its proximity to Dublin Airport and Dublin City Centre. The completion of the new town centre development in Ashbourne has significantly improved the retail provision in the town.

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. This Plan identifies the strategic importance of Ashbourne and will support and facilitate industry, employment, and enterprise in the settlement as it continues its transition to a Metropolitan Centre.

As part of the future growth strategy for Ashbourne and to improve connectivity with Dublin City Centre it is an objective of this Plan to explore the feasibility of providing a rail link to Ashbourne as part of Phase II of the Navan Rail Project.¹¹

Kells and Trim have a unique cultural and built heritage and are accordingly designated heritage settlements. They are important tourist destinations in the County. Both settlements have strong links with the principal economic centre of Navan. Kells is an important centre for local enterprise and employment. The designation of the Kells Municipal District as a Regional Economic Development Zone (REDZ) has had a positive impact on employment and enterprise activity in the town.

With a 'Jobs:Resident Workforce' ratio of 0.67 and 2,500 jobs in 2016, Trim is the second largest centre for employment in the County behind Navan. It is an objective of this Plan

¹⁰ Regional Policy Objective 4.35 of the RSES

¹¹ See objective MOV OBJ 3(b) in Chapter 5 Movement Strategy **

to continue to maximise the number of local job opportunities in Trim during the life of this Plan. It will also support the investment in and expansion of the tourist product in the town.

Dunshaughlin is an important growth town in south Meath that benefits from strong road links to Dublin due to its proximity to the M3. Whilst there is a frequent bus service to the capital the car remains the predominant mode of transport. The town has a strong employment base with potential for future expansion. The population growth of the town would support the delivery of the Navan rail project as it would provide a critical mass of population along the rail line. The delivery of this rail project is a key element in supporting the sustainable growth of the town.

The town is in the unique position of having benefitted from significant investment in water and waste water infrastructure. The front loading of these services alongside upgrades to the local network has created significant capacity in this infrastructure to accommodate medium-long term growth.

Residential activity in Dunshaughlin is buoyant with a significant number of active residential sites in the town at the time of writing. In addition An Bord Pleanála granted a Strategic Housing Development for 913 residential units on the northern side of the town in April 2019.

Future development in Dunshaughlin will focus on the completion of existing developments currently under construction and the build out of the units granted under the Strategic Housing Development. In addition support will be given to the creation of additional employment opportunities in the town alongside necessary services to ensure the development of the town takes place on a sustainable platform. Additional local road infrastructure will be required to

address localised access issues and in particular securing a more direct link to the M3 Motorway.

3.4.9 Self-Sustaining Towns

The Self-Sustaining Towns in the County vary in size, built form, and service provision. The location of these settlements has influenced their growth rate and function. The settlements in the commuter area of Dublin have experienced higher levels of growth and have the characteristics of dormitory settlements due to the high levels of outbound travel for employment. Growth in the more peripheral settlements has been largely based on local growth.

Ratoath, Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington East-Donacarne, Enfield, Kilcock, and Stamullen have all developed on the basis of outbound commuting to Dublin. The highest levels of growth have been in Ratoath and the East Meath settlements. Social and physical infrastructure and employment provision in these settlements has struggled to keep pace with population growth.

Future development in these settlements will generally be focused towards local growth with appropriately sized employment and enterprise encouraged in order to assist in the creation of more sustainable communities. A strategic employment site has been identified in Laytown adjacent to the train station in order to provide a focus for addressing the employment deficiencies in this area.

Ratoath received LIHAF funding to assist in the delivery of a section of the Outer Relief Road. This section of road is currently under construction and when completed will facilitate the release of lands for residential development in the south-eastern part of the town.

The completion of this Outer Relief Road has been a Local Area Plan objective for a number of years. There is an opportunity to maximise the investment in this LIHAF funded infrastructure by facilitating the completion of this Outer Relief Road and complete the link between the R125 and R155. This will be achieved by zoning additional lands for residential development and requiring that the remainder of this link road is delivered as part of the development of these lands.

There is also an opportunity to provide additional employment opportunities in Ratoath by supporting the integration of existing major equestrian facilities with the town. To facilitate such economic investment a strategic employment site has been identified and will be strongly promoted from an economic and employment creation perspective.

In general, it is envisaged that growth in the Self-Sustaining Towns will expand at a sustainable rate in line with the availability of local services and infrastructure. Employment and economic opportunities will be supported at appropriate locations where they are of a nature and scale proportionate to the size and service availability in the town. Retail development will be primarily in the convenience category, with small supermarkets and local centres serving the town and its local catchment area only.

3.4.10 Towns and Villages

Below the Self-Sustaining Towns are towns that are experiencing lower levels of population growth that is primarily based on locally based growth. These towns perform important employment and service functions in their surrounding area.

Athboy and Oldcastle are important service

centres in the western parts of the County. Athboy has a strong retail base that serves an extensive hinterland. It is also an important centre for local employment and community activities.

Oldcastle is a historic market town that has a strong tradition in the manufacturing industry that includes furniture and engineering. Another important employment sector in the town is the service industry. Similar to Athboy, Oldcastle has an extensive catchment that stretches into the neighbouring counties of Cavan and Westmeath.

Whilst Duleek has experienced commuter-led development, employment in the town has also grown through the expansion of the Business Park. The continued expansion of the Business Park will be encouraged in order to provide a greater proportion of employment locally, consistent with its role as a small town.

The Villages in the County vary in size with a population ranging from c.200 to in excess of 1,000 people. They provide important local community and retail services with smaller scale rural enterprises also present in a number of villages. The level of service and catchment population of the villages is smaller than that of the towns further up the settlement hierarchy.

The future development of these villages will be focused on organic growth only that primarily serves the local population. There will be a strong emphasis on brownfield and infill development delivering this growth. Any development in villages, within commuting distance of Dublin, will be managed so as to avoid unsustainable travel patterns. These are primarily the villages in the south and east of the County including Longwood, Rathmoylon, Donore, Julianstown, Clonard, and Kentstown.

In the more remote areas of the County

there are key villages that perform a more important function due to their distance from the larger settlements. These villages operate as rural service centres and have a vital role in sustaining rural communities. Such villages include Carlanstown, Rathcairn, and Baile Ghib. This Plan will support locally based services and enterprise in these villages whilst residential development shall meet the needs of local growth.

In order to retain the distinct character of these villages, any future development shall be of a character and scale reflective of the village in question.

The villages of Baile Ghib and Rathcairn are the only Gaeltacht settlements in the County. Any future development in these adjacent villages shall reflect the distinctive character of these areas and will support the Irish language.

Further details are contained in Chapter 9 Rural

Development Strategy and Volume 2.

Below Villages in the Settlement Hierarchy are Rural Nodes. The strategy for Rural Nodes is set out in Chapter 9, Rural Development Strategy.¹²

3.5 Tiered Land Use Zoning

The NPF advocates close co-ordination between infrastructure agencies and Planning Authorities when zoning land for development. This will result in a standardised methodology that will differentiate between zoned land that is available for development and zoned land that requires significant further investment in services and infrastructure for development to be realised.¹³ This two tier approach to land zoning is as follows:

Tier 1: Serviced Zoned Land
These are lands that are either serviced or can connect to existing services.
Tier 2: Serviceable Zoned Land
These are lands that are not currently sufficiently serviced to accommodate new development but have the potential to become fully serviced during the life of the Plan.

It is anticipated that further guidance on this approach to land use zoning will be set out in detail in the updated Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities.¹⁴

An analysis of all undeveloped lands zoned for employment and residential uses in each settlement to identify any potential infrastructure constraints inhibiting lands from being developed has been carried out.

3.6 Plan Land Use Zoning in each settlement

A Land Use Zoning Map has been prepared for each settlement included in the settlement hierarchy. These maps illustrate the location and extent of zoned lands in each settlement.

The quantum of lands zoned for residential uses is reflective of the population projection and

¹² List of the Rural Nodes in the County are set out in section 9.4.4

¹³ Appendix 3 of the NPF set out the Methodology for the tiered approach to land use zoning

¹⁴ At the time of writing the updated Development Plan Guidelines had not been published

household allocation for each settlement as set out in the Core Strategy.

In settlements where a surplus of residential land remains, lands have been prioritised based on their location, the availability of services, and the likelihood of the lands being developed within the lifetime of the Plan. A reserve of residential lands not available for development until after 2026 has been provided in settlements where there are fundamental reasons, supported by national and regional policy that would support the requirement to phase such lands. These 'Post 2026' lands have been identified in Dunboyne, Navan, Dunshaughlin, and Kilcock Environs.¹⁵

Through the implementation of the active land management strategy with particular reference to the Vacant Site Levy, the Council will be supporting promoting the regeneration/development of infill and brownfield site and the development of key strategic green field sites.

Whilst the Council advocates a sequential approach to development this is not always possible due to lands not being brought forward for development. This can lead to instances where there are strategically located sites close to town centres and public transport remaining undeveloped. There are various reasons for such lands not being developed including lack of impetus from land owners, lack of finance, and infrastructure deficits.

This presents a challenge for the Council with regard to quantifying the residential land requirement for the particular settlement. The RSES recognises that there are instances where such strategic sites are not being brought forward for development and recommends that Planning Authorities should not place an *"unreasonable dependency"* on these lands delivering development where this would

impede other suitable lands with more prospect of being developed in the short term.¹⁶

In settlements where there are challenges in releasing such strategic lands, the Council will continue to support the development of these lands through its active land management strategy. In instances where this has arisen, the quantum of residential lands identified for development has taken account of the fact that certain lands may not be developed during the life of the Plan in order to ensure there are sufficient lands, likely to be brought forward for development, to meet the projected population growth.

3.7 The Settlement Hierarchy and Future Population Growth in Meath

The Settlement Strategy in this Plan is consistent with the approach set out in the NPF and RSES in that it will encourage consolidation of existing urban centres with an emphasis on delivering more compact growth. It supports the creation of sustainable 'live work' communities whilst also maximising on recent investment in physical and social infrastructure. The larger settlements at the top of the settlement hierarchy will receive the greatest proportion of growth, with development in smaller towns and villages primarily focused on local growth.

An emphasis on the consolidation of growth in the Metropolitan Area is also a key element of this Strategy, with 14.5% of the total population growth to be directed to the Metropolitan Area.

Navan, the Southern Environs of Drogheda, and

¹⁵ See Table 2.4 in the Core Strategy for further details

¹⁶ Section 4.3 of the RSES 'Taking Account of Existing Plans'

Dunboyne are strategically located settlements within the County and are important centres for enterprise and employment. These settlements have the potential to make a significant contribution to the delivery of housing in the County in the medium term with a substantial quantity of “ready to go” serviced lands available for development. An example of such lands is in the Farganstown area of Navan where LIHAF funding will support the delivery of up to 1,600 residential units in the long term.

An incremental, sequential approach will be taken to the development of these settlements that will support the long term objective of achieving a population of 50,000 in Navan and Drogheda and 25,000 in Dunboyne.

The future expansion of the Self-Sustaining Growth Towns other than Dunboyne will be more moderate than Navan and Drogheda and will focus on the delivery of social and physical infrastructure in tandem with residential growth and employment. Ashbourne and Dunshaughlin are two Self-Sustaining growth settlements that have the capacity to absorb further growth.

Ashbourne’s link to Dublin Airport and Dublin City Centre provides a solid basis for the settlement continuing to expand. There will be a stronger emphasis on the provision of employment and necessary social and physical infrastructure with any continued residential growth.

Dunshaughlin is strategically located along the route of Phase II of the Dublin-Navan Rail Line. In this regard, it is considered appropriate to provide for the future growth and expansion of the town on the basis that it will be located along a sustainable rail based corridor in the future. Dunshaughlin has also benefitted from recent upgrades in water and wastewater infrastructure that will facilitate future

population and employment growth.

In the Self-Sustaining Towns there will be a strong focus on consolidation and strengthening the employment base and improving services which will support the creation of more balanced and sustainable communities. The level of growth in the Towns and Villages will be primarily focused on local growth proportionate to the size of the settlement rather than commuter driven development.

The consolidation of these settlements will provide a greater focus on the provision of necessary services that would facilitate the creation of sustainable communities. Residential development in these settlements will be modest in scale and will have regard to the scale of existing development in the settlement.

Settlement Strategy Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

SH POL 1

To ensure that all settlements, in as far as practicable, develop in a self-sufficient manner with population growth occurring in tandem with the provision of physical and social infrastructure.

SH POL 2

To promote the consolidation of existing settlements and the creation of compact urban forms through the utilisation of infill and brownfield lands in preference to edge of centre locations.

SH POL 3

To support the creation of healthy and sustainable communities that encourages and facilitates walking and cycling and general physical activity through the implementation of best practices in urban design that promotes permeability and interconnecting spaces.

Settlement Strategy Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

SH OBJ 1

To secure the implementation of the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy, in so far as practicable, by directing growth towards designated settlements, subject to the availability of infrastructure and services.

SH OBJ 2

To ensure that sufficient zoned lands are available to satisfy the housing requirements of the County over the lifetime of the Plan.

SH OBJ 3

To ensure the implementation of the population and housing growth allocations set out in the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy.

SH OBJ 4

To operate an Order of Priority for the release and development of residential lands with any lands identified as being 'Post 2026' not available for development until after 2026.

SH OBJ 5

To prepare new local area Plans for the following settlements within the lifetime of this Plan: Navan, Dunboyne/Dunboyne North/Clonee, Ashbourne, Kells, Trim, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington East-Donacarneymornington, Oldcastle, Athboy, Duleek, and Stamullen.

SH OBJ 6

The existing Southern Environs of Drogheda Local Area Plan 2009 (The LAP) shall remain the statutory plan for the Southern Environs of Drogheda until such a time as it is replaced with a Joint Urban Plan for Drogheda in conjunction with Louth County Council having regard to the requirements of the Report of the Drogheda Boundary Review Committee (February 2017), the National Planning Framework, and the Eastern and Midland Region Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. This plan shall be read together with the County Development Plan 2020-2026. The County Development Plan 2020-2026 shall take precedence if a conflict arises between the Plans and the conflicting provision of the LAP shall cease to have effect.

SH OBJ 7

To prepare a Joint Vision and Urban Area Plan for Drogheda in partnership with Louth County Council within the lifetime of this Plan in accordance with the requirements of Regional Policy Objective 4.11 of the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region.

SH OBJ 8

To prepare a Joint Vision and Local Area Plan for Maynooth in partnership with Kildare County Council within the lifetime of this Plan in accordance with the requirements of Regional Policy Objective 4.35 of the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region.

SH OBJ 9

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.

SH OBJ 10

To ensure that in Villages no single application on a defined parcel of land shall increase the existing housing stock by more than 15%.

SH OBJ 11

To continue to support the transition of Ashbourne towards a Metropolitan Settlement by supporting its development as an enterprise and employment hub and by strengthening links and connectivity between Ashbourne and Dublin Airport and City Centre and the wider Metropolitan Area.

SH OBJ 12

To support the preparation of a feasibility study exploring the potential of a future rail spur off the Navan-Dublin Rail line from Dunshaughlin to serve Ashbourne and Ratoath.

3.8 Housing

3.8.1 Introduction

The delivery of housing in the appropriate location and the creation of attractive neighbourhoods with a range of housing options and a strong sense of place and community are key objectives of this Plan.

It is recognised that the availability and supply of housing to meet the required demand is a critical element in maintaining the competitiveness of the County and its attractiveness as a place to live and invest.

This section of the Settlement Strategy sets out the framework for the provision of housing over the lifetime of the Plan.

3.8.2 Challenges in the Delivery of Housing

One of the consequences of the recession was a dramatic decline in the output of housing, particularly in urban areas where a demand has remained. Following a prolonged period of undersupply there is a 'pent up' demand for housing, which has resulted in increased house prices, rents, and homelessness across the country. The Government has responded to these challenges with legislative changes and policy initiatives which are intended to stimulate development and increase the supply of housing.

3.8.2.1 Legislation changes and Policy Initiatives

The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 resulted in significant changes to the social housing requirement under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. This included the removal of the options for developers to fulfil Part V obligations by making a financial contribution or making land available outside the development site. The social housing obligation was lowered from 20% to 10% for developments of 10 or more units. A Vacant Site Levy was also introduced under this legislation. A Housing Action Plan 'Re-Building Ireland – An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness' was published in 2016. This set out a series of measures and targets by the Government that aims to increase and accelerate the delivery of housing across the country.

There is a target to double the annual level of construction to 25,000 units by 2020 and to deliver 47,000 units of social housing up to 2021.

In order to assist in the delivery of these units a Local Infrastructure Housing Activation

Fund (LIHAF) was established. This is a €200 million fund that will contribute towards the construction of critical public infrastructure required to deliver housing on key development sites across the country. The Council has received funding for the construction of a Distributor Road in Navan that will release lands with a potential to deliver 1,600 units and a section of an Outer Relief Road in Ratoath that will open up lands with a potential to deliver 370 units.

In recognition of the continued increase in rental properties Rent Pressure Zones have been identified in areas where rents are above average national rent level or have experienced significant rental inflation in excess of 7% in four of the last six quarters. The legislative requirements for designating a Rent Pressure Zone are set out in the Residential Tenancies Act 2004 (as amended). At the time of writing all Local Electoral Areas in Meath (i.e. the entire County) have been designated as a Rent Pressure Zone.¹⁷

Within areas designated as a Rent Pressure Zone legislation has been introduced requiring planning permission where a person intends to let their property for short-term letting purposes.¹⁸

As part of a strategy of streamlining the planning process to speed up the delivery of housing the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016¹⁹ introduced, for a limited period, arrangements for fast track planning applications for strategic housing developments (SHDs) of 100 or more housing units, student accommodation of 200 or more bed spaces, or shared accommodation developments of 200 or more bed spaces, to be made directly to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

¹⁷ A list of all Rent Pressure Zones in the country can be accessed from this link: [Rent Pressure Zones July 2019](#)

¹⁸ Section 38 of the Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2019

¹⁹ Section 3 of the Planning and Development and Residential Tenancies Act 2016 sets out the provisions for Strategic Housing Developments

The Design Standards for New Apartments were updated in 2018, with the amendments striving to enable a mix of apartment types, make better provision for building refurbishment and infill schemes, and address the emerging 'build to rent' and 'shared accommodation' sectors.

Rebuilding Ireland seeks to improve the rental sector by striving to make rent more affordable and creating an attractive, viable, and sustainable private rented sector. As part of this strategy 'Build to Rent' and 'Shared Accommodation' have emerged.

'Build to Rent' developments are large scale developments that have the potential to deliver residential accommodation at a pace and scale significantly greater than that of the more traditional developers.

'Shared accommodation or 'Co-Living' consists of professionally managed rental accommodation where individual rooms are rented within an overall development that includes access to shared or communal facilities and amenities.

The Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities published in 2018 build on the strategic policy framework set out in the NPF which supports higher densities and more compact urban growth.

3.8.2.2 Housing supply in Meath

As the economy continues to recover, housing output in the County is showing signs of normalisation, with year on year increases in the number of completed units.

3.8.3 Meath County Housing Strategy

The preparation of a Housing Strategy is a mandatory requirement under Part V of

the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The purpose of a Housing Strategy is to evaluate the housing needs of the existing and future population in the County.

National Policy Objective 37 of the NPF requires a Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) to be carried out for each Local Authority Area.²⁰ This assessment will evaluate the number of additional housing units required to meet existing and future demand. At the time of writing this Plan no guidance documents or relevant data or associated projections has been provided to assist Local Authorities in the preparation of a HNDA. Until these guidance documents become available the Housing Strategy will continue to inform Housing Policy in the County.

The Meath County Housing Strategy is closely aligned with the Core Strategy in that the future housing need is based on the population and household projections outlined in the Core Strategy. The Strategy is also informed by the most recent Social Housing Needs Assessment for Meath in addition to National Housing Policy publications including '*The Social Housing Strategy 2020 – Support, Supply, and Reform (2014)*', and '*Rebuilding Ireland – Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness (2016)*'.

The Strategy includes an analysis of housing requirements in the context of affordability and addresses the need to ensure that housing is available for persons with different levels of income. It also assesses the mix of house types and sizes (including accommodation for the elderly and persons with disabilities) and highlights the need to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds.

The Housing Strategy estimates that there will be a requirement for 1,397 social and affordable units between 2020 and 2026.

²⁰ National Policy Objective 37 of the NPF

The mechanisms for delivering social housing include the following:

- Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
- Direct construction by Local Authorities or in partnership with Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs).
- Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), Social Housing Lease Initiatives and Housing Assistance Payments (HAPs).
- Purchase of new or second-hand residential units.
- Casual vacancies.

The full version of the Housing Strategy can be found in Appendix 4 of this Plan. A review of the Housing Strategy will be carried out as part of the mandatory Two Year Development Plan review.

The Council is seeking to prioritise the delivery of social housing in a number of settlements where a combination of high demand, limited and/or no suitable land in Council ownership and difficulties in acquisition of land are all factors inhibiting supply. Taking this into account an objective supporting the delivery of social housing in addition to that required by Part V will be included in the Written Statement for Ashbourne, Dunboyne, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, and Trim in Volume 2 of this Plan.

Housing Strategy Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

SH POL 4

To promote social integration and the provision of a range of dwelling types in residential developments that would

encourage a mix of tenure, particularly in any State funded house building programmes.

SH POL 5

To secure a mix of housing types and sizes, including single storey properties, particularly in larger developments to meet the needs of different categories of households.

SH POL 6

To support the provision of accommodation for older people and for people with disabilities that would allow for independent and semi-independent living in locations that are proximate to town and village centres and services and amenities such as shops, local healthcare facilities, parks and community centres.

Housing Strategy Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

SH OBJ 13

To secure the implementation of the Meath Housing Strategy 2020-2026.

SH OBJ 14

To support the delivery of social housing in Meath in accordance with the Council's Social Housing Delivery Programme

and Government Policy as set out in Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness.

SH OBJ 15

To apply a 10% social housing requirement, pursuant to Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, to land zoned for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, except where the development would be exempted from this requirement.

SH OBJ 16

To address the identified need to increase the supply of social housing in Trim, Ashbourne, Ratoath, Dunboyne, Dunshaughlin by seeking the provision of social housing additional to that required by way of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, subject to funding.

SH OBJ 17

To review the Housing Strategy two years after the adoption of the Development Plan as part of the mandatory Two Year Development Plan review.

SH OBJ 18

To implement the 'Meath County Council Traveller Accommodation Programme

2019-2024' and any subsequent programme adopted during the lifetime of the Development Plan.

SH OBJ 19

To support the provision of accommodation that would satisfy the requirements of people with a disability and the implementation of the 'Strategic Plan for Housing Persons with Disabilities 2016-2019' and any subsequent Plan adopted during the lifetime of the Development Plan.

SH OBJ 20

To support the implementation of the Mid-East Regional Homeless Action Plan 2018-2020 and any other subsequent Homeless Action Plans adopted during the lifetime of the County Development Plan.

3.8.4 Vacant Site Levy – Residential and Regeneration Lands

Construction 2020, published in 2014, focused on facilitating increased activity in the construction sector, and in particular residential construction, in order to meet the demand for housing and contribute to the economic recovery. Action 23 of this Strategy focused on how to incentivise the use of vacant and underutilised sites in urban areas.

This culminated in the publication of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act in 2015 which provided for the introduction of a Vacant Site

Levy. The intention of this levy is to incentivise the development of vacant sites in urban areas for residential and regeneration purposes.

The levy will support the implementation of the Development Plan and Core Strategy objectives, particularly in respect of promoting the renewal and regeneration of urban areas, ensuring a compact urban form and sustainable growth patterns, and in achieving the household allocations and meeting the housing needs of the County.

The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act set out two broad categories of vacant land that the levy may apply to:

- i) Lands zoned primarily for residential purposes
- ii) Lands in need of regeneration

3.8.5 Lands zoned for residential purposes

The following zonings will be applicable to the 'residential' category:

- i) A1 'Existing Residential'
- ii) A2 'New Residential'
- iii) B1 'Commercial/Town or Village Centre'
- iv) C1 'Mixed Use'

3.8.6 Lands in need of regeneration

It is an objective of this Plan to support the regeneration of land and buildings. For the purposes of this Plan the 'Regeneration' lands, as defined under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, applies to the following zonings:

- i) B1 'Commercial/Town or Village Centre'

ii) C1 'Mixed Use'

The implementation of the Vacant Site Levy requires the Council to identify sites in the County which are vacant and come within the scope of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended). Any sites identified are to be entered on a Vacant Sites Register that is to be monitored by the Council. The amount of the Vacant Site Levy is set out in section 16 of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended) and shall be equal to 7% of the market value of the site for 2019 and subsequent years (unless otherwise revised).

At the time of writing there were 20 sites on the Vacant Sites Register in Meath.²¹ The Register can be viewed by clicking on this [link](#).

Vacant Site Levy Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

SH OBJ 21

To promote the development of vacant residential and regeneration sites in all development centres in the County, as appropriate, in accordance with the requirements of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended).

3.8.7 Sustainable Communities

The Institute of Sustainable Communities defines a sustainable community as one *"that is economically, environmentally, and socially healthy and resilient."*²³

Common elements of a sustainable community include:

²¹ November 2019

²³ Key elements of a Sustainable Community

- Healthy and safe surroundings in which the needs of everyone are met.
- A strong economy with employment opportunities.
- An environment that is appreciated.

The creation of a sustainable community can be achieved through well designed buildings and spaces, which promote social interaction, ensure ease of access, and create an open and safe environment. An attractive and well maintained environment also creates a sense of identity that promotes a sense of community in a local neighbourhood.

This Plan continues to promote the development of sustainable communities by supporting a suitable mix of housing units, services, employment, community facilities, and associated infrastructure in appropriate locations.

A key element of a sustainable community is the provision of social and recreational amenities. As the population of settlements increase, existing facilities can sometimes struggle with the associated increased demands on these amenities. In order to ensure there is an appropriate provision of such facilities and amenities it is a requirement of this Plan that a Social Infrastructure Assessment is included with planning applications for the development of 50 units or more. This Assessment will be required to determine whether or not existing social and recreational facilities are sufficient to cater for the needs of the future residents of the development. (Please refer to Chapter 7 Community Building Strategy for full requirements in respect of Social Infrastructure Audit).

3.8.7.1 Live-Work Communities

As part of the spatial implementation of the Economic Development Strategy 2014-22 the

Council has piloted and targeted the creation of 'live work' communities in designated towns at the upper end of the settlement hierarchy. This is a more integrated approach to settlement growth which promotes the location of employment close to residential areas and services such as schools and shops. Dunboyne North and Farganstown in Navan are two examples of locations in the County where the Council is supporting the delivery of the 'live work' community model.

As stated, these 'live work' communities are targeted particularly towards the larger settlements in the County. There are a number of benefits to the implementation of this model, some of which are as follows:

- A reduced travel time to work which results in people having more time to participate in local activities, which improves the level of social interaction and the sense of community in settlements.
- Improved health and quality of life. If people are working near their home they are more inclined to walk/cycle to work and participate in other physical activities.
- Fewer cars travelling long distances reduces congestion which benefits the environment and reduces the carbon footprint of the County.

By providing a mix of house types in these communities there is a greater capacity for people to buy a house that suits their needs and will allow people to live in the same neighbourhood through all stages of life, if they so desire. The 'live work' development model is fully supported in the RSES.

3.8.8 Housing for Older People

With people living longer it is important that provision is made to allow older people to live independently in their local community for as long as possible. Living close to local services and facilities creates a convenient lifestyle for older people and encourages them to remain active and healthy. The Council has published an 'Age Friendly Strategy 2017-2020', which seeks to cater for the needs of older people.

This Plan supports the provision of a mix of house types that provide a choice for older people and encourages private developers to incorporate the principles of universal design into new residential properties. Consideration should be given to providing single storey properties in large residential developments that would provide older people with the option of downsizing if so desired. This would have the positive knock on effect of releasing larger homes for younger families.

The adaption of existing homes to meet the changing needs of older people is also supported. It is recognised that there are opportunities for infill development in central locations in established urban areas to meet the housing needs of older people. Such development will be encouraged, subject to the appropriate standards being met.

3.8.8.1 Housing for People with Disabilities

The delivery of housing for people with disabilities requires co-ordination between design teams and community support networks in order to ensure specific housing needs are met.

The Council provides accommodation for disabled people through various means including the adaption of existing housing stock and the construction of specially designed units, subject to adequate funding and resources being available.

The Council published a 'Strategic Plan for Housing Persons with Disabilities' in 2016. This Strategy aims to provide an appropriate range of housing and support services that will meet the needs of persons with disabilities. This Plan will support the implementation of this Strategy.

3.8.8.2 Traveller Accommodation

The Council Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 outlines the Council Policy regarding the provision of Traveller Accommodation. It sets out the range of social housing supports for Travellers including standard Local Authority Housing, Approved Housing Body Housing, Group Housing, and Halting Site Bays.

Provision has been made for two Group Housing Schemes in Navan consisting of eight and six unit schemes and one Group Housing Scheme in Trim consisting of six units.

The Programme also identifies that the existing Halting Site at St. Francis Park in Navan is under-utilised. The Council is presently seeking funding from the DHPLG for the refurbishment of this site which will allow for full occupancy.

3.8.9 Design Criteria for Residential Development

Well designed residential developments can make a significant contribution to the creation of an attractive urban environment where people want to live, work, and socialise.

Applications for new residential developments should strive to create a sense of place by responding positively to local surroundings. This can be achieved by taking into account local building types and styles, landmark buildings, and any important views or features in the local landscape. Innovative designs that would not compromise the local environment are encouraged.

New buildings should be designed to take account of the potential implications of climate change including higher temperatures, different rainfall patterns and a potential increase in extreme events such as flooding and storms. Improving the energy efficiency of buildings would reduce energy consumption and therefore reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

New developments should include a suitable mixture of house types that will support the creation of a sustainable community. The principles of good urban design should be embraced. This includes the creation of permeable streets that promote walking and cycling and provide direct and safe routes to adjoining developments and town/village centres in accordance with the principles and recommendations set out in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS). Public realm and open spaces should be of a high quality and design that benefits all residents, whilst measures should also be taken to ensure the creation of a safe and secure environment that would minimise any opportunities for anti-social behaviour and promote the use of high quality finishes to buildings and boundaries.

The principles of universal design that support the optimal design and layout of buildings and neighbourhoods that cater for all age groups, and the promotion of energy efficiency to improve the environmental performance of

buildings and the integration of renewable technologies into the design of new buildings is also encouraged. This concept of providing lifetime adaptable homes is a policy objective of the NPF.

The following guidance documents are useful reference points in relation to the design and layout of residential developments:

- [The Guidelines on Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, DEHLG \(2007\)](#)
- [The Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, DEHLG \(2009\)](#)
- [Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide, DEHLG \(2009\)](#)
- [Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, DHPLG \(2018\)](#)
- [The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, DTTAS and DECLG \(2013 and updated in 2019\)](#)
- [Permeability Best Practice Guide, NTA \(2015\)](#)

Further details of the standards and requirements for residential developments are set out in Chapter 11 'Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives'.

3.8.10 Densities

Building at higher densities makes more efficient use of land and allows for a more compact form of development that supports and maximises investment in critical infrastructure such as public transport.

This Plan seeks to maximise the use of serviced residential lands and promotes the creation of compact, high quality developments, with higher

densities supported in appropriate locations.

Density policy is informed by the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' (2009) and the National Planning Framework, which supports higher densities in city and town centres and along public transport corridors through mechanisms such as reduced vacancy rates, infill development and the regeneration of centrally located lands.

It is an objective of this Plan to require a density of 45 units/ha on more centrally located and strategic lands in Regional Growth Centres and Key Towns. This density is also a requirement on lands adjacent to existing and future rail stations in the County.

On the remaining, more edge of centre lands in the Regional Growth Centre and Key Towns a density of 35 units/ha will normally be required.

In the Self-Sustaining Growth Towns and Self-Sustaining Towns a density of up to 35 units/ha on all lands will normally be required.

In smaller Towns a density of up to 25 units/ha is considered appropriate whilst in Villages any development should take cognisance of the prevailing scale and pattern of development in the locality and the availability of public services.

It is acknowledged that there may be instances where these densities cannot be achieved due to site constraints, however all developments should strive to achieve the prescribed density in order to support the delivery of more compact development and to ensure a maximum return on investment in social and physical infrastructure.

Further details in relation to density requirements are set out in section 11.7.2 of Chapter 11 'Development Management

Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives'.

Housing Development Policies

It is a policy of the Council:

SH POL 7

To encourage and foster the creation of attractive, mixed use, sustainable communities that include a suitable mix of housing types and tenures with supporting facilities, amenities, and services that meet the needs of the entire community and accord with the principles of universal design, in so far as practicable.

SH POL 8

To support the creation of attractive residential developments with a range of housing options and appropriate provision of functional public and private open space that is consistent with the standards and principles set out in the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and the associated Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide, DEHLG (2009) and any subsequent Guidelines.

SH POL 9

To promote higher residential densities in appropriate locations and in particular close to town centres and along public

transport corridors, in accordance with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, DEHLG (2009).

SH POL 10

To require that applications for residential development take an integrated and balanced approach to movement, place making, and streetscape design in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, DTTS and DECLG (2013 and updated in 2019).

SH POL 11

To encourage improvements in the environmental performance of buildings by promoting energy efficiency and energy conservation in existing and new developments in line with best practice.

SH POL 12

To promote innovation in architectural design that delivers buildings of a high quality that positively contributes to the built environment and local streetscape.

SH POL 13

To require that all new residential developments shall be in accordance with the standards set out in the Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives set out in Chapter 11 of this Plan, in so far as is practicable.

Housing Development Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

SH OBJ 22

To encourage a minimum density of 45 units/ha on centrally located new residential, town centre, or mixed use zoned lands in Regional Growth Centres and Key Towns.

SH OBJ 23

To encourage a minimum density of 45 units/ha on centrally located residential, town centre, or mixed use zoned lands in proximity to existing and future rail stations.

SH OBJ 24

To encourage a density of 35 units/ha on edge of centre sites in Regional Growth Towns and Key Towns.

SH OBJ 25

To encourage a density of 35 units/ha on all lands zoned for new residential, town centre, or mixed use development in Self-Sustaining Growth Towns and Self-Sustaining Towns.

SH OBJ 26

To encourage a density of 25 units/ha on

lands zoned for new residential development in Small Towns.

SH OBJ 27

To require new developments in Villages and Rural Nodes to take cognisance of the prevailing scale and pattern of development in the area.

SH OBJ 28

To seek that all new residential developments on zoned lands in excess of 20 residential units provide for a minimum of 5% universally designed units in accordance with the requirements of the 'Building for Everyone: A Universal Design' developed by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (National Disability Authority).

SH OBJ 29

To require that all new residential development applications of 50 units or more are 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 in accordance with the requirements of policy SOC POL 6 in the 'Community Building Strategy' (Chapter 7).

CHAPTER 4

**Economy and
Employment Strategy**

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the economic vision for the County for the period 2020-2026. Continued economic development and job creation will be supported by the work of the Planning and Economic Development Directorate and the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) guided by this Plan via a range of policies and objectives. These policies and objectives have been developed cognisant of the forthcoming economic challenges that the County will face during the Plan period.

The Council's staff have an excellent record of delivery, local knowledge, skills and experience necessary to address these challenges. The preparation of an Economic Strategy for the County sets out key targets which support continued economic development. The Economic Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022 a 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.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) acknowledges the opportunities for growth of *urban areas and well connected towns that are accessible to significant population catchments*.¹ It also recognises the interdependencies between cities and their surrounding Metropolitan Areas and the importance of the Metropolitan Areas in contributing to the economic success of a city.

This is clearly acknowledged by the inclusion of an objective within the NPF that a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) is to be prepared for the cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway, and Waterford.²

At a regional level the NPF is implemented through the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). Due to the diversity and scale of the Eastern and Midlands Region the RSES sets out a vision for future growth and development at both a Strategic Planning Area level and a regional level. The RSES has a much greater focus on economic development and potential than the previous Regional Planning Guidelines. This greater economic focus is intended to strengthen links between Planning policy and economic trends.

The RSES identifies that improving the alignment between the location of residential development and employment is one of the key challenges facing the region. Thus the RSES fully supports the Council's approach to economic development which established the central importance of 'live work' communities as a panacea to positively manage the extent of outbound commuting from the Mid East.

Plan

A targeted evidence based Plan led approach has been applied to this chapter which identifies a number of strategically important sites intended to attract specific employment sectors based on a number of variables such as: the strategic location of the sites within the County; the proximity of the sites to a critical mass of skilled workers and public transport and the level of critical infrastructure provision at each location. This targeted Plan led approach endorsed by a strong marketing strategy based around the 'Make it Meath' brand and supported by a multidisciplinary Planning and

¹ For further information see Section 4.4 of the National Planning Framework

² National Policy Objective 67 of the National Planning Framework

economic development team within the Council will provide a platform for the County to be promoted County as an attractive business base for both FDI and SME's over the life of the Plan and beyond.

The need to identify additional strategic economic development sites in those centres which are experiencing significant out bound commuting due to the extent of their resident populations and the lack of local employment opportunities is a key objective of this Development Plan. Thus building on the notable successes already achieved in the implementation of the Economic Strategy.

4.2 Statutory Context

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, while Regional Assemblies are in turn required to produce Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies. Further changes include the establishment of the Local Community Development Committees (LCDC's), and Local Enterprise Offices (LEO's) within Local Authorities. A new Regional Assembly Structure has been established reducing the total number of regions to 3; Meath is located within the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA).

4.3 Policy Context

4.3.1 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031

The EMRA Region provides more than half of what is produced and is home to one in every two people living in the Country, therefore the economic Regional Policy Objectives are central to ensuring this economic powerhouse continues to function effectively. The economic vision is to facilitate sustainable, competitive, inclusive and resilient growth. The economic strategy focuses on a number of key objectives which are as follows:

- Smart Specialisation;
- Clustering;
- Orderly Growth;
- Placemaking;
- Future Proofing and Risk Management.

The strategy sets out a number of guiding principles for the identification of locations for strategic employment growth at Metropolitan, Regional and Local level. These include:

- A focus on technology and innovation poles located at Institutes of Technology and Universities;
- Current employment locations, density of workers, land take and resource/ infrastructure dependency;
- Locations for expansion of existing enterprises;
- Locations for new enterprises based on whether they are people intensive/space intensive, tied to a particular resource or dependant on a particular piece of infrastructure;
- Locations for potential relocation of enterprises that may be better suited to

alternative locations and whether such a move would facilitate the release of urban land for more efficient uses;

- Within large urban areas locations where significant job location can be catered for through infrastructure servicing and proximity to public transport corridors.

The foregoing principles have been considered in the drafting of this economic strategy. Having regard to the plentiful supply of land designated for employment uses in suitable locations in County Meath, there is potential to accommodate some enterprises seeking to relocate from Dublin City and thus make available urban land in the city for redevelopment. Bearing this in mind it is intended to target specific employment uses which align with the principles of the Economic Strategy and direct same to suitable locations.

A number of the guiding principles for investment priorities have relevance to the challenges to be addressed in this strategy including availability of human capital, proximity to third level institutions, availability of transport infrastructure and broadband, capacity of place and impact of commuting, alignment with NPF in respect of Data Centre locations etc.

The Dublin- Belfast Economic corridor is a key element of the RSES strategy and its importance to the economic success of the region is emphasised. The role of Key Towns in the region in the provision of a strong employment base for their resident population and hinterlands is also acknowledged.

In respect of the rural economy RPO 6.5 advocates the identification of measures in LECP's for the regeneration in small town and village cores. The strategy advocates the exploring of options to co-locate housing in rural towns and villages with incubator space

near Institutes of Technology to facilitate technological spill over. The strategy fully supports the enhancement of the agriculture, food, forestry, energy sectors in tandem with encouraging diversification in the context of landscape and heritage protection.

4.3.2 Putting People First – Action Programme for Effective Local Government

Putting People First – Action Programme for Effective Local Government sets out the plans for the greater alignment of local government and local development. It seeks to provide Local Authorities with more autonomy in the support of enterprise and the promotion of wider economic development, thereby creating and sustaining jobs. It's four key objectives are:

- *Doing more for the economy, enterprise and the local economy*
- *Building a local government system for the 21st Century*
- *Local Government that is soundly funded, working better and serving the community*
- *Good governance, strong leadership and democratic accountability*

4.3.3 Action Plan for Jobs 2017

This document is a high level, ambitious, all-of-Government initiative designed to mainstream creativity in the life of the nation so that individually and collectively, Irish people at home and abroad, can realise their full creative potential. The purpose of the document is to respond to the immediate challenge of the UK's decision to leave the EU and also to inform the Government's response to a more

volatile and changing external environment by strengthening the resilience and agility of the Country's enterprise base.

4.3.4 Action Plan for Jobs: Mid East Region 2016-2017 (DBEI)

Since the "Action Plan for Jobs" process commenced in 2012 a number of Regional Reports have been published. The Government has published the "Action Plan for Jobs: Mid East Region". This plan covers Counties Kildare, Meath and Wicklow. The plan identifies that the region has significant existing enterprise strengths and assets. It notes that increased collaboration can be facilitated by building on the recent reforms such as:

- *The growing impact of LEO;*
- *The new mandate of Education and Training Boards;*
- *The strengthening of Regional Offices of the IDA and Enterprise Ireland;*
- *The reform of Local Government with emphasis on economic development role;*
- *The blueprint of a stronger policy framework to underpin sectoral opportunities.*

4.3.5 Winning: Foreign Direct Investment, 2015-2019, (IDA)

This strategy aims to increase foreign direct investment at a regional level, more evenly throughout the Irish economy which positively impacts indigenous business and regional locations. The strategy seeks to continue winning investments and see the benefits flow as widely as possible in economic terms throughout Ireland. Ambitious targets include; 80,000 new jobs; 900 investments; €3bn R&D

investments and balanced regional growth. The core role of IDA Ireland set out in this document is 'to create employment with economic and social benefits for the Irish people'.

4.3.6 Meath Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021

As outlined above the Council is obliged under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 to develop a 6-year LECP for the County. This Plan is required to be consistent with the RPGs and the County Development Plan (and the National Planning Framework and future Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy). It provides economic and community objectives that promote and support the economic and local community development of the County. Tourism and recreation are noted as key sectors in both the economic and social development of the County, providing opportunities for employment and wealth generation, and also facilities and infrastructure that enhance the quality of life for residents. This is reflected within the policy framework of the Meath LECP. The LECP is now required to be reviewed ensure compliance with the adopted RSES.

4.4 Vision for the Economy and Employment Strategy

It is a cross cutting theme of this Plan to enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of the County in order to make it one of Ireland's prime locations for indigenous and foreign economic and employment generating investment. It is the policy of this Plan to promote the County as a cost-competitive and well-connected investment location in

the Greater Dublin Area. This vision will guide ongoing external engagement process between the Council and the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and other agencies, now and in the years ahead.

It is a policy of the Council:

ED POL 1

To facilitate and support the continued growth of the economy in the County in a sustainable manner and in accordance with the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).

4.5 Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022

Since the adoption of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 the Council has taken a very proactive approach to leading economic development in the County, which includes the establishment of the Meath Economic Forum in 2013 and the publication of the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022. The Strategy sets evidence based measures aimed at accelerating the economic transformation, revitalisation and sustainable development of the County. The Strategy contains 8 no. key actions/recommendations designed to achieve the projected level of employment growth in the County by 2022 of an additional 7,500 jobs in order to broaden the County's economic base by growing the share of employment taken up by knowledge-orientated

activities and thus growing both indigenous and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) enterprises in the County.

The promotion of economic development requires a multi-pronged approach, the key components of which are as follows:

- Identifying key strategic sites for employment generation in County Meath for the promotion of economic growth locally;
- Reserving sufficient employment zoned land in suitable locations for industry and enterprise uses;
- Offering a good quality of life encouraging and providing a sustainable "live work" development model in the County, thereby reducing unsustainable long distance commuting patterns for employment;
- Providing and facilitating the provision of requisite physical infrastructure;
- Facilitating relevant bodies regarding the availability of high-speed telecommunications;
- Facilitating relevant energy suppliers regarding the availability of clean and reliable sources of energy;
- Promoting and facilitating appropriate educational/training measures to ensure a suitably skilled local workforce;
- Providing for appropriate zoned lands at strategic locations to accommodate synergies between third level institutions and business enterprises including start up companies;
- Forging mutually-beneficial linkages and partnerships with the business and third level institutions including research and development facilities;
- Securing high standards of landscape and environmental protection/enhancement;

- Ensuring that towns and villages remain attractive to investment, and;
- Recognising the critical role tourism and related activity plays in the economic base of the County and to support the continued investment in this key indigenous industry.

The measures recommended within the Economic Development Strategy seek to promote County Meath to fulfil its economic potential and to prosper as a successful, diverse and vibrant social, civic, commercial, and residential centre that will be recognised locally, nationally and internationally as a highly attractive and distinctive location in which to live and conduct business.

The Economic Development Strategy recognises that the County has an unparalleled and unique competitive advantage within Ireland, due to its:

- strategic location within the fastest growing region in Ireland;
- proximity to the Dublin Metropolitan Area and its markets;
- proximity to Dublin Airport and Dublin Port;
- location within the Dublin – Belfast Economic Corridor;
- highly skilled labour force;
- high quality built and natural environment, and;
- lower housing prices.

These advantages offer distinctive economic and commercial investment opportunities. Notwithstanding this, the Strategy also identifies existing trends within the County which impact on the economic performance of the County including:

- Narrow base of economic activities in

largely traditional areas;

- FDI deficit;
- Low penetration of knowledge orientated activities and;
- Substantial skills leakage due to commuting trends from the County.

The key aim of the Economic Strategy is to positively address these trends, providing for a more robust economic base within the county in order to improve the county's economic resilience to changes in the geo political sphere both nationally and internationally.

The sites contained in the Economic Strategy are listed below, and illustrated in Map 4.1,

- Navan (IDA Business & Technology Park)
- South Drogheda (IDA Business & Technology Park and lands in private ownership)
- Dunboyne North (Lands adjacent to the M3 Parkway Rail Head)
- Ashbourne (Lands north of the Rath Roundabout)
- Kells Business Park

4.5.1 Economic Variation to County Development Plan 2013-2019

In order to enable the spatial implementation of this Strategy it was necessary to align the policies and objectives of the Plan to the tenets of the Strategy as they relate to statutory land use planning.

The implementation of the 8 no. specific actions contained in the Strategy was the primary response of the Local Authority to seek to improve the number of local employment opportunities available to the resident

population. In particular Action 3 of the Strategy identified a number of revisions required to the County Development Plan 2013-2019 to positively provide the framework for investment and employment creation while at the same time removing non-essential potential barriers to employment generating development. The requirements arising from Action 3 of the Strategy were a key reason for the preparation of Variation no. 3, therefore a comprehensive review of the County Development Plan was undertaken.

On the 23rd May 2016 Meath County Council Members voted to adopt Variation no. 3 to the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 and therefore commenced the process which has instigated the economic successes within the County to date.

4.6 Changing Economic Climate

The economy has emerged from a difficult period and is forecast to achieve healthy, sustainable growth rates over the medium-term. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has outpaced all other European economies with year on year growth of 8.2% in Ireland recorded in 2018⁵. This figure is forecasted to remain robust over the coming years with the headline GDP rate forecast to increase by 4.9% in 2019 and 3.1% in 2020.⁶

The most significant threat to the stability of the Irish economy is generally accepted to be BREXIT. A number of scenarios can be considered in relation to same, irrespective of the final outcomes of negotiations, it will undoubtedly affect our economy significantly. In this regard the NPF stresses *'the cross-border*

*and all-island dimension of spatial strategy. The continued strengthening of the economic relationship between Dublin and Belfast can help reinforce the competitiveness of the Eastern and Midland Region, while also helping to mitigate the adverse effects of Brexit*⁸.

Irish based companies who rely on the UK for exports may be adversely affected by increases in the cost of doing business as a result of tariffs or currency depreciations and will be required to diversify their markets in order to maintain healthy trading levels. In line with the government's commitment to facilitate European trade InterTrade Ireland will continue their supports for SME's trading across the Border and Enterprise Ireland will continue supports for access to foreign markets. Fortunately for the County a significant number of companies assisted by the Local Enterprise Office based within the County trade towards Dublin and this is likely to lessen the impact of BREXIT in respect of these businesses. However those businesses with a high dependence on the UK for imports of raw materials or exports of goods and services will face significant challenges and uncertainties associated with the introduction of tariffs or regulatory divergence between the EU and UK as part of any Withdrawal Agreement.

While the County must future proof against any ill effects from BREXIT there are potential gains which may emerge. Ireland is in a strong position to attract FDI from the UK, in 2015 the Country had 3% of the net inward Global FDI, this amounted to half that in the UK – an extraordinarily high proportion for Ireland given the much smaller size of its economy and population compared to that of the UK. The level of US investment and other non-EU investment in the UK is expected to decline post-Brexit as the investors involved will seek

⁵ CSO National Income and Expenditure 2018

⁶ Quarterly Economic Commentary, Autumn 2019, ESRI

⁸ National Development Plan 2018-2027

a base in the EU (a much larger market than the UK, even when the UK leaves the EU). This presents an opportunity for Ireland and for the County in particular, given the County's strategic location adjacent to the National Gateway and the availability of a highly educated and skilled workforce.

4.6.1 Successes and Projecting beyond 2022

Since the launch of the Economic Strategy, positive outcomes have been delivered - not by coincidence but as a result of the implementation of the actions set out in the Economic Development Strategy. Employment rates have increased by 1.47% on an annual basis with 2,935 additional jobs within the County, which equates to an 8% increase in employment. County The Council has played a leading role in the implementation of the actions, which were deliberately kept limited in number and targeted on key areas reflecting the comparative strengths of the County and the issues that need to be addressed;

- 1) Increasing the jobs-to-population ratio,
- 2) Reducing the economic leakages in the form of outward commuting and
- 3) Reducing retail loss and broadening the employment base of the County by facilitating more high quality, knowledge-oriented employment.

Recent successes include the Facebook data centre developments, Shire (Takeda) Pharma Group and the Avoca development at Dunboyne which will jointly provide more than 550 jobs to the County in the near future. The development of EMeRI Nutrition in the IDA Business Park is a welcome indicator of additional employment activity in Navan.

The timeframe of the current Economic Strategy is to 2022, however it is projected that the long term issues outlined above in terms of the current narrow base of economic activities, FDI deficit etc., will be as relevant post 2022 as they are currently. It is also predicted that there will be improvements in the trend in these metrics, in favour of Meath, with particular improvements to the local economic base. In order to reach the target of 7,500 jobs identified in the Strategy by 2022 a rise in employment growth to a rate of 1.74% is required. Given that annual employment growth rate within the State is 2.16% it is considered that this target is achievable and it is anticipated that the target will be met prior to 2022.

While much attention has been given to FDI and the successes achieved since the preparation of the Economic Development Strategy, the more traditional economic base of the County must continue to be supported, including extractive activities (mining and quarrying), meat processing, other agri-food, engineering and furniture making etc. The indigenous sector has seen an increase in employment from 11.4% of total jobs in the County in 2011 to 15.4% in 2016. Such has been the growth in employment in Enterprise Ireland (EI) clients that the County ranked 5th among all counties in the country in the latter year in terms of the number of jobs provided. Increases have also been seen in Údarás client firms in the County rising from 0.4% to 0.5% of total employment. These statistics are a positive performance indicator for the County because EI client companies are relatively large and have access to international markets. The County's advantage in this regard relative to the State has remained strong with a widening gap of 6.6 percentage points in 2016. Accordingly the employment prospects are likely to remain positive for larger Irish-owned companies based in the County.

4.7 Development Plan Economic & Employment Strategy

Building on the momentum of the successful implementation of the Economic Strategy and having regard to the need identified in the RSES to address the disconnect experienced most acutely in the Mid East between where people live and work the Council is setting out an ambitious programme for the delivery of a wider spread of economic growth throughout the County. The successful implementation of the Strategy to date could not have been achieved without significant support from national employment support agencies particularly the IDA/EI. The focus in this strategy will be on securing the 'build out' of the remaining strategic sites originally designated in the Economic Strategy complimented by additional sites. Support for this process comes from the RSES which has strongly endorsed the 'live work' community development model championed in the spatial implementation of the Meath Economic Strategy. The strategic employment sites identified support the development of compact settlements linked by multi-modal corridors and are in accordance with the criteria for employment growth as set out in Section 4.4 of the NPF, in that these sites are located proximate to a critical mass of skilled workers; can be served by readily available infrastructure in terms of water supply, waste water capacity, electricity and fibre optic connections; and all locations have the potential for expansion of existing large industry and the provision of lands which could facilitate co-location of similar industry.

In addition to the 5 Strategic Employment Sites identified in the Economic Strategy 2014-2022, this Plan has identified an additional 7 sites

that have been potential to deliver economic development and support the creation of sustainable communities. These sites are a combination of new and existing zoned lands. The intention in designating these sites as strategic employment sites is to facilitate a similar approach to the marketing of the sites originally designated in the Economic Strategy. This focus is required to stimulate development on these lands. The location of these lands are identified in Map 4.1 overleaf and are as follows:

- Trim Road lands, Navan identified for High Technology Uses and Warehousing and Distribution⁹;
- Maynooth Environs (existing and additional employment land);
- Ratoath, lands between the existing build up area of Ratoath and Fairyhouse/ Tattersalls Equestrian complex, for the creation of an equestrian based employment hub (existing employment land, additional lands identified);
- Kells, lands opposite Headfort Golf Club (existing employment land);
- Laytown, lands adjacent to Laytown Train Station (existing employment land, additional lands identified);
- Enfield, lands to the east of the built up area of Enfield (existing employment land);
- Dunshaughlin, lands to the south of the town centre (existing and additional employment land).

⁹Part of these lands were identified for employment uses under Variation 3 of the Navan Development Plan. This Variation was adopted in Q4 2019.



Map 4.1 Strategic Employment Sites

It is the policy of the Council:

ED POL 2

To support and facilitate the economic development of the county in accordance with the Economic Strategy 2014-2022 or its replacement. There will be a general presumption against development that would prejudice the implementation of the Economic Strategy.

ED POL 3

To encourage the provision of 'live work' communities, in which employment, residency and sustainable transport facilities are located in close proximity to each other, to reduce long distance commuter trends and congestion.

ED POL 4

To identify and promote a range of

locations within the County for different types of enterprise activity including international business and technology parks, small and medium enterprises (SME) and micro enterprise centres.

ED POL 5

To co-operate with local and national development agencies and engage with existing and future employers in order to maximise job opportunities in the County.

ED POL 6

To ensure that people intensive developments are located close to strategic public transport networks.

ED POL 7

To support start-up businesses and small scale industrial enterprises throughout the County.

ED POL 8

To encourage and facilitate small indigenous industries, at appropriate locations with good communication infrastructure, in recognition of their increasing importance in providing local employment and helping to stimulate economic activity within small communities.

ED POL 9

To support the use of town centre locations for new service focused enterprises.

ED POL 10

To ensure that zoning for employment uses will be carried out in a manner which protects investment in the national road network, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the DECLG guidelines on 'Spatial Planning and National Roads.

ED POL 11

To require that all new developments with over 100 employees shall have a mobility management Plan, (Refer to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives)

ED POL 12

To support appropriately considered events on the County's beaches which do not impact on sensitive coastal environments (e.g. dune systems, coastal wetlands and estuaries) and are compliant with the requirements of the Habitats Directive and other environmental considerations.

It is an objective of the Council:

ED OBJ 1

To address the rate of out bound commuting, the highest of any County in the State, with the provision of 'live work' communities in strategic settlements served by sustainable transport, thereby improving quality of life, encouraging volunteerism and community engagement.

ED OBJ 2

To continue to promote Meath as a strategically located economic and employment hub within the Greater Dublin Area.

ED OBJ 3

To continue to work with key state agencies and other stakeholders to develop opportunities for employment creation in the County.

ED OBJ 4

To identify suitable locations and support the provision of co-working facilities, digital hubs/eHubs and eWorking centres throughout the County that function as outreach hubs for city-based employers and promote flexible working arrangements.

ED OBJ 5

To work with Irish Water and other infrastructure providers, to support the

provision of services and facilities to accommodate the future economic growth of the County and to seek to reserve infrastructure capacity for employment generating uses.

ED OBJ 6

To acquire suitable land (subject to the availability of funding), including where appropriate, disused sites in State ownership, for creative and innovative entrepreneurial initiatives and the provision of clustered incubator units.

4.7.1 Economic Areas – Metropolitan Area

4.7.1.1 Dunboyne

It remains a priority for the Council to deliver on the very significant potential presented by the lands adjacent to the M3 Parkway in Dunboyne North as one of the five key strategic employment sites identified within the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath. The area is intended for high technology employment opportunities mixed with other complementary and supporting land uses such as residential and community built on the sustainable community model. The Council remains fully committed to the delivery of a vibrant 'live work' community at this location in accordance with the RSES. Having regard to the limited area of land in County Meath located within the Metropolitan area of Dublin it is critical that these lands are prioritised for services and infrastructure in order to deliver the Planned quantum of

mixed use development as set out in the RSES. Furthermore, development of these lands would build on the significant public financial investment already made in the area to create a public transport interchange and is intended to reduce the significant out bound commuter rate of 77% in this area¹². This area is identified as one with the potential to accommodate increased building height, (Refer to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives)

The Facebook data centre developments on the enterprise and employment lands at Portan Clonee have been a notable success for County Meath. Given the proximity of these lands to the T50 fibre optic cable and the access to high voltage electricity, there is an opportunity to generate further economic investment in the area by identifying additional lands for enterprise and employment uses . These additional lands will promote clustering and agglomeration effects of similar format developments at this location. National and Regional policy supports the accommodation of 'land hungry' developments NPF /RSES policies support the accommodation of 'land hungry' development at such locations.

ED OBJ 7

To promote an educational partnership with accessible third level institutions such as NUI Maynooth, UCD, Trinity, Blanchardstown DIT and Dunboyne College of Further Education and existing and future businesses and the Council. To promote Dunboyne as an employment base with direct access to a pool of skilled graduates and encourage the location of start up businesses in the area.

ED OBJ 8

Encourage mixed use settlement forms and sustainable centres, in which employment, residency, education and local services / amenities are located in close proximity to each other.

ED OBJ 9

To encourage the development of synergies between Dunboyne North and Maynooth in relation to complementary Life Science / SMART Park campuses in partnership and collaboration with established third level institutions.

4.7.1.2 Maynooth

Maynooth Environs in County Meath is located on the northern periphery of the dynamic university town of Maynooth. These lands comprise of 139 hectares approximately 1.5km to the north east of the town centre. The lands enjoy an attractive setting and character in proximity to the Carton House Estate on which there is a high quality hotel used for business and recreational purposes. The town has a growing student and residential population with established rail and motorway links to Dublin and the West.

The RSES acknowledges the potential of Maynooth to accommodate significant employment and residential growth with its designation as a Key Town. The RSES states that in order to enhance co-ordination of development in Maynooth, including its environs in County Meath, the preparation and adoption of a Joint Local Area Plan (LAP) should be carried

¹² Data obtained from POWSCAR 2017.

out by Kildare and Meath County Councils, (RPO 4.35 refers). This RPO sets out that the joint LAP will set a boundary for the town and will identify strategic housing and employment development areas, infrastructural investment requirements and promote greater co-ordination and sequential development of serviced lands for development. Therefore, the preparation of the joint LAP will allow the Meath Environs of Maynooth to play an active supporting role in the further development of this university town.

The development of the Meath Environs of Maynooth is envisaged by the Council as a natural extension to the town. The Council intend to pursue the 'live work' development model, as supported in the RSES, with significant emphasis on the delivery of strategic employment uses and housing at this location. Given the proximity of the Maynooth Environs to the University campus, the accommodation model could provide for an element of student accommodation. The lands adjacent to Carton present an opportunity to further enhance a successful tourism product at this location.

The RSES emphasises that there are significant opportunities to further develop knowledge-based employment focusing on ICT and manufacturing through the development of a research and technology campus to the west of the existing university campus in Co Kildare. The further development of Maynooth University as a leading third level research and educational facility is critical for the economic development of the town and the region with potential synergies to large established employers such as Intel and Hewlett Packard. Lands at Moygaddy within the Maynooth Environs of County Meath have also been identified by the RSES for Science and Technology based employment. The County Development Plan sets out that the Environs will be a focal point for science

and technology employment with potential for additional tourism related uses. Employment uses are based on the Economic Strategy objectives which focus on the development of Life Sciences, High Tech, Bio Tech, ICT, Research & Development and seeks to benefit from synergies with third level institutions which may include Maynooth University (MU) and major employers already established in the sub Region (Intel, Hewlett Packard). The Economic Strategy seeks to brand this area as a centre of excellence in the knowledge based economy, particularly having regard to its location viz a viz the M4 Knowledge Corridor. The objective is to foster a 'dynamic partnership' between multinational companies, indigenous Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME's), and third level institutions which may include NUI Maynooth University (MU), in a campus style environment of exceptional high quality design. The Council is aware that there is interest in the development of a private hospital and associated medical related uses in the Maynooth Environs. A development of this type would contribute significant levels of employment to the locality and may possibly also include medical research type uses.

RPO 4.33 of the RSES acknowledges the need for co-ordinated delivery of strategic infrastructure by stating as follows: '*Support the continued development of Maynooth, co-ordinated with the delivery of strategic infrastructure including pedestrian and cycle linkages within the town and to the Royal Canal Greenway, DART expansion and road linkages forming part of the Maynooth Outer Orbital Route in a manner which supports future development and population growth and builds on synergies with Maynooth University promoting a knowledge-based economy.*'

This Development Plan contains supporting

objectives for the delivery of the Maynooth Outer Orbital Route located in the Meath Environs, refer to Chapter 5, Movement Strategy. Part of this orbital route in County Kildare has received LIHAF funding. A critical component of any development proposals in the Maynooth Environs will be the ability to deliver sustainable connections to the train station. The RSES identifies Maynooth as a key settlement on the north- west corridor and considers that the electrification of the Maynooth line, to be delivered by 2027 will support sequential growth in Leixlip and Maynooth.¹³

The MASP supports employment generation at strategic locations within the metropolitan area to strengthen the local employment base and reduce pressure on the metropolitan transport network, including; future employment districts in Swords and Dublin Airport/South Fingal; Maynooth; Bray; Greystones; Dunboyne-Portan; and Leixlip.

ED OBJ 10

In accordance with RPO 4.33 of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, to support the continued development of Maynooth, co-ordinated with the delivery of strategic infrastructure including pedestrian and cycle linkages within the town and to the Royal Canal Greenway, DART expansion and road linkages forming part of the Maynooth Outer Orbital Route in a manner which supports future development and population growth and builds on synergies with Maynooth University promoting a knowledge-based economy.

ED OBJ 11

To further key linkages and partnerships with Maynooth University including the branding of the area as a centre of excellence in the knowledge based economy.

ED OBJ 12

To work with Kildare County Council to further develop the area as an attractor for Life Sciences, High Tech, Bio Tech, ICT, Research & Development employment. The council in conjunction with Kildare County Council will work with Irish Water and other agencies to ensure the delivery of key infrastructure to facilitate future development.

ED OBJ 13

To promote the development of high quality tourism, leisure and complementary activities that can build on and complement the existing attractions in the area which include Carton House and Demense, the town of Maynooth and Maynooth University to provide a destination venue of national significance.

ED OBJ 14

It is a priority for the Council to deliver on the significant potential of the lands in the Maynooth Environs, a designated strategic employment site to create a unique employment hub centred on a high tech/ bio tech campus within the lands, supported by a 'live work' community with

a mixture of employment, residential, community, medical and tourism uses to be progressed following the preparation of Master Plans. Said Master Plans shall be agreed in writing with the Executive of Meath County Council in advance of the lodgement any planning application. This area can accommodate increased building height which shall be addressed as part of the Master Plans. (Please refer to Volume Maynooth Environs Written Statement for detailed requirements in respect of Master Plans)

4.7.2 Economic Areas – Core Area

4.7.2.1 Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor

The Dublin – Belfast Economic corridor is acknowledged within the NPF as the ‘largest economic agglomeration on the island of Ireland’. This corridor is the national entry point to the island and it is a policy of the NPF to support and ‘promote the economic potential of the corridor and develop it as a distinct spatial area’.

This Corridor connects the two main cities of scale on the Island and its area of influence hosts a combined population, between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, of more than 3.3 million people of which Drogheda, Dundalk and Newry are part. The Corridor has the capacity to provide the only potential paired city growth pole of scale on the Island reaching a European benchmark 5 million population target to compete with similar city regions in the EU. The imperative to counteract BREXIT with

a proactive spatial economic policy adds to the international significance of the Corridor. It also provides opportunities to further Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), for example with the Louth Pharma hub at the centre of the Corridor, and the e-payments cluster. By increasing its critical mass, population and jobs growth will take place in a sustainable growth pattern focused on clusters and smart specialisation, in line with the Region’s Economic and Settlement Strategy set out in the RSES. The Corridor also offers extended strategic connections throughout the Island through links with the TEN-T network and the Dublin- Rosslare route.

4.7.2.2 Regional Growth Centre – Drogheda

The RSES sets out the function and role of a Regional Growth Centre, which is to act as a focal point for population growth and economic development and to enhance national and regional growth.

The designation of Drogheda as a Regional Growth Centre in the NPF is a recognition of the strategic location of the settlement along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and its potential to attract jobs and investment. Its connectivity with Dublin and Belfast in addition to Dundalk and Newry highlights the opportunities there are to develop synergies and economic links along this corridor.

The RSES also acknowledges the potential of lands in the Southern Environs of Drogheda to accommodate economic investment in section 4.5 of the Strategy where it states that support is given to *“the sustainable development of existing zoned lands in the Northern and Southern Environs of the town with particular emphasis on the promotion of the IDA Business Park as a location for economic investment ...”*¹⁴

In addition there is a large parcel of employment lands at Bryanstown that have the potential to make a significant contribution to the economic development of the area.

The Council is committed to the development of a Joint Urban Plan for this area with Louth County Council and to develop the area in partnership in a coordinated and complimentary manner. The economic potential of these lands is evident in the growth of employment rates in this area during the inter-census period in which persons employed grew by 44%.¹⁵

With regard to port facilities in the area, the RSES supports the role of Drogheda Port in RPO 4.12. The RPGs supported the examination of the expansion of Dublin Port for a new Port facility on the east coast however this was not continued in the RSES. There have been previous proposals for the development of a world class deepwater port, logistics centre and business park at Gormonston, County Meath.¹⁶ The potential economic benefits of such a facility in this location are recognised.

The economic development objectives for this area positioned on the M1 which is identified within the NPF as the national entry point to the island include:

ED OBJ 15

To develop in conjunction with Louth County Council and other stakeholders a strategy for the expansion and economic development of Drogheda as part of a joint vision and Urban Plan for Drogheda¹⁸.

ED OBJ 16

To continue to support and promote the inherent economic potential of the M1 corridor, building upon existing strengths. There will be a focus on developing the corridor as a distinct spatial area with international visibility.

ED OBJ 17

To develop the Drogheda IDA Business Park (Donore Road) and adjoining land as a location for economic investment. There is significant scope in the IDA Business Park for further expansion which will be prioritised by the Council in conjunction with the IDA.

ED OBJ 18

To promote an educational partnership with accessible third level institutions such as Dundalk DIT and Drogheda Institute of Further Education and existing businesses and the Council.

ED OBJ 19

To promote the Southern Environs of Drogheda as an employment base and encourage the location of start up businesses in the area.

ED OBJ 20

To encourage the development of employment lands at Bryanstown and Mill

¹⁴ Written Statement for Drogheda in Section 4.5 of the RSES page 64

¹⁵ Data obtained from POWSCAR 2016

¹⁶ Section 4.1.5 of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 'M1 Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor & Provision of Deepwater Port Facility at East Meath' indicated that this project is at the pre-feasibility and environmental assessment stage. At the time of writing there have been no further developments with regard to this project.

¹⁸ As required by the boundary committee review.

Road/Marsh Road as part of a 'live-work' community at these locations.

ED OBJ 21

To encourage the further development of high value added employment and financial services in the Drogheda Environs.

ED OBJ 22

To seek to maximise the tourism potential of the significant tourism hub within the Boyne Valley region which includes the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne, the Battle of the Boyne Site at Oldbridge and the coastal area of East Meath stretching from Mornington to Gormonston whilst ensuring the environmental protection of sensitive and protected coastal habitats and landscape.

4.7.2.2 Key Town - Navan

Rail connectivity to Dublin is critical to significantly strengthen the attractiveness of Navan as an investment and employment centre and would therefore in turn have a positive impact on growing the population of the town which is expected to increase to 50,000 in the longer term.

This development strategy seeks to rebalance the provision of jobs so that residents of Navan have access to opportunities for employment within easy distance from their homes, thereby reducing levels of commuting in the area as

a whole. The Strategy will ensure that the primacy of Navan is recognised, protected and promoted whilst ensuring that over time, a number of other major supporting employment centres as outlined above are developed which provide balance to the location of employment opportunities across the County. Navan, in appropriate locations having regard to adjoining land uses, pattern and character of development, can accommodate increased building height which shall be addressed as part of the future LAP.

The IDA Business and Technology Park within Navan is one of the key strategic employment sites within the County. The Strategy identified that approximately 23.5ha of land is available for development within the IDA Park and these lands have the potential to accommodate both people and product intensive economic activity including E1 High Technology – knowledge orientated services and manufacturing. Further employment lands were identified at Farganstown Navan (circa 40 hectares) which could accommodate similar types of development to include land intensive development such as a data centre. Strategic employment lands have been identified to the south of the town off the Trim Rd. RPO 47 of the RSES states as follows: *'Support the development of strategic employment lands on the Trim Rd in Navan, subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and the Planning process.'*

The Economic Strategy seeks to build on the success of the Mullaghboy Industrial Park and Liscarton Industrial lands and additional lands have been identified adjacent to these sites to facilitate the continued growth in the indigenous and SME sectors.

A proactive approach to marketing and delivery

of economic development on these lands is strongly promoted within the Economic

ED OBJ 23

To promote the Key Town of Navan as a primary centre of employment in the County so that its significant residential population will have employment opportunities within easy distance of their homes, thereby reducing outbound commuting.

ED OBJ 24

To implement the extension of the Dunboyne/M3 Parkway rail line to Navan during the Midterm review of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, in accordance with Table 8.2 of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.²⁰

ED OBJ 25

To recognise the significance of the Regional Hospital as a catalyst for significant employment opportunities in accordance with RPO 4.44 of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

ED OBJ 26

In accordance with RPO 4.42 of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, to support the delivery of road infrastructure to release strategic residential and employment lands for sustainable development and to improve connectivity

and the efficient movement of people and services in Navan.

ED OBJ 27

To promote Navan as an employment base and encourage the location of start up businesses in the area.

ED OBJ 28

To promote an educational partnership with accessible third level institutions such as UCD, Trinity, DCU, DKIT and Blanchardstown IT and existing businesses, future employers and the Council.

ED OBJ 29

To promote the further development of the Navan IDA Business & Technology Park as one of the strategic sites for economic investment in Meath as identified in the Economic Development Strategy 2014-2022.

ED OBJ 30

In accordance with RPO 4.47 of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, support the development of strategic employment lands at the Trim Road in Navan, subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessments and the Planning process.

²⁰ Subject of a Draft Ministerial Direction, August 2019

ED OBJ 31

To promote the development of the Strategic Employment lands at Farganstown for high technology general enterprise and employment uses (E1/E2 zoning).

ED OBJ 32

To continue to develop Navan as a Level II Town Centre and primary retail location within the County. A variety of comparison shopping will be encouraged within the town in order to stem the comparison retail leakage to the wider region.

ED OBJ 33

To support the implementation of the Public Realm Plan 'Navan 2030' to make the town a more attractive place to live, shop, visit and do business in accordance with RPO 4.43 of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

ED OBJ 34

To support the future redevelopment of Pairc Tailteann as a modern sports hub which will be an important economic, sporting and cultural asset for the County and the Region comprising an upgraded Pairc Tailteann, to include associated and complementary uses in accordance with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

ED OBJ 35

To facilitate the appropriate expansion of the Liscarton and Mullaghboy Industrial Estates.

Development Strategy.

It is an objective of the Council:

4.7.3 Self Sustaining Growth Towns

4.7.3.1 Ashbourne

Located on the border with Fingal, Ashbourne is the second largest town in Meath, and is one of the fastest growing towns in the County.

Between 2011-2016 the population increased by 11.7%, bringing the total population to 12,679. It is an important employment and service centre in that it supports almost 2,000 jobs, which is c.5% of the total jobs in the County. Many of these jobs are concentrated in the recently redeveloped town centre and a number of business and industrial parks in the northern part of the town. Transport, distribution and logistics, and retailing and wholesaling are important sectors for the town, reflecting its favourable location, including its proximity to Dublin Port and Dublin Airport. Ashbourne's competitive advantage is based on its unique location on the boundary of Fingal and County Meath. The town is close to Dublin Airport with excellent transport links that rapidly connect the town to Dublin city centre.

The Council recognises that there are opportunities to further enhance the economic performance of Ashbourne by capitalising on its proximity to Dublin Airport and the associated

national and international connectivity that this provides. As previously indicated, there are a number of business/industrial parks in the town that benefit from access to the M2 Motorway.

The importance of Ashbourne as a centre for employment growth in Meath is demonstrated by its inclusion as one of 5 strategically important settlements designated to attract FDI in the Economic Development Strategy. The Strategy identifies employment lands at the Rath roundabout as a strategic site for major inward investment. The Council has prepared a Master Plan to ensure a planned approach to the site's development and the lands are being marketed by the Council's Economic Development Team to potential investors in conjunction with external employment partner agencies. It is noteworthy that currently zoned strategic employment lands identified by Fingal at Ballymadun are adjacent to the strategic employment site in Ashbourne. Due to the configuration of the lands, access to the Ballymadun employment lands in Fingal, can only be provided via the Rath roundabout.

The Regional Planning Guidelines, 2010-2022 acknowledged the potential for Ashbourne to capitalise on opportunities for economic growth due to its proximity to Dublin Airport and the Dublin Metropolitan Area and identified the town as a 'Secondary Economic Growth Town'. These Guidelines support the consolidation of economic development in Ashbourne that would assist in the creation of a more sustainable settlement. Reference is also made to the creation of synergy between Ashbourne and Ratoath that would optimise local employment opportunities by availing and utilising the highly skilled workforce that reside in these towns. Section 3.7.5 of the Regional Planning Guidelines stated that Ashbourne is: *"transitioning away from a dormitory hinterland context to a more urbanised, metropolitan character."* The RSES acknowledges

that Ashbourne²¹ is one of the towns in the region which recorded the highest growth rates in the Country over the last 10 years (>32%) which have lower levels of employment.

The RSES notes that *'such towns are important employment and service centres. In addition some of these settlements, such as Ashbourne and Ratoath have the potential to strengthen their employment base and develop as important centres of employment due to their strategic location, connectivity with surrounding settlements, and the availability of a skilled workforce.* In recognition of the delivery of Metro North to Swords during the lifetime of the National Planning Framework, the Council will support the strengthening of links and connectivity between Ashbourne and Swords, in order to further improve the links between Ashbourne and Dublin City centre whilst also promoting more sustainable modes of transport by facilitating the use of the Metro for commuters travelling to Dublin City centre and Airport for employment.

The delivery of the rail to Navan will include provision of a station in Dunshaughlin, an alignment east of Dunshaughlin would facilitate a future spur to serve Ashbourne/Ratoath thereby further supporting the economic viability of the rail project and creating sustainable communities in these towns containing a future population of circa 40,000, please refer to ED OBI 40.

ED OBJ 36

To promote the development of the key strategic employment site identified in the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath – employment zoned lands to the north of the Rath Roundabout in Ashbourne.

ED OBJ 37

To continue to attract new employment development to Ashbourne which capitalises on the quality of road infrastructure at this location and its proximity to the M50, Dublin Airport and Dublin Port.

4.7.3.2 Dunshaughlin

Dunshaughlin's future potential is intrinsically linked to the delivery of Phase 2 of the Dublin-Navan Rail Project. The construction of the Rail Line will result in Dunshaughlin becoming a hub for economic and residential growth due to its location on a multi-modal corridor with direct road and rail links to Dublin and the wider region.

The combination of the potential delivery of the Rail Line and the proximity of the town to the Dublin Metropolitan Area makes the town an attractive location to potential investors as a place of employment whilst the connectivity of the town to Dublin and Navan via the local road network and frequent bus service makes the town an attractive location for the general population as a place to live.

In order to ensure the viability of the Navan Rail Line, it is essential that there is a critical mass of population living along the rail corridor. The location of the future rail station will be central to the future usage of the line i.e an eastern alignment is more accessible from the town. As part of the rail project the station

location will be examined. Continued population growth in Dunshaughlin is required to support the delivery of the Rail Line. It is essential however that employment delivery is balanced with population growth to create a 'live work' community in the town.

Employment lands in Dunshaughlin are concentrated in the southern part of the town with additional lands available to accommodate expansion. The existing Business Park and Industrial Estate are important locations for local employment.

In order to ensure employment opportunities are commensurate with population growth, it is proposed to designate and extend the employment land to the south west of Dunshaughlin as a strategic employment site. This designation will facilitate the comprehensive marketing of these lands by the Council's Economic Development Team and the delivery of a major distributor road connecting the town to the M3 Motorway.

In addition to supporting the delivery of the Rail Line, the Council also support the review of the Railway Order for the project by ensuring any Rail Station is optimally located to promote

ED OBJ 38

To promote the development of the key strategic employment site – employment zoned lands to the south west of Dunshaughlin.

ED OBJ 39

To explore in conjunction with Irish Rail and other stakeholders the feasibility of

a future rail spur off the Navan-Dublin Rail line from Dunshaughlin to serve Ashbourne and Ratoath.

ED OBJ 40

To support the continued development of the existing business park in Dunshaughlin.

walking and cycling from the town centre and residential lands in addition to serving surrounding settlements including Ratoath and Ashbourne.

4.7.3.3 Kells and Trim

Kells acts as a major economic development centre in the north of the County. The Economic Strategy identifies lands at Kells Business Park as one of 5 key strategy sites within the County. The lands are designated as an Assisted Area in the Regional Aid Map for Europe 2014-2020. A Strategic Employment Zone of circa 33 hectares was zoned E1/E3 in 2016 in conjunction with the spatial implementation of the Economic Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022. The lands are located to the south east of Kells easily accessible to the M3 motorway and are identified for high end technology/ manufacturing and major campus style office based employment as well as providing for potential logistics, warehousing, distribution and supply chain management uses. The development of these lands will provide a balance of employment opportunities for the area of north Meath.

Trim is a self-sustaining growth town with a

unique cultural and built heritage identified in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) as a medieval heritage town. With a 'Jobs: Resident' Workforce ratio of 0.67 and 2,500 jobs in 2016, Trim is the second largest centre for employment in the County behind Navan. The vision going forward for Trim is to maximise the number of local job opportunities while investing and expanding in the tourist product in the town. A variation to the Trim Development Plan adopted in Q3 of 2019 supported the continued economic development of the town through the facilitation of the development of a live work community including a key piece of road infrastructure for the town. Trim is designated as being eligible for the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) (as a town of fewer than 10,000 people but with more than 2,500 jobs) which will present opportunities for funding going forward. In

ED OBJ 41

To encourage the development of Kells and Trim as a tourism cluster with improvement in the connectivity between both centres. Each town to develop a strategy for niche tourism as integral part of their overall development strategy e.g. culinary tourism, regional food hub, creative industries, etc. Continue the ongoing protection of the intrinsic built and natural heritage of Kells and Trim and their promotion as a basis of tourism;

ED OBJ 42

To promote the further development of the Kells Business Park which is identified

as one of the five key strategic sites for economic investment in the County in the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022;

ED OBJ 43

To promote and support the development of the strategic site located on the southern side of the strategically important R147 (Navan Road) in Kells where lands with an E1/E3 land use zoning objective have been identified.

ED OBJ 44

To continue to support and promote existing industries and enterprises in Kells and build upon the status of Kells as part of an EU designated Regional Aid area and to explore funding streams such as the REDZ initiative to support enterprise within the County;

ED OBJ 45

To further develop the indigenous enterprise, logistics, manufacturing and retail base in Kells.

ED OBJ 46

To encourage and facilitate the successful development of the Oaktree and Scurlockstown Business Parks.

ED OBJ 47

To promote sustainable economic development in Trim Town and Environs through the promotion of identified economic growth areas which provide employment opportunities locally and reduce the volume of long distance commuting.

ED OBJ 48

To provide for the development of high-end Business and/or Corporate Headquarters including FDI, at Navan Road, Trim.

ED OBJ 49

To work with and support the Office of Public Works, Fáilte Ireland and other relevant stakeholders in facilitating the development of visitor centre services at the Market House premises on Castle Street for the promotion and development of visitor facilities in Trim and the wider Boyne Valley region including the Trim Castle attraction.

ED OBJ 50

To seek funding for underused areas, through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, for the town of Trim.

this regard, the Council has taken a proactive approach in securing funding to obtain Planning approval to develop Trim Library and Cultural Centre.

It is an objective of the Council:

4.7.4 Self Sustaining Towns

4.7.4.1 Laytown/Bettystown

The vision for Laytown/Bettystown seeks to facilitate the development of Bettystown as a vibrant town centre while redefining Laytown to function as a support centre. The residential expansion of the Laytown/Bettystown area in the absence of any employment generating development has resulted in the settlements having a weak employment base. In 2016 the Jobs: Workforce ratio in East Meath was 0.16, which was the lowest recorded in the County. Due to the proximity of the area to Drogheda and Dublin, it would be challenging to attract a large scale employer however there are opportunities to attract small-medium sized enterprises that could avail of the skilled workforce and the connectivity that the area provides to Dublin and Drogheda. Such employment would be vital to improving the jobs ratio and creating a more sustainable settlement.

In order for the settlement to function in a sustainable manner, the town's retail offer needs to be broadened. The Council recognises the importance of a high quality public realm in attracting new businesses into the area and creating a desirable living and working environment and has embarked on the preparation of a Public Realm Plan. Plan Further, a proactive approach is being taken by the Council to improve the Public Realm through the acquisition of land at the entrance to Bettystown

beach for the development of a landmark building providing amenities and services at the beach for the local community and tourists.

A key element of the development strategy for Laytown/Bettystown is the construction of the north-south spine road connecting the R150 at Scoil an Spioraid Naomh Primary School to the Eastham road roundabout. This will reduce traffic congestion along the Coast road and improve traffic movements in the town centre thereby improving the Public Realm.

The Council has identified a strategic employment site in Laytown to address the sustainability issues currently experienced in this area . These lands could accommodate a potential people intensive enterprise opportunity. This would help redress the current commuter levels from the area. It is also intended that these employment lands would support a greater use of the train station in Laytown along with the provision of a public car park. This would allow for the redevelopment of the existing carpark adjacent to the playground. Potential uses of this central space adjacent to a High Amenity area on the banks of the River Nanny could be a Public Park/amenity area for the general public in line with the Public Realm Plan once completed. This would provide

ED OBJ 51

To promote East Meath as an employment base and encourage the location of start up businesses in the area.

ED OBJ 52

To support the development of industrial, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing,

technology and campus style office based employment on the strategic employment lands to the northern side of the R150, immediately west of Laytown rail station. Enterprise and employment proposals shall be developed in tandem with park and ride facilities and enhanced pedestrian connectivity between the rail station and the residential development further north in Laytown all to facilitate the development of a sustainable live work community in order to address outbound commuting from the Laytown/Bettystown area.

ED OBJ 53

To continue to support the delivery of the North-South Spine Road linking Bettystown and Laytown.

ED OBJ 54

To implement the Public Realm Strategy for Bettystown and Laytown.

ED OBJ 55

To facilitate the provision of a new Park and Ride Facility at Laytown Train Station in conjunction with the National Transport Authority and Irish Rail.

ED OBJ 56

To support the design and construction of a Beach Facilities building of high architectural quality at the entrance

to Bettystown beach that will improve the provision of amenities and services available at the beach.

a central hub for the community creating an improved sense of community in Laytown and in turn creating a better live work environment while also promoting the tourism sector creating further employment in the area.

It is an objective of the Council:

4.7.4.2 Ratoath

Ratoath is currently the fourth largest town in County Meath. As recognised in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy Ratoath is one of the towns recording the highest population growth rates in the country over the last ten years (>32%) which has a lower level of employment provision. It operates primarily as a commuter settlement, with almost 75% of the workforce travelling outside Meath for employment in 2016²², with 70% of these people travelling to the Dublin Region and 36% travelling to Dublin City Centre. This confirms the close inter-relationship between Ratoath and the Dublin Metropolitan Area. Reducing the volume of commuting from Ratoath and expanding the employment base is one of the key challenges facing the town. A unique opportunity to strengthen the relationship between Ratoath and the equine industry, including Fairyhouse Racecourse and the Tattersalls International Equestrian facilities, which are important equine assets of national and international significance, has been identified as an area where future employment opportunities could be generated.

The key Planning challenge for Ratoath is to

²² CSO POWSCAR, 2016

facilitate a Plan led evidence based transition from an unsustainable commuter settlement to a sustainable settlement based on the 'live work' community model championed by the Economic Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022. This will enable the town to capitalise on the existing highly skilled and educated work force currently resident within the town. An alignment of the Navan- Dublin rail line to the east of Dunshaughlin would facilitate a future spur to serve Ashbourne/Ratoath thereby further supporting the economic viability of the rail project and creating sustainable communities in these towns containing a future population of circa 40,000, please refer to ED OBJ 40.

The RSES recognises the towns potential to strengthen its employment base and develop as an important centre of employment due to its strategic location, connectivity with surrounding settlements, and the availability of a skilled workforce. Future growth will promote and support the development of further visitor and tourist facilities at Fairyhouse and Tattersalls to develop an internationally significant Equine Hub at this location. Future development will focus on brown field/infill development in the town centre to reduce vacancy levels. Provision will also be made for the sustainable expansion of the town centre to support employment growth and service provision for existing and

ED OBJ 57

To seek to develop Ratoath as an employment hub in recognition of its highly skilled and educated workforce.

ED OBJ 58

To support the development of an equestrian hub at Ratoath that maximises the internationally recognised equine facilities at Tattersalls and Fairyhouse and ensures the County continues to be a leader in the Irish and International sport horse industry, including breeding, racing, competing, and training.

ED OBJ 59

To promote and, support the development of strategic employment lands between Ratoath and the National and International equine hub at Fairyhouse.

future residents. In summary the development strategy for Ratoath will give emphasis to the creation of jobs and the provision of social and community infrastructure that is essential in the creation of a vibrant and active sustainable community.

It is an objective of the Council:

4.7.4.3 Enfield

Enfield functions largely as a commuter town with settlement growth influenced by its proximity and accessibility to Dublin City and its metropolitan city economy, with strategic road and rail commuter connections to the Capital and the northwest as part of the national Dublin-Sligo rail line. The population of Enfield increased significantly during the last inter census period, from 2,929 persons in 2011 to 3,239 persons in 2016. This 10.6% increase was the largest increase to occur across the 'Small Towns' and is well above the 3.8% national

average growth. Some 44% of the town's population make up the labour force, of which, 66% are in employment, a figure higher than the County average. 37.2% of the workforce living in Enfield (530 persons) commute to Dublin City and suburbs, with an average journey time of 55 minutes.

Given the strategic location of Enfield proximate to the M4 knowledge corridor, there is a significant opportunity for economic and commercial development growth in the town. In this regard, a large site on the eastern edge of the town has been designated as a strategic employment site (c. 31 hectares), suitable for development and use as a data centre or other use compatible with the E1/E3 zoning objective, based on the strategic position of the town and the proximity of the site to the national fibre network optic cable. Further, there are two sites in the centre of the town which

ED OBJ 60

To encourage the development of Knowledge orientated enterprise, High Tech, Bio Tech, ICT, Research & Development synergies with third level institutions which may include Maynooth University (MU²³), and major employers already established in the sub region (Intel, Hewlett Packard);

ED OBJ 61

To further key linkages and partnerships with Maynooth University including the branding of the area as a centre of excellence in the knowledge based economy;

ED OBJ 62

To facilitate the location of emerging employment sectors including (but not limited to) industrial, Engineering, ICT, Science, Data Analytics, Data Centre and Business and Financial Service, and other Foreign Direct Investment on the strategic employment lands zoned E1/E3 to the east of the town.

ED OBJ 63

To work with Eirgrid, as far as practicable, to ensure power infrastructure is available for the development of zoned employment lands within the M4 corridor.

ED OBJ 64

To promote, encourage and facilitate economic development and diversification of Enfield and to support the development of the Royal Canal Greenway and the potential spin off enterprises generated from this facility.

would support consolidation in the urban core.. There is sufficient capacity in the existing Enfield Business Park to accommodate industrial and enterprise development. Employment growth is subject to the capacity of infrastructure and quality of environment to support it.

It is an objective of the Council:

²³ Maynooth University (MU) formerly NUIM

4.7.4.4 Stamullen

Stamullen has developed as a commuter settlement primarily due to its proximity to Dublin and associated road and rail links via the M1 Dublin-Belfast Motorway and Gormanstown Rail Station.

The town functions as a local employment centre that serves the wider East Meath area. The City North Business Park has capacity for further expansion. The location of this Business Park, which includes a hotel with conference facilities, along the M1 Dublin to Belfast Economic Corridor makes it an attractive location for investment due to its transport links with regional and national growth centres. Thus there is significant potential for economic development given the strategic location of the town on the Dublin-Belfast Economic corridor which will address out bound commuting levels.

The development strategy for Stamullen will

ED OBJ 65

To facilitate development of employment lands at the City North Business Park in tandem with the development of the necessary link road from these lands to the Gormanstown Road.

ED OBJ 66

To continue to support and promote the inherent economic potential of the M1 corridor, building upon existing strengths. There will be a focus on developing the corridor as a distinct spatial area with international visibility.

focus on the development of the settlement as a local service and employment centre.

The City North Business Campus is strategically located off the M1 at Junction 7 however the absence of a direct road link to the campus from Stamullen has inhibited the creation of a synergy between the town and this employment zone.

It is an objective of the Council:

4.8 Data Centres

Recent years have seen a marked increase in the number of new data centres constructed worldwide and this trend is expected to continue into the foreseeable future. The demand has been fuelled by a dramatic surge in data management requirements caused by, amongst other factors, the growth of IT requirements, web-based services and emerging technologies.

Data centres by nature, are land intensive developments and can have differing locational requirements depending on the type of data accessibility speeds they cater for. All data centres have common infrastructure requirements such as access to high voltage electricity lines, high powered fibre optic cables, good site security and accessibility. Given the infrastructural requirements for data centres the Council's Planning and Economic team have liaised extensively with industry leaders and stakeholders and have pioneered a Plan led approach to the identification of specific suitable sites for data centres within the County. High speed retrieval speeds are more appropriately located within close proximity to the Metropolitan Area where direct access can be provided to the T50 fibre optic cable

and high voltage electricity, both of which are present on lands identified at Dunboyne and Dunboyne North. The location of these less people intensive uses outside of the M50 ring and separate from but connected to the existing built up area is a key growth enabler for Dublin and the policy position is endorsed within the NPF²⁴ Alternative sites deemed suitable for such development include but are not limited to: employment lands at appropriately zoned lands in the Southern Environs of Drogheda

ED POL 13

To support and facilitate the development of data centres on suitable sites with supporting infrastructure subject to obtaining the relevant consents.

the identification of suitable sites for data centre development.

ED OBJ 67

To continue to identify suitable sites for the development of data centres and ICT related development within the County.

ED OBJ 68

To promote and support the development of lands within the Metropolitan Area for the provision of data centre and ICT related development.

It is the policy of the Council:

It is the objective of the Council:

4.9 Quantum of Available Zoned Employment Generating Land

Planning for future employment development requires a more broadly based approach than planning for other sectors due to the increasingly diverse nature and requirements of development in the economic and employment sector. In order to respond to the diverse nature and requirements of this sector the council has employed a targeted approach to the selection of lands within the County, ensuring that there is sufficient variety and quantum of zoned lands to achieve sustainable and balanced growth within the County.

It is acknowledged within the NPF that certain employment sectors have very specific locational attractions and requirements. In particular, those related to the information economy and knowledge development, tend to be very place specific. These sectors tend to locate in urban areas which have *'a denser, more skilled workforce and have a steady stream of local talent and innovation associated with third level research institutions'*.²⁵ They also tend to have good international connectivity and are located

²⁵ Page 56 of the National Planning Framework.

in close proximity to international airports. The Council has been responsive to these trends as outlined in the NPF and in 2014 developed a targeted approach to these issues via the preparation of the Economic Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022.

In order to facilitate the implementation of the Economic Strategy, Variation no. 3 was adopted to the Meath County Development 2013-2019 which provided for the spatial implementation of the economic strategy for the County. The Council promoted a highly selective approach to the zoning of land for specific employment sectors and continues this plan led approach to the identification of employment lands within the County in this Plan.

4.9.1 Summary

Overall the Economic Development Strategy of this Plan seeks to facilitate the provision of adequate land for employment uses, having regard to spatial planning, infrastructural, environmental and transportation requirements and their compatibility with adjoining land uses.

ED POL 14

To ensure that there is sufficient land zoned within the County for economic activity in line with the requirements of the Economic Strategy 2014-2022 and any replacement/updated Strategy. Such land will be protected from inappropriate development that would prejudice its long term development for employment and economic activity.

Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives sets out in detail the land use zoning objectives which are applicable to all statutory land use Plans in County Meath.

4.10 Green Economy

The Green Economy refers to an increasingly sustainable approach in undertaking economic activity by reducing the reliance on fossil fuels and upgrading inefficient buildings, and the need to do so in order to attract investment. The term Green Economy covers a wide range of sectors that have in common the objective of *'providing goods and services in a sustainable way that reduces impact on the environment and contributes to the circular economy'*²⁶. In Ireland, this covers activities such as sustainable food production, tourism, green financial services, green products and services, waste and water management, renewable energy and energy efficiency. The NPF recognises and supports the development of the circular and bio economy.

The Government's Action Plan for Jobs 2017 outlines that there is a *'strong economic dimension to the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy'*. The Council recognises the significant role the 'Green Economy' has to play in the competitiveness of the County and the country

²⁶ DJEI Action Plan for Jobs 2017

²⁷ For more information on Meath County Council's policy on green house gas reduction, refer to chapter?

as a whole²⁷. The growing international emphasis on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving resource efficiency presents a major opportunity for indigenous enterprises to grow and export innovative products and services.

The geographical location of the County adjacent to the national Gateway and the proximity of the routes, through which significant energy transmission networks

ED POL 15

To seek to support and facilitate both existing and new businesses who seek to maximise the re-use and recycling of resources, create new business models and promote innovation and efficiency.

comes from their specific sites and the export of surplus energy to the national grid.

It is the policy of the Council:

ED OBJ 69

To work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to ensure that a sustainable approach is taken to enterprise development and employment creation across all sectors of the Meath economy in accordance with the Green Economy national frameworks relevant to each sector.

ED OBJ 70

Engage with all relevant government stakeholders, enterprise agencies and sectoral representatives in pursuing 'green' approaches to economic

development, and actively collaborate with key industry and educational bodies to promote Meath based initiatives across the economic sectors.

4.11 Rural Economy

The development and maintenance of the rural economy is a complex issue, and one which the government is committed to supporting. This is reflected in the number of government initiatives currently available to promote and assist enterprise within the rural economy. The NPF recognises the 'role rural areas play in driving our economy and our high quality environment' and seeks to encourage and attract entrepreneurship and innovation development in these areas, particularly where low carbon outputs can be achieved²⁸. In order to create future employment opportunities in the rural economy measures are required to support rural entrepreneurship and innovative rural SMEs. The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund established as part of Project Ireland 2040 will assist in revitalising the rural economy.

At present, through the 'Action Plan for Jobs 2017' the Government has committed to provide up to €60 million in competitive funding over the period to 2020 to support collaborative initiatives. The Government is also committed to the implementation of the Action Plan for Rural Development (2017) and will deliver the 2014-2020 EU LEADER Programme which has a total budget of €250 million and includes up to €30 million per annum for other rural development schemes such as Town & Village Renewal, CLÁR and the Rural Recreation programme. The REDZ

²⁸ Page 139 Draft National Planning Framework

(Rural Economic Development Zone) initiative is classified within the CEDRA (Commission for Economic Development in Rural Areas) and are intended to complement the Town and Village Renewal Scheme and cater for projects between the towns and surrounding hinterland that maximise local assets in areas such as tourism, culture, heritage and other areas that support rural economic activity.

Investment under the National Development Plan 2018-2027 will allow an *tÚdarás na Gaeltachta to continue to play its important role in employment creation in Gaeltacht areas over the period of the Plan*. There are existing Údarás funded projects in both Baile Ghib and Rathcairn and it is an objective of this Plan in conjunction with Údarás na Gaeltachta and Gaeltacht na Mí Economic forum to continue to support economic development in the Gaeltacht areas of the County.

The Meath Local Enterprise Office (LEO) works in conjunction with the aforementioned initiatives in providing support to existing businesses and start ups which includes financial assistance, training, mentoring and management development programmes.

The NPF also recognises the important role of telecommunications in the development of the rural economy. It acknowledges that as digital links and opportunities for remote working and new enterprises continue to grow, they will increasingly have the capacity to accommodate employment focused on ICT based industries, multi/media and creative sectors in areas such as agri-tech, tourism, transport and in particular, an added value bio-economy and circular economy.

In order maintain competitiveness and connectivity in rural areas, the Government is supporting the delivery of high speed

broadband services to all businesses, farms, and households in Ireland through the National Broadband Plan.²⁹

The government has acknowledged the specific issues posed by BREXIT to the rural economy and is seeking to support vulnerable businesses in their response to the changing economic climate through initiatives such as the BREXIT fund.

Much of the larger indigenous employment in the County occurs in traditional manufacturing industries, as noted in the Economic Development Strategy. These activities depend to a large extent on the UK market (including NI), which raises the uncertainty posed by Brexit and the likelihood that the exports from the County may become more expensive to the UK in the post-Brexit environment (due to the probability of the UK leaving the Common Market and the Customs Union and from leaving the EU's External Tariff). In order to highlight the attractiveness of the County as a business base, rural networking, clustering and branding will be promoted and supported by the Council, in order to target smaller niche FDI investment into rural areas of the County and increase the share of export business already exporting and those with potential to export.

No single economic sector offers the total solution to the challenges facing rural areas. The optimal response most likely lies in the development of a variety of measures to tap into the potential that individual rural areas possess. In all areas of the County, there is a role for rural development in contributing to the general economic growth of the County. The Council will encourage diversification by promoting the unique assets of the County, its strategic location within the GDA, the availability of an indigenous highly skilled workforce coupled

²⁹ In November 2019 the Government approved the appointment of a preferred bidder to deliver this project.

with the benefits of living in the gateway to Ireland's Ancient East promoting appropriate forms of rural employment development such as agriculture (arable, dairy, sheep, horticulture and organic), equine, forestry, tourism (walking, cycling, leisure, fishing, golfing, water based activities, beach and cultural heritage), mineral extraction and rural enterprises. In summary this Plan promotes and encourages economic development to meet the needs of rural areas whilst recognising and seeking to protect their environmental character and heritage.

4.11.1 Rural Enterprise

It is the policy of the NPF *'to enhance the competitiveness of rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the sustainable diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and in particular those with a low or zero carbon output'*. This Plan accepts that there is a need to develop a rural economy that offers viable and sustainable employment for existing communities. There is also a need to strengthen the provision / retention of services, regenerate rural communities and promote the economic development of rural areas. This manifests itself in the need to both acknowledge the need for, and promote the development of, small scale enterprises in rural areas. Given the County's strategic location within the GDA its excellent transport links, proximity to a multiplicity of third level institutions providing a steady stream of skilled workers and its access to urban centres served by high speed communications infrastructure the County is ideally located to attract and grow new and innovative employment sectors into its rural areas. The Council provides a comprehensive, multidisciplinary support system to businesses who seek to locate in the County.

It is the policy of the Council to support the location of once off medium to large scale rural enterprise if it is demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the council, that the enterprise can be more readily accommodated in a rural setting than provided in a designated settlement centre and subject to standard development management considerations being applied. It is equally accepted that there are certain types of rural enterprises, especially those that involve processing of natural resources, which serve rural communities which have a critical role to play in sustainable rural development. There are already a number of successful enterprises of this nature existing in the County in the food processing and development areas.

The promotion and facilitation of micro enterprises (up to a maximum of 10 employees) is a key area for the generation of sustainable employment opportunities in rural areas. The Council will seek to facilitate the development of this sector by ensuring that incubator units for micro enterprises are provided in lower tier centres (Small Towns and Villages) as well as considering their individual appropriateness in rural nodes and possibly, the open countryside. In particular, the reuse of redundant agricultural buildings and the development of new buildings to accommodate such diversification / enterprise, within an overall farmyard complex, will be considered on their individual merits.

The Government's Action Plan for Rural Development *"Realising our Rural Potential"* highlights the potential of activity tourism to contribute to economic growth in rural areas. It states that *"Outdoor adventure tourism is a key growth sector worldwide and has been identified as a priority for Irish tourism in future years. The development and promotion of this sector provides opportunities for growth, in rural areas in particular, by facilitating businesses to leverage*

the tourism assets in their area in a sustainable way to support recreational activities such as canoeing, cycling, angling and hill walking". The development of a new Greenways Strategy to support activity tourism in rural areas is specifically identified as an action point in the Action Plan. Given the rich cultural heritage and rural tourism present in the County, it is well placed to continue the development of its tourism product and place itself as one of the top destinations for diversity of choice in this sector.

It is the policy of the Council:

ED POL 16

To support the location of a once off medium to large scale rural enterprise only in instances where it is demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Council, that the enterprise can be more readily accommodated in a rural setting than in a designated settlement centre and subject to standard development management considerations being applied.

ED POL 17

To support in conjunction with Meath LEO and other agencies the development of indigenous industry and business start-ups in rural employment centres (villages and settlements) in the County, subject to compliance with siting, design and environmental considerations.

ED POL 18

To support rural entrepreneurship and the development of micro businesses (generally less than 10 no. employees) in rural areas where environmental and landscape impact is minimal and such developments do not generate significant or undue traffic. This policy shall not apply to sites accessed from the National Road Network.

ED POL 19

To support and facilitate sustainable agriculture, agri-food, horticulture, forestry, renewable energy and other rural enterprises at suitable locations in the County.

ED POL 20

To support the implementation of the new LEADER Rural Development Strategy 2014-2020 and any subsequent amended/ updated Strategy for the County.

ED POL 21

To support the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in the identification of other potential REDZ zones across the County and assist local communities to prepare for future funding opportunities.

ED POL 22

To support all relevant stakeholders in the development of a programme of Agri-Innovation/ Agri-Tech, Agri-Green, Food Innovation, and Niche Food for consumers.

ED POL 23

To support the development of activity tourism facilities, in appropriate locations, within the County subject to standard development management considerations being applied.

ED POL 24

To consider, on their individual merits, the reuse of redundant agricultural buildings and the development of new buildings to accommodate farm diversification / enterprise within an overall farmyard complex.

the sector through increased employment with integration and diversification of equine facilities for related leisure and sporting activities.

ED POL 25

To support and promote the equine industry in the County as an economic and employment provider.

ED POL 26

To support the racecourses and associated facilities at Fairyhouse, Navan, Bellewstown and race event at Laytown to ensure that these centres remain viable for long-term development for employment and economic activity.

Please refer to Chapter 9 Rural Development Strategy for further information regarding rural enterprise. Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives provides further information regarding permitted uses in RA Rural Areas and RN Rural Nodes zones.

4.11.1.1 Equine Industry

There are a considerable number of people employed both directly and indirectly in the equine industry which is an important economic contributor to County Meath. There are three race courses located at Fairyhouse, Navan and Bellewstown along with the annual beach races at Laytown. In addition, there are a number of stud farms located throughout the County and the Tattersalls International Equestrian facility near Ratoath. The equine industry in the County presents an opportunity to sustain and grow

4.12 Retail

4.12.1 Introduction

The importance of the retail sector to the national economy is hugely significant delivering 270,000 jobs and constitutes³¹, the largest share of sectoral employment. The sector plays a pivotal role in the growth of the domestic economy as it is the only sector to have a presence in practically every town and village in the country. A strong retail sector has the

³¹ Action Plan for Jobs 2015, January 2015, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, pg. 121.

multiple benefits of drawing people into centres to interact with their community (thereby reducing social isolation), supporting local employment, and obviating the need for people to travel long distances for essential shopping needs, thereby reducing car dependency. The current Retail Strategy for Meath has been undertaken at a time of growth within this sector compared to the previous Retail Strategy conducted for the 2013-2019 Development Plan. At that time the economy had experienced continuous contraction in which the retail sector was significantly affected. Recent forecasts indicate recovering employment rates and increases in consumer disposable income levels, both of these factors are already having a significant positive effect on the growth of the sector. It is the policy of this Plan to promote expansion of growth levels in the retail sector and to provide a clear Plan led approach for future development.

Please refer to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use zoning Objectives and Appendix 4 Retail Strategy for further information.

4.13 Policy Context

The policy context for the Plan in relation to retail is informed by retail guidance documents at national and regional levels. These include the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, Guidelines for Planning Authorities: Retail Planning issued in 2012 by the DoECLG; and the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area, 2008-2016, published in 2008 on behalf of the Dublin and Mid East Regional Authorities.

4.13.1 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, 2019-2031

The RSES acknowledges that retail is a significant contributor to economic activity and employment in the region. The 2008 Retail strategy for the Greater Dublin Area has not yet been updated and the RSES states that EMRA will 'support and drive the preparation of a new retail strategy which will update the retail hierarchy and floor space requirements. RPO 6:10 states:

'EMRA will support the preparation of a Retail Strategy/Strategies for the Region in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012, or any subsequent updates, to update the retail hierarchy and apply floorspace requirements for the Region.'

Table 6.1 of the RSES sets out the Retail Hierarchy for the Region. Navan, Maynooth and Drogheda are designated Level 2 centres (major town centres and County town centres), Ashbourne, Dunshaughlin, Kells, Trim and Laytown/Bettystown are designated as Level 3 centres (town and/or district centres and sub-County town centres).

4.13.2 Guidelines for Planning Authorities: Retail Planning (DECLG) 2012

In order for Planning to support the retail sector through the provision of retail development and the maintenance of vibrancy in towns, the Retail Planning Guidelines outline 5 overriding objectives which include:

- Ensuring retail development is Plan led
- Use of the sequential approach within towns

- Securing competitiveness in the retailing sector through quality designed suitably located projects
- Increasing access to retailing opportunities through more sustainable forms of transport
- Delivering quality urban design outcomes.

The 2012 Retail Planning Guidelines are accompanied by the Retail Design Manual (April 2012). The Manual provides Planning authorities, developers and designers with evidence based quality principles to ensure that future Planning for the retail sector is focussed on the creation of vibrant, quality places.

4.13.3 Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (2008)

The current GDA Retail Strategy covers the period 2008-2016 and provides guidance and policies for retail development at a strategic level and aims to ensure a co-ordinated and sustainable approach to the assessment and provision of retail development in the Greater Dublin Area. The strategy was based on economic conditions prior to the recession. It is a requirement of the Retail Planning Guidelines that a Retail Strategy is prepared for the GDA. Given that the current strategy has passed its expiry date it is anticipated that a Retail Strategy for the Eastern & Midlands Regional Assembly will be developed within the life of the Plan. In the absence of any updates to the Retail Strategy the current document applies.

In relation to Meath the current Retail Strategy for the GDA, 2008-2016 supports the continued development of Navan as the main retail centre in the county (Level 2 Major Town Centre & County Town Centre). The Strategy identifies

Dunboyne, Ashbourne, Dunshaughlin, Kells, Trim, Laytown/Bettystown & Enfield as Level 3 centres (Town and/or District Centres and Sub-County Town Centres). The Retail Strategy 2008 provides that Dunboyne will gradually develop to Level 2 status by 2028. The Strategy states as follows: *To provide for the future development of Dunboyne from Level 3 to a Level 2 centre over a 15-20 year time frame alongside the development of the rail line and associated future population growth, with this growth guided by the Integrated Framework Plan for Landuse and Transportation Plan and the Local Area Plan for Dunboyne.'*

4.14 Development Plan Vision

The overriding aim of the retail strategy for the County is to create the appropriate conditions to foster a healthy and vibrant retail environment in the County over the life of the Plan and beyond. The in depth review of the current situation and consideration of future environmental improvements, to include public realm improvements and floor space provision will be framed within the national and regional context to ensure appropriate and optimal retail activity throughout the County.

Please refer to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives for more information regarding town centre renewal/public realm/placemaking.

4.15 Meath Retail Strategy

The previous County Retail Strategy was prepared during a time when the national retail

market was experiencing a significant decline due to the recession and national economic downturn. The current strategy has been prepared in the context of national economic recovery in which the retail market is showing signs of improvement, with marked increases in the volume of recorded sales. This optimism within the market must be tempered within the context of a level of uncertainty derived from geo-political events and a sustained period of the 'price conscious shopper'. In addition the growth of online shopping is a feature that continues to be apparent in the retail sector and is an area that retailers must engage in if they are to remain competitive.

The strategy aims to sustain and improve the retail competitiveness of the County, address retail expenditure leakage and ensure an equitable, efficient and sustainable spatial distribution of retail floorspace across the County. The emphasis of the Retail Strategy is on ensuring that the County sustains its role and importance in the shopping patterns of local people, the region and nationally. This should be largely driven by the continuing improvement of the County's comparison shopping offer particularly in its main centres. It is important to note that the Council will undertake a joint Retail Strategy with Louth County Council for Drogheda. This is will be an integral part of the joint vision and Joint Urban Plan for the town of Drogheda³².

4.16 Survey & Analysis – Key Findings

A comprehensive survey of households in the County was undertaken in June 2017³³ to establish existing shopping patterns as was a

detailed Health Check survey of all the high tier settlements. Ratoath was included in this Health Check exercise due to its high population and its evolution as a dormitory town within the GDA. The survey highlights continued significant levels of comparison expenditure leakage from the County, however, improvements have been noted in the settlements of Navan, Kells and Trim where the survey indicated that the majority of respondents remained in the County for comparison shopping. 90% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience of shopping in Navan.

This demonstrates that improvements to the diversity of uses available and improvements to public realm have impacted positively on the retail sector in the town. Variety of goods was stated as the main reason for people to leave the County, as was convenience and proximity of other centres to their home.

Convenience (Main Food & Grocery Shopping) - Highlights

- » 78.56% retention of convenience expenditure within the County, which is up from 77% at the time of the previous retail strategy
- » Kells (high) retains 97.56% compared to Bettystown (low) retaining only 50% within the County.
- » Drogheda attracts 50% shoppers from the East Meath area
- » 93% of respondents undertake their top up shopping locally within the County at their local and nearest convenience store.

Main reason cited for selection of shopping venue is geographical proximity. It is noted from the surveys carried out that towns in the County do not provide a significant attraction outside of their immediate catchment area.

³² See report of Drogheda Boundary Review, February 2017, and RSES.

³³ Publication of Meath County Development Plan delayed by Planning and Development Act 2018.

People tend to travel for an experience a 'day out' and this type of destination shopping is lacking in the County.

Comparison (Clothes & Footwear) - Highlights

- » 64.5% of respondents carry out their main comparison shopping outside of the County which is an increase from the 58.9% recorded at the time of the last survey.
- » Navan fulfils a sub regional comparison retail role – 62.5% retention within its own catchment which is a decrease from the 70% recorded at the time of the last survey and attracts 55% & 68% expenditure from Trim and Kells catchments. Kells percentage has seen significant improvement from the 37% recorded at the time of the last survey.
- » Ashbourne retains 27% comparison goods expenditure in its own catchment area which is a significant improvement from the previous retail strategy where it only retained c.11% - the main attraction remains as Blanchardstown (29%).
- » Almost all comparison expenditure from the east coast settlements leaves the county primarily to Drogheda (63%), this has reduced from 78.8% at the time of the previous retail strategy.
- » The main reason cited for shopping outside of County is to avail of a more varied product range.

Bulky Goods Shopping - Furniture and Electrical Goods – Highlights

- » Expenditure leakage for bulky goods was 57.5%.

- » Geographical trends evident in comparison goods expenditure leakage are reaffirmed, with Blanchardstown being the most popular destination.
- » Navan performs quite well retaining 77% of expenditure for bulky goods and 67.5% of Kells area expenditure in this category which is a large improvement from 48.65% recorded in the previous survey.
- » The majority of survey respondents in Trim stated that they conduct their shopping between Navan (17.07%) and Trim (46.34%).
- » Ashbourne catchment – 57.5% of bulky goods takes place outside the County with Blanchardstown satisfying 26% of this.
- » Bettystown catchment – retention of expenditure within the County in this area is an issue with 75% taking place in Drogheda, however it will be difficult to address this in any significant way given the population size of this area and its close proximity to Drogheda.
- » However as per the previous strategy, the Southern Environs of Drogheda continue to perform well.

4.16.1 Commentary

The survey confirms that the continued leakage of comparison and bulky goods expenditure from the east Meath catchment to Drogheda and from the Ashbourne catchment to Blanchardstown is based largely on geographical proximity. The Retail Strategy indicates that this is not surprising given their geographical proximity. Blanchardstown has an influential pull on shopping trends, with the centre being named as the most frequented competing centre outside of the County. The majority of trips generated to Blanchardstown, Dublin City

and Liffey Valley are for comparison goods shopping. The results of the household survey demonstrate a requirement for an increase in the variety and range of comparison stores provided within the County. This would help reduce the leakage to external centres.

4.17 Retail Hierarchy

The County Retail Strategy confirms a retail hierarchy, as set out in Table 3.1 overleaf. This hierarchy is consistent with the Retail Hierarchy contained in the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area completed in 2008.

Level	Type of Centre	Centre	Type of services
Level 1		None	
Level 2	Major town centre/County Town	Navan	Level 2 centres should offer a full range of types of retail services from newsagents to specialist shops, large department stores, convenience stores of all types, shopping centres and a high level of mixed uses. Level 2 centres should be well serviced by public transport.
Level 3	Town And/Or District Centres and Sub County Town Centres	Ashbourne, Dunboyne*, Dunshaughlin, Kells, Trim, Laytown/ Bettystown, Enfield	Level 3 centres will vary in terms of scale of provision and the size of catchment. Generally where the town is not close to a major town such as Ashbourne/Dunboyne/ Enfield and there is a large catchment there should be a good range of comparison shopping with a mix of uses and services. At least one supermarket and smaller scale comparison department store to cater for local needs.
Level 4	Small towns, village and local centres	Various locations within the county including (although not exclusively) Athboy, Ballivor, Clonee, Duleek, Kilmessan, Nobber, Oldcastle, Ratoath, Slane and Stamullen.	Level 4 centres should generally provide for one supermarket ranging in size with a limited range of local shops, supporting services such as a health centre, community facilities and recreation uses. This type of centre should meet the day to day needs of the local population and surrounding catchment.
Level 5	Small villages	Various locations	These centres should meet the basic day to day needs of the surrounding residents. These shops can present as a rural focal point with a local post office near to the local primary school or GAA club or as a small terrace of shops in an urban area such as Blackcastle Shopping centre in Navan.
Other		Southern Environs of Drogheda	Drogheda environs contain a relatively large quantum of retail development due to its association with Drogheda, a second tier centre in the national retail hierarchy. Southgate Shopping Centre (District Centre) is located at Colpe Cross on the southern fringe of Drogheda and includes a significant office component. The retail provision in Drogheda environs performs an important function in serving the needs of the local and surrounding communities.

*Dunboyne will gradually develop over the next 20 years towards a Level 2 Centre in recognition of the status affirmed in the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area

4.18 E-commerce

Online shopping, or 'e-commerce' has a major presence in the Irish retail market, with most multiples having a significant online presence. E-commerce Europe estimates that 82% of Ireland's population of 15 years and older use the internet and 1.9 million of this population shop online, spending €3,143 per year, representing €5.9bn in 2015³⁴.

Visa's Irish Consumer Spending Index has recorded sales in all payment types since 2014. In January 2017, the Visa Index highlighted the contrasting fortunes of online sales versus face-to-face sales with spend on the latter decreasing -0.7% year-on-year - a marginal reduction, but the fourth in as many months. In contrast, online shopping continued to record strong growth in expenditure. Spending was up +12.3% year-on-year, with the rate of expansion in double-digits for the sixth month running.³⁵

Online shopping is therefore one of the most significant growth areas in the retail market in the past decade. While this represents an opportunity for retailers as an additional sales platform, many traditional retailers have suffered loss of sales and in this way, online sales or 'e-commerce' represents a significant competitor. In recognition of this, many retailers are adapting by co-locating leisure uses (particularly food and beverage) alongside retail to provide an 'experience' that cannot be replicated in an online setting. On the main street where floorplates are generally not large, leisure uses such as restaurants and cafes have tended to replace vacant former retail units.

While online shopping is a major factor in loss of sales, there is an opportunity for town centres to provide something that is not possible online, a market-place where experience and social interaction is possible.

4.19 Identification of Core Retail Areas and Opportunity Sites

In accordance with the guidance set out within the Retail Planning Guidelines, the County Retail Strategy identifies Core Retail Areas for the first and second level centres within the County Retail Hierarchy. The Retail Strategy also identifies a number of Opportunity Sites within each town which are considered to be suitable locations for retail development. In accordance with the objectives of the Retail Planning Guidelines, new retail development should be located within or close to these identified core retail areas, where possible.

4.20 The Requirement for Additional Retail Floorspace

One of the key requirements of the *Retail Planning Guidelines* is that retail strategies should provide a broad assessment of the additional retail floorspace required in counties over the lifetime of their strategies. The requirement for additional retail floorspace within the County is estimated having regard to the changes to the population, population forecasts, updated information on expenditure, retail floorspace, extant planning permissions and the findings of the 2017 household and shopper surveys.

The County Retail Strategy sets out broad guidance on the type and amount of additional floorspace that will be required to accommodate additional expenditure over the timescale of the Strategy. This is summarized in Table 4.2 below:

³⁴ <https://www.ecommerce-europe.eu/research-figure/ireland/>

³⁵ <https://www.visa.ie/about-us/press-releases/irish-consumer-spending-increases-plus-4-percent-year-on-year-in-january-1801988?returnUrl=/about-us/press-releases/listing>

Table 4.2: County Meath Floorspace Potential

Year	Convenience sq. m.	Comparison sq. m. Scenario1	Comparison sq. m. Scenario 2	Bulky Goods sq. m.
2011	15,431	124	124	-19,983
2019	31,071	13,723	38,527	-7,614
2022	35,617	20,368	48,446	-1,570

It is noted that there are a number of extant permissions for town centre schemes which have not been implemented and which have not been included within the above floorspace figures. The permissions pertaining to these sites predominantly refer to the provision of supermarkets. For example, a major town centre scheme has been permitted in Kells, however given the limited level of retail floorspace required in the town it is unlikely that this permitted floorspace will come to fruition in the format and scale as originally planned.³⁶ Changing retail formats and patterns in recent years will influence the implementation of historic retail grants of planning permissions.

The Council remains committed to promoting retail development at an appropriate scale on key sites. A case by case consideration of the relevant pipeline floorspace will be necessary in considering any significant retail development. The key consideration in assessing future planning applications is the location of the proposed retail floorspace. The appropriate redevelopment and revitalization of town centres lands should continue to be promoted as a priority.

The results of the household and shopper's surveys undertaken to inform the retail strategy identify a significant degree of leakage of comparison expenditure from the County. A key objective is to reduce this level of leakage throughout the lifetime of the retail strategy.

4.21 Strategic Guidance on the Distribution of Retail Floorspace

The County Retail Strategy provides a strategic policy framework for the spatial distribution of new retail floorspace within the County. The assessment takes account of both emerging trends in the retail market and general estimates of future demand, based on projected changes in the local population, consumer spending and turnover potential. The focus of this is to provide strategic guidance on the location and scale of major retail development. New retail floorspace for comparison retail uses will be promoted in particular within Navan and Dunboyne balanced with incentives to address vacancy.

Enhancing the range and quality of comparison floorspace within the County is essential in ensuring that the County enhances its retail offer and attraction and claws back some of the leakage of expenditure that is occurring to competing centres such as Blanchardstown. As the County Town Centre, Navan, in particular, should be promoted and developed as a centre for higher order comparison floorspace.

In terms of convenience retail provision, it is evident that certain centres most notably Dunboyne and Enfield are under provided for in

³⁶ Current Planning permission due to expire in 2020.

terms of convenience offer, however planning permissions granted in 2017 will significantly address this issue. Convenience retail development will in particular be promoted in these urban centres in order to improve competition choice and diversity in the retail market. A large convenience store has opened in Dunboyne (2018) which will make significant inroads in convenience leakage from this centre. In terms of retail warehouse development, the County is well served. There are two large retail warehouse parks in Navan and a further retail park in Ashbourne. Vacancy levels are reduced low levels in Navan but remain high in Ashbourne. The retail strategy has outlined that there is no current need for additional floorspace of this type within the County. A very cautious approach will be taken regarding further such development over the period of the Plan other than completion of existing parks and existing areas identified in Volume 2.

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 set out the indicative potential for additional convenience and comparison floorspace in the main towns within the County in accordance with the role of each settlement within the County Retail Hierarchy, emerging trends in the retail market and general estimates of future demand, based on projected changes in the local population, consumer spending and turnover potential.

For both convenience and comparison goods retailing, Navan, as the Key Town in the County is to receive approximately one third of the total allocated additional retail floorspace potential. Navan's population has risen to above 30,000 and continues to grow at a strong rate.

Dunboyne is allocated the next largest share of potential floorspace. As a Large Growth Town II, Dunboyne has grown (from 2011-2016) at a lower rate when compared to Navan,

Table 4.3: Indicative Convenience Floorspace Potential

Centre	2026
Navan	4,000-8,806
Trim	1,000-1,450
Kells	800-1,250
Ashbourne	1,000-1,872
Dunshaughlin	1,200-2,322
Dunboyne	2,000-4,744
Enfield	1,000-1,450
Laytown-Bettystown	1,000-1,450
Ratoath	500-1,545
Stamullen	500-895
Other	1,000-1,125
Total	14,000-26,909

Table 4.4 Indicative Comparison Floorspace Potential

Centre	2026
Navan	4,000-6,388
Trim	1,250-1,750
Kells	1,000-1,500
Ashbourne	1,500-2,100
Dunshaughlin	700-977
Dunboyne	1,640-3,200
Enfield	400-500
Laytown/Bettystown	400-500
Ratoath	200-876
Stamullen	200-226
Other	500-768
Total	11,790-18,785

however it is envisaged that the settlement will grow significantly during the lifetime of the Development Plan as part of the Dublin Metropolitan Area.

The allocations shown in Table 4.3 & 4.4 for additional convenience and comparison retail floorspace in Kells, Trim and Ashbourne reflect their status and their projected growth over the life of the Plan. Dunshaughlin's relatively low population growth rate between 2011-2016 and the higher vacancy levels recorded in the land use survey for this retail strategy indicate that significant additional retail floorspace potential is less likely in Dunshaughlin than in Navan and Dunboyne. A convenience foodstore completed in Dunshughlin in 2018 has enhanced the retail offering in the town centre. Notwithstanding the significant level of recent residential activity in Dunshaughlin and the likely corresponding increase in population significant additional floorspace is not likely to be required over the Plan period.

Both Enfield and Laytown/Bettystown have recorded a high population growth in the Census 2016 and Planning permissions granted in 2017 will address any significant deficits in retail floorspace for these areas. Construction of the convenience foodstore in Laytown commenced in 2019. An additional quantum of floorspace is proposed for these settlements also in line with future population growth projections. In areas where there has been limited organic growth, the Council will for limited additional floor space to accommodate qualitative improvements in the retail offer to existing residents. There are a number of challenges for the Bettystown/Laytown area over the Plan period including the sustainable completion of the town centre development in Bettystown, the implementation of the public realm strategy and the development of a hub

for beach related services over the Plan period, all of which will contribute significantly to the regeneration of the area.

Ratoath's large population base and low vacancy rate is acknowledged by a higher allocation of additional convenience and comparison retail floorspace potential to serve the existing population while Stamullen will continue to operate as a small settlement in retailing terms.

In considering the potential for additional retail floorspace within the County, the figures contained in Tables 4.3 and 4.4 above should not be considered as upper limits, merely as indicative of the scale of new floorspace required to meet the needs of existing and future organic population growth and expenditure within the County. The figures represent the potential additional floorspace over that existing and do not include unimplemented permitted retail schemes in the County. The figures set out within Tables 4.3 and 4.4 may be subject to further analysis in the context of future Town Development or Local Area Plans. Additional new floorspace may be proposed and this could replace some existing outdated or poorly located retail floorspace.

4.22 Criteria for the Assessment of Retail Developments

In accordance with the Retail Planning – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (April 2012), new significant development should be directed primarily into the town centres in the County (Level 2&3). New development in small towns and villages (Level 4&5) should be of an appropriate scale and offer to sufficiently meet local retailing needs only.

Retail development in Level 2 and 3 centres should be located within the core retail areas identified for these centres. Retail development outside of the identified core areas will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where the Planning Authority is satisfied that there are no other sites available and the development is necessary to serve the needs of the area. In all instances when assessing new retail developments, the sequential approach shall be applied. This will maintain the retail importance of the town centre and protect the viability and vitality of our town centres. Promotion of an appropriate mix of day and night time uses to include residential, civic, cultural, recreational, commercial and social uses is a critical aspect in this regard. Developments which make a positive contribution to the area in terms of adding value and diversity will be encouraged by the Planning Authority.

The Council will require a high standard of design in all retail developments. This is of particular importance due to the visual role which retail plays in a town or village streetscape.

Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives provide guidance for Retail Development whilst individual Town Statements and future Local Areas Plans will include a range of design principles and policies which respond to local circumstances.

4.23 Shop Fronts

The shop front forms an important part of a street's character as it constitutes a highly visible part of the building at street level. Shop fronts which are well designed and well maintained make for a more attractive street experience

for the shopper and passer-by. All proposals for retail development should have regard to Meath County Councils Shop Front and Signage Guidelines 2017.

Refer also to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives for further requirements in respect of shop fronts.

It is the policy of the Council:

ED POL 27

To implement the Meath County Retail Strategy 2020-2026.

ED POL 28

To have regard to the policies and objectives of the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008-2016 and any replacement document.

ED POL 29

To promote and encourage Navan to sustain its competitiveness and importance as a Level 2 County Town Centre in the Eastern and Midland Region.

ED POL 30

To support the vitality and viability of existing designated centres and to work in conjunction with Retail Excellence Ireland, DJEI and all relevant stakeholders to facilitate a competitive and healthy environment for the retailing industry into the future.

ED POL 31

To ensure that future growth in retail floorspace responds to the identified retail settlement hierarchy.

ED POL 32

To support the development of Core Retail Areas in each of the retail settlement areas as identified within the County Meath Retail Strategy and reinforce the role and function of the Core Retail Areas.

ED POL 33

To adhere to the Sequential Approach principle in the consideration of retail applications located outside of core retail areas.

ED POL 34

To facilitate the development of key opportunity sites as identified in all existing retail centres by the County Meath Retail Strategy 2020-2026.

ED POL 35

To promote the reuse or reactivation of vacant and under-utilised properties/ shop units in order to assist within the regeneration of streets and settlements in the County.

ED POL 36

To encourage a healthy diversity of retail types and scales, as well as uses that are complementary to retail, in particular leisure uses, within all Core Retail Areas.

ED OBJ 37

To facilitate LEO in supporting all existing retail business with an on-street presence in all Core Retail Areas to establish an online sales platform.

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

ED OBJ 71

To continue to implement and facilitate environmental, amenity and recreational improvements to the public realm, including the restriction where appropriate of vehicle use in existing Core Retail Areas.

ED OBJ 72

To promote and facilitate on-street activities including festivals, events, street markets and farmers / country markets in all existing retail centres.

4.24 Tourism

4.24.1 Introduction

The County has much to offer as a tourist destination, in particular its rich heritage, quality rural landscape, attractive towns and villages, and its appealing coastline. The promotion of Ireland as a tourism destination in overseas markets has a multifaceted impact on the Country. Successful tourism marketing not only increases visitor numbers and revenue to the Country, the positive message that it conveys about the Country's natural environment and friendly people support the Government in other areas of economic development such as the attraction of foreign direct investment. Tourism has played a significant role in the economic recovery in recent years and is fundamental in terms of the opportunities it generates for businesses and employment throughout the country. The government is seeking to expand on this growth through the marketing of 'Ireland's Ancient East' as a tourist destination. The Boyne Valley is identified as the birth place of Ireland's Ancient East and the County in particular is the gateway to this destination, with its unique collection of pre-historic sites and monuments in particular the Brú na Bóinne UNESCO World Heritage Site. The County is marketed by Fáilte Ireland as a destination to tell the story of Ireland through a diverse range of authentic and exciting visitor experiences.³⁷

While the County is a particularly attractive location for day-trippers, additional enhancement of the visitor experience is needed to increase dwell time to ensure the County fully benefits from growth in the tourism sector. The implementation of strategies and programmes by the tourism agencies aims to ensure that

visitors are aware of, and directed to, a broad range of attractions across the County, thereby better managing visitor numbers at sites.

4.25 Policy Context

4.25.1 Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy 2020, (Boyne Valley Tourist Office 2016)

The Boyne Valley Tourism Plan has been created to focus on areas of growth potential, identify key projects that will act as a stimulus for tourism development and bring the Boyne Valley brand to the next level through marketing innovation. The immediate goal of the plan is to support the creation of employment through increased tourism activity. The introduction of Ireland's Ancient East programme and the increasing awareness of the Boyne Valley as a national tourism destination highlight the immediate scope for tourism growth within the region. The plan seeks to capitalise on this in order to grow the tourism product of the region to its full potential.

4.25.2 People Place and Policy - Growing Tourism to 2025, (DTTAS, 2014)

This document is a policy framework for the development of tourism within the Country. It seeks to provide a basis for the prioritisation of investment in order to maximise the return from tourism in the long term. It examines the role of people, places, Local Authorities, Central Government, Europe and international policy. The framework has a strong focus on developing the sector to attract 10 million overseas visitors, create a range of direct and indirect enterprise

³⁷ People, Place and Policy; Growing Tourism to 2025.

opportunities and to grow employment in the sector to 250,000 persons by 2025. A Tourism Action Plan (2016-2018) has been created by the Tourism Leadership Group and sets out actions required in the period to 2018, to achieve the overall objectives of People Place and Policy – Growing tourism to 2025.

4.25.3 Tourism Development and Innovation – A strategy for Investment 2016-2022, (Fáilte Ireland, 2016)

In order to stimulate innovation in the tourism product, and to improve international competitiveness, Fáilte Ireland has launched a significant new Tourism Development and Innovation fund which will be the main source of funding in the sector over the next five years. This strategy sets out the framework and mechanism for the delivery of investment to cities, towns, villages, communities and businesses across the country. It identifies priorities to support innovation in the sector to retain and grow the country's competitiveness in the marketplace. Its ultimate aim is to strengthen the appeal of Ireland for international visitors.

4.25.4 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, 2019-2031

The RSES sets out that three of Fáilte Ireland's regional tourism brands are based in the EMRA region. Tourism is a strong contributor to the economy of the region and the RSES seeks to support Fáilte Ireland and other organisations to deliver greater tourism benefits to the Region.

4.26 Development Plan Vision for Tourism

The Plan seeks to facilitate the further development of the County as the gateway to Ireland's Ancient East. It is proposed to promote and facilitate the development of sustainable tourism and recreation and support the development of the Boyne Valley Bucket list³⁸ through the provision of a diverse range of activities, historic sites and accommodation types within the County. Improvements to the tourist experience of the County and increases in overnight stays will positively influence the creation of new and varied employment opportunities throughout the County.

ED POL 38

To co-operate with Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Boyne Valley Tourism, Louth County Council, and any other relevant bodies in the implementation of the Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy 2016-2020 and Ireland's Ancient East Programme.

4.27 Tourist Infrastructure

Fáilte Ireland research has shown that overseas tourists want to visit a destination with a variety of experiences to offer. This has formed the basis for the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East campaigns. The marketing of themes for locations in the County supported by softer route enhancements such as food and local culture is an objective of this Plan. The Plan will seek to support the development

³⁸ Fáilte Ireland marketing campaign for Ireland Ancient East

of a number of initiatives within the County including the Boyne Valley Food Series and Kells Cultural Quarter and Arts Collective and seeks to facilitate any associated development arising from these initiatives in appropriate locations. The Council will endeavour to facilitate new tourist attractions which are sensitive to the rural character and heritage of the area, such as the opening of historic houses or gardens to the public, farm visits, museums and interpretative centres.

ED POL 39

To facilitate the development of tourism infrastructure such as accommodation, restaurants, car and coach parking and toilet facilities in the designated hubs throughout the County.

ED POL 40

To promote the development of sustainable tourism and encourage the provision of a comprehensive range of tourism facilities, subject to satisfactory location, siting and design criteria, the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and areas identified as sensitive landscapes in the Landscape Character Assessment for the County. (Refer to Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Appendix 5 Landscape Character Assessment)

ED POL 41

To support the development of new

tourist facilities or upgrading/ extension of existing tourist facilities at tourist sites within the County such as the Hill of Tara, Loughcrew and Trim Castle in accordance with proper Planning and sustainable development principles. These facilities should avail of shared infrastructure and services where possible, and will be designed to the highest architectural and design standards.

ED POL 42

To encourage new and high quality investment in the tourism industry in the County with specific reference to leisure activities (including walking, cycling, angling, equestrian and family focused activities) and accommodation in terms of choice, location and quality of product.

ED POL 43

To work with all relevant stakeholders and Fáilte Ireland to facilitate the erection of standardised signage for tourism facilities and tourist attractions as part of National and Regional initiatives.

ED POL 44

To encourage the clustering of tourism products and services within identified hubs and nodes to facilitate the sharing of infrastructure and services where possible, to increase linkages within and reduce leakage from the local economy.

ED POL 45

To support the use of the Kells Court House building for tourism and arts related activities.

ED POL 46

To encourage and support the development of the Boyne Valley Food Series, Kells Cultural Quarter and Kells Arts Collective.

ED POL 47

To encourage and support the development of the former Town Hall to use as a Visitors Centre for Trim Castle.

ED POL 48

To support and seek to secure additional funding for the restoration of the Former St Patrick's Classical School for use as a County Archive, genealogy research centre and performance and study space.

It is the objective of the Council:

ED OBJ 73

To support the development of sustainable tourism and encourage the provision of a comprehensive range of tourism facilities, subject to satisfactory location, siting and design criteria, the protection of environmentally

sensitive areas and areas identified as sensitive landscapes in the Landscape Character Assessment for the County. (Refer to Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Appendix 5 Landscape Character Assessment)

4.28 Tourism Sectors

4.28.1 Agri-Food

The agri-food sector has been credited with playing an integral role in the national economic recovery in recent years. The sector is the country's largest indigenous industry, with an estimated turnover of €26 billion and providing 170,000 jobs or 9% of the total employment figure. The sector makes a significant contribution to employment in rural areas, being a pivotal source of enterprise creation and opportunities.

Meath Food Series are a group of businesses – restaurants, hoteliers, food producers and visitor attractions – who are passionate about food, keen to celebrate its journey from producer to the table, and to link it to the rich heritage of this region. Through this medium food producers organise many free and family events throughout the County which include gourmet cycles and farm walks. The focus of this medium is to market the multitude of food experiences there are in the County and in doing so to positively impact growth in this sector. Food tourism has significant potential within the county and provides an alternative experience for visitors. It is a policy of this Plan to support the expansion and growth of food enterprises and associated tourist development

in appropriate areas in the County.

It is the policy of the Council:

ED POL 49

To facilitate and support the development of the Boyne Valley Food Series and associated development in the County at appropriate locations and to encourage co-location of enterprises at suitable sites.

4.28.2 Festivals and Events

Fáilte Ireland recognises the importance of festivals and events with regard to the attraction of both domestic and overseas visitors. The economic and community benefits of such events are well documented. The County has a number of annual festivals and events such as Hinterland book festival, Kells type trail and Guth Gafa film festival all located in Kells, Nobber Harp festival, Spirits of Meath throughout the County and many more. It is a policy of this plan to support the development of festivals and events throughout the County at appropriate locations and subject to any relevant consent required. Refurbishments of existing buildings for such events will be encouraged within the County, at appropriate locations, such as the refurbishment of the Heritage Centre in Kells and the Town Hall in Duleek.

The inaugural Púca festival, to be held in 2019, celebrating Ireland as the birthplace of Halloween with venues in Trim, Athboy and Drogheda aims to attract international visitors to Ireland in October and November. It is intended that this would become an annual event.

ED POL 50

To support and promote existing festivals and sporting events to increase the cultural, heritage and lifestyle profile of the County, and where appropriate to promote and facilitate the development of new events and venues to host these events.

It is the objective of the Council:

ED OBJ 74

To support and promote existing festivals and sporting events to increase the cultural, heritage and lifestyle profile of the County, subject to the satisfactory location, access, parking provision and protection of the surrounding environment.

4.28.3 Multi-Experience Attractions

The provision of multi experience facilities, particularly family friendly attractions such as those developed at Tayto Park, Slane Castle and Causey Farm, is supported by the policies and objectives of this development plan. The discerning modern tourist wants a variety of experiences suitable for both families and adults in a variety of settings.

The development of significant family attractions such as Tayto Park at Curragha, Ashbourne, Irish Military War Museum in Starinagh and Causey Farm at Fordstown has had a positive impact in attracting a different target market

to the County, who, when visiting these sites, create spin off revenue for local shops, hotels and other commercial businesses. The addition of Tayto Park in particular, has provided a new national tourist attraction deviating from the traditional attractions based on heritage and culture. The Plan acknowledges this regional amenity and the tourism role for the County and supports the sustainable development of these parks, farms and complexes at suitable locations throughout the County.

Slane Distillery has provided a further form of tourism diversification within the County which attracts a different target market not previously captured by the County. The development of Slane Demesne as a multi experience tourism destination is supported by this Plan subject to the protection of the integrity of the protected structure and it's setting for future generations.

ED POL 51

To enable, facilitate and encourage the growth and sustainability of the tourism sector through the provision of tourism enterprise developments in rural areas including open farms subject to the provision of adequate infrastructure and compliance with normal Planning considerations. (Refer to Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Appendix 5 Landscape Character Assessment)

ED POL 52

To promote Tayto Park in Curragha as a flagship family visitor attraction in the

County, subject to the normal development management standards. The Council will support and encourage further appropriate sustainable development of the integrated tourism product at Tayto Park subject to the provision or upgrade of the requisite physical infrastructure.

ED POL 53

To promote Slane Castle as a multi experience tourism destination and attraction in the County, subject to the normal development management standards. The Council will support and encourage further appropriate development of the integrated tourism product at Slane Castle subject to the provision or upgrade of the requisite physical infrastructure and the protection of the integrity of the projected structure and its surrounds, including the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA.

ED POL 54

To promote Causey Farm as a rural multi-experience tourism attraction in the County. The Council will support further appropriate development at Causey Farm subject to the provision of adequate infrastructure and compliance with normal Planning considerations.

ED POL 55

To promote the Irish Military War Museum

as a rural multi-experience tourism attraction in the County. The Council will support further appropriate development at the Irish Military War Museum, subject to the provision of adequate infrastructure and compliance with normal Planning considerations.

future tourist value in any way, particularly in and proximate to the Brú na Boinne and Hill of Tara areas.

4.28.4 Culture & Heritage

The Boyne Valley is identified as the birth place of Ireland's Ancient East and the County in particular is the gateway to this destination, with its unique collection of pre-historic sites and monuments in particular the Brú na Bóinne UNESCO World Heritage Site³⁹.

It is recognised that there is a need for improved and new tourist facilities within the County in particular at Loughcrew, Hill of Tara, Trim Castle, Newgrange, Knowth and Hill of Slane. The development of tourist facilities at these locations and within the wider county should respect the outstanding quality and variety of the natural and built environment in the County and should not damage the resource or prejudice its future tourist value in any way. In assessing such proposals regard will be had to the Landscape Character Assessment for the County.

It is the policy of the Council:

ED POL 56

To support the development and improvement of tourist facilities at historical sites in the County only in instances where the development does not damage the resource or prejudice its

4.28.5 Walking and Cycling Routes

Greenways offer a unique opportunity to develop a further strand in tourism for the County, through the provision of infrastructure for adventure tourism which has demonstrable economic benefits. In 2015, Fáilte Ireland estimated that 355,000 of overseas visitors engaged in cycling representing 7% of the overall overseas tourist market. Greenways also provide opportunities for active travel which supports sustainable transport policy⁴⁰ and recreation in the localities along their routes and can also provide economic, social, environmental and health benefits.

As mentioned in Section 4.25 above, the Government's Tourism policy statement "People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025", recognises the importance of investing in the visitor experience in order to continue to grow tourism including investment in facilities for visitor activities such as greenways and other outdoor recreational activities. This Plan recognises the important role that suitable cycle and pedestrian routes have in the attraction of tourists to the County. The Council will endeavour to assist in the delivery of such routes and, in particular, the delivery of the Royal Canal Greenway which is currently under construction, the Boyne Valley Greenway (Trim – Navan – Slane – Drogheda- Newbridge House), Boyne Valley - Lakelands Greenway (Navan – Kingscourt - Monaghan), subject to appropriate assessments and consents. (Refer to Chapter 5

³⁹ See Built Heritage Chapter for more details on the Bru na Boinne

⁴⁰ See Section 8.16 Public Rights of Way

Movement Strategy).

Pedestrian walks, such as the Royal Canal, and the Navan Ramparts will also be improved and maintained subject to obtaining the relevant consents. Other routes that arise from time to time will also be supported. Public rights of way which contribute generally to the amenities of the county and local areas will be protected and maintained⁴¹.

It is the policy of the Council:

ED POL 57

To work with the National Transport Authority (in conjunction with relevant objectives in Chapter 5 Movement Strategy of this Development Plan), Boyne Valley Tourism, Fáilte Ireland, Waterways Ireland and all stakeholders to develop a co-ordinated approach to the selection, delivery and servicing of future greenways, blueways, trails and routes throughout the County.

ED POL 58

To support developments which will enable and encourage countryside recreation and an increased appreciation of the natural environment, through facilitating the development of community walks, off road trails / rural trail developments, parks and other outdoor amenities and recreational infrastructure. All proposals will require screening to determine if a full Appropriate Assessment of the likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, is required.

ED POL 59

To encourage and support sensitive development which provides for the appreciation, interpretation, upgrade and provision of access to natural habitats, scenic vistas and heritage features for the benefit of rural tourism subject to normal Planning and nature conservation considerations.

It is the objective of the Council:

ED OBJ 75

- a)** To promote and develop the upgrade of the towpaths along the Ramparts at Navan to Stackallen.
- b)** To deliver the Boyne Greenway from Oldbridge to Navan via Slane in conjunction with the NTA, Fáilte Ireland and all relevant stakeholders and subject to obtaining all relevant assessments and consents.
- c)** To deliver the Royal Canal Greenway as part of the Dublin to Galway Greenway project in co-operation with Waterways Ireland, and neighbouring Local Authorities and all relevant stakeholders, and subject to obtaining all relevant assessments and consents.
- d)** To deliver the Lakelands Greenway (Navan-Kingscourt-Monaghan) in co-operation with Irish Rail and neighbouring Local Authorities and subject to obtaining all relevant assessments and consents

The delivery of these Greenways and the upgrade of these towpaths will be subject

⁴¹ See Chapter 5 Movement for additional policies and objectives on walking and cycling

to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process. Where adverse effects on European Sites are identified, alternative locations and/or designs will be developed to ensure that the upgrades will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Sites, either alone or in-combination with any other Plans or projects. Considering the general location provided for these upgrades, and the ecological information and assessment required to be carried out to inform their design, it is reasonable to assume that at the detailed design stage any potential for a project element to impact on the European Site could, and will, be resolved through the exploration of alternative locations or designs. If, despite the implementation of mitigation measures, there remains a risk that the proposals will adversely affect the integrity of the European site, the project will not be progressed unless an alternative solution can be implemented which avoids/ reduces the impact to a level that the integrity of the European Site(s) is (are) unaffected.

ED OBJ 76

To explore the provision of sustainable medium and long distance walking routes.

ED OBJ 77

To explore the feasibility of developing the Turas Columbanus walking trail in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders and neighbouring Local Authorities and subject to obtaining all relevant assessments and consents.

4.29 Accommodation

Managing the provision of tourist accommodation is essential to ensuring the delivery of a sustainable tourism strategy. It is acknowledged within the Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy that there is a significant deficit in accommodation within the County. The provision of new quality hotels is outlined as a requirement of the strategy in order to attract over night dwellers and increase the County's benefit from tourism. While the provision of new hotels in appropriate locations will be supported by the Planning Authority, the County must broaden the type of bed night stock through the provision of more contemporary forms of accommodation and the development of rural based tourism enterprise. The redevelopment of outbuildings as part of such a rural enterprise for accommodation purposes would be considered in appropriate locations.

4.29.1 Caravan / Camping grounds

The Council recognises the potential and growth nationally of sites for caravans, motor homes and camping. This sector is an important element in the overall accommodation provision of all holiday makers. Such developments should ideally be located within or at the edge of development centres within the County in order to provide ease of access to services for tourists. It is an objective of the Plan to ensure that the design, operation and impact of such tourist and visitor accommodation do not unreasonably affect the amenity of the surrounding landscape.

4.29.2 Holiday Homes

With the possible exception of the coastal strip,

the County is not under significant pressure for second home or holiday home development. It is recognised that there is a market for small short term let holiday home complexes associated with a particular tourist attraction in areas such as the equine industry. Applications for such developments will only be considered in suitable locations including towns, villages and rural nodes and where there is an existing established visitor attraction in operation.

It is the policy of the Council:

ED POL 60

To facilitate the development of a variety of quality tourist accommodation tourist types, at suitable locations, throughout the County.

ED POL 61

To positively consider the development of new hotels in existing settlements, with particular preference for locations in larger settlements such as Navan. In rural locations (i.e villages / rural nodes), it must be demonstrated that:

- (i)** the area proposed to be served by the new development has high visitor nos associated with an existing attraction / facility;
- (ii)** a need for new / additional hotel type accommodation for these visitors has been identified having regard to the profile of the visitor and the availability and proximity of existing hotels in the area; and
- (iii)** The distance of the location from a significant settlement is such that visitors to the area/attraction are unlikely to avail of existing hotel facilities.

ED POL 62

To positively consider the development of a new hotel at an appropriate location in Navan, subject to the provision of required infrastructure and compliance with Development Management Standards.

ED POL 63

To encourage touring/holiday vehicles, caravan, and camping sites to locate adjacent to or within existing settlements or established tourism facilities, having due regard to surrounding land uses and proper Planning and development of the area.

ED POL 64

To positively consider the (part) conversion of existing dwellings to Bed & Breakfasts (B&Bs) and Guesthouses, to be operated by the owner-occupier of the dwelling. Applications for new build B&Bs /guesthouses will in the first instance be evaluated as private dwellings and the objectives and standards applicable in that area type (e.g. large town, rural town, rural area etc) will be applied.

ED POL 65

To facilitate, where appropriate, the conversion of former demesnes or estate dwellings and their outbuildings into tourism facilities subject to good Planning and architectural conservation practice.

(Refer to Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Appendix 5)

ED POL 66

To ensure that the provision any accommodation (ED POL 65 refers) , shall not be occupied as permanent place of residence. This accommodation type will in any event only be considered favourably in the case of refurbishment and adaptation of a Protected Structure or group of structures within attendant grounds for tourism use.

ED POL 67

To encourage proposals to reinstate, conserve and/or replace existing ruinous or disused dwellings for holiday home purposes subject to normal Planning considerations relating to design, safe access and provision of any necessary wastewater disposal facilities.

ED POL 68

To require new holiday home / self-catering developments to locate within either established settlements or at established tourism / recreation facilities, other than those developments involving the renovation / conversion of existing buildings.

ED POL 69

Holiday home / self-catering

developments on a farm holding shall be provided by farmhouse extension or by the utilisation of other existing dwellings / structures on the property. Only where it has been demonstrated that these are not viable options, will permission be considered for new build development. Any new build development shall be in close proximity to the existing farmhouse.

ED POL 70

To facilitate the development of hostels along established walking / hiking routes and adjacent to existing tourism / recreation facilities, subject to normal Planning criteria.

4.30 Town and Village Enhancements

The important role that towns and villages throughout the County play as tourist centres and the facilities and services they can provide are recognised by Government, which through 'Realising our Rural Potential' seeks to revitalise town and village centres through the implementation of initiatives such as the Town and Village renewal scheme and others set out within Section 4.11 above.

The Council has sought to improve the overall appearance of the County's towns and villages in recent years through Pride of Place Initiatives, Tidy Towns Initiative and through policies contained within Local Area Plans and through effective development management and enforcement.

The Council has included a policy to work closely

with local communities in implementing village design plans that have been prepared in a public consultation process whilst ensuring that such plans are consistent with adopted Local Area Plans and development objectives contained in the County Development Plan.

ED POL 71

To facilitate and support in the implementation of Village Design Plans and other community led projects to enhance village environments that have been prepared through a public consultation process whilst ensuring that such Plans are consistent with adopted Local Area Plans for such centres and town/village development objectives contained in the County Development Plan.

Please refer to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives for further information on public realm/town renewal.

CHAPTER 5

Movement Strategy

5.1 Introduction

Transport is fundamental to how we live and work. The maintenance and delivery of an efficient, integrated and coherent transport network in line with national and regional policy is fundamental to the future economic, social and physical development of the County. Failure to facilitate efficient transport creates costs for society and acts as a barrier to economic growth. A key priority for this 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.

National and regional transport policy recognises that current transport trends in Ireland and the GDA, 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.

While the emphasis in this chapter is to encourage this modal shift it is also important to recognise that some essential travel will continue to be made by cars and goods vehicles and the Plan also facilitates improvement in road infrastructure to cater for the required improved efficiencies.

5.2 Statutory Context

Legislation in the form of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) established the role of the National Transport Authority (NTA)¹ in the planning process for the GDA. Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies

(RSES) are to be consistent with the National Transport Authority's Transport Strategy as are Local Authority Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

5.3 Policy Context

There are a number of National and Regional policy documents which provide the basis for Meath's transportation strategy as follows:

National Planning Framework and National Development Plan- Project Ireland 2040

The National Strategic Outcomes of Compact Growth (NSO 1), Enhanced Regional Accessibility (NSO 2), Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities (NSO 3), Sustainable Mobility (NSO 4) and Transition to a Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Society (NSO 8) and a Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills (NSO 5) are all of relevance to this Movement Strategy.

The NPF focus is on delivery of compact growth with the emphasis on an efficient public transport systems thereby reducing reliance on the private car which will reduce emissions, improve air quality etc.

Implementing the Ireland 2040 Framework will be guided by targeting the following national strategic outcomes:

Compact, Smart Growth:

'Carefully managing the sustainable growth of compact cities and towns adds value and should create more attractive places for people to live and work in. All our cities and many rural towns contain large potential development areas, centrally located and frequently publicly owned, that are suitable and capable of re-use to provide housing, jobs, amenities and services, but which

¹ The NTA is the transport authority for the Greater Dublin Area and the public licensing agency for Ireland. It was established under the provisions of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 and the Public Regulation Act (2009), on 1st December 2009.

need a streamlined and co-ordinated approach to their development, with investment in enabling infrastructure and supporting amenities, to realise their potential. Activating these strategic areas and achieving effective density and consolidation, rather than more sprawl of urban development is a top priority.'

Enhanced Regional Accessibility:

'Once the core areas in key cities and urban areas have been mobilised, the next priority is to enhance accessibility between key urban centres of population and their regions such as the key cities of Cork and Limerick and through the Atlantic Economic Corridor to Galway as well as access to the larger urban centres in the North-West. Investment in connectivity first without urban consolidation measures will likely worsen the current trends towards sprawl.'

Sustainable Mobility:

'in line with Ireland's Climate Change mitigation plan, we need to progressively electrify our mobility systems moving away from polluting and carbon intensive propulsion systems to new technologies such as electric vehicles and introduction of electric and hybrid traction systems for public transport fleets, such that by 2040 our cities and towns will enjoy a cleaner, quieter environment free of combustion engine driven transport systems.'

National Strategic Outcome 2 refers to enhanced regional accessibility. The N52 Ardee Bypass and the N2 Slane Bypass are projects listed as part of the programme of investment set out in the National Development Plan, and as illustrated by figure 5.2, aims to achieve these objective the objective of enhanced regional connectivity.

A number of sections of the national road network will be progressed through pre-appraisal and early planning during 2018 to

prioritise projects which are proceeding to construction in the National Development Plan, these projects include: N3 Clonee to M50, N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon Cross, N2 Ardee to south of Castleblayney and N2 Clontibret to the Border.

A number of local roads are listed in the NDP for progression over the life of the plan the Bettystown/Laytown Spine Road is included. The NDP states that Local Authorities are planning to progress a wide range of regional and local roads projects across the country. These projects are at various stages of planning and appraisal. Examples of projects currently subject to appraisal include the R157 Maynooth Road, Dunboyne (safety upgrade) and the R162 Navan to Kingscourt road (safety upgrade).

National Transport Authority - Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035

This transport strategy provides a framework for the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure and services in the Greater Dublin Area over the next two decades. The strategy has identified that since the 1990's car ownership in Meath has consistently risen even through the recession years and is now reaching saturation point. Cycling mode share in the County is low. The strategy emphasises the need for additional walking and cycling infrastructure in the region and outlines the improvements required to achieve this. The NTA's Transportation Strategy is required by legislation to be consistent with the RSES.

Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016-2021 (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)

The Capital Plan presents the Government's €42 billion framework for infrastructure investment

in Ireland over the period 2016 to 2021. The plan is committed to the provision of high quality infrastructure. It outlines allocations for new projects across a number of key areas and funding to ensure that the present stock of national infrastructure is refreshed and maintained. In particular it mentions the commencement of the Slane By-Pass and the Laytown – Bettystown link road.

Investing in our Transport Future - A Strategic investment Framework for Land Transport (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2015)

This document considers the role transport should play in the future of the Irish Economy and seeks to identify a strategy for the development and management of Irelands land transport network. The framework is intended to guide key land transport investment decisions over the next number of decades. The document also provides a set of criteria against which to assess national and regional land use planning policy, including the development of a possible new spatial planning framework. It also functions as a filter for new transport investment projects prior to their appraisal for suitability for inclusion in national or regional schemes.

Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government 2012)

These guidelines set out planning policy considerations relating to development affecting national primary and secondary roads, including motorways and associated junctions, outside the 50-60 kmph speed limit zones for cities, towns and villages.

Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland, 2009-2020 (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport)

This strategy aims to deliver a sustainable transport system which is fundamental to the climate change agenda. The Government reaffirms its vision for sustainability in transport and sets out five keys goals: (i) reduce overall travel demand, (ii) maximise the efficiency of the transport network, (iii) reduce reliance on fossil fuels, (iv) reduce transport emissions and (v) improve accessibility to transport and thus improve our quality of life.

National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020 (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport)

The National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF) 2009-2020, uses the targets outlined in Smarter Travel and focuses more specifically on cycling as a sustainable transport mode. The document sets out the stated aim of creating a strong cycling culture in Ireland making cycling the norm, rather than an exception, for all short trips undertaken.

Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan 2014-2024

This document focuses on establishing an inventory of cycling facilities in Dublin, Kildare, Meath and Wicklow and identifies potential cycle routes such as greenways, cycle paths, cycle lanes, and roads. The plan sets out a ten year strategy to guide investment into cycling in the GDA and seeks to increase the regions cycle network fivefold in length to 2,840km.

Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2019 (DMURS), (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department of Environment)

The focus of the manual is to create streets

that are safe, attractive and comfortable for all users. It presents a series of principles, approaches and standards that are necessary to achieve balanced, best practice design outcomes with regard to street networks and individual streets. Well designed streets can create connected physical, social and transport networks that promote real alternatives to car journeys, namely walking, cycling or public transport. The manual gives guidance on the layout of new developments and on the design of individual roads and streets taking into account streetscapes, urban design as well as engineering criteria. The manual must be taken into account by all Planning Authorities when permitting or planning development.

National Cycle Manual 2011 (National Transport Authority)

This offers guidance on integrating the bike into the design of urban areas. The manual challenges planners and engineers to incorporate cycling within transport networks more proactively than before.

Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2018 (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government)

This includes standards for car parking.

National Aviation Policy for Ireland 2015 (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport)

This document serves as a general guidance document for the development of aviation within the Country. It highlights three principal goals for the Irish aviation sector:

- *To enhance Irelands connectivity by ensuring safe, secure and competitive access, responsive to the needs of business, tourism and consumers;*

- *To foster the growth of aviation enterprise in Ireland to support job creation and position Ireland as a recognised global leader in aviation; and,*
- *To maximise the contribution of the aviation sector to Irelands economic growth and development.*

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, 2019-2031

Regional Policy Objective RPO 6 Integrated Transport and Land Use Planning seeks to: *'Promote best use of Transport Infrastructure, existing and planned, and promote sustainable and active modes of travel to ensure the proper integration of transportation and land use planning.'*

The RSES acknowledges that transport as a sector is one of the significant contributors to our national Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and as a nation we need to act on climate change and adapt and mitigate all sectors accordingly. The need to transition to a low carbon society by reducing transport usage and transitions to lower carbon options, including transition to clean renewables is a key aspect of Ireland's response to climate change. Transition to a low carbon transport system is firstly about reducing the need for travel and then shifting to economically efficient modes, i.e. active travel modes and public transport. Transitioning existing fossil fuel vehicles to clean renewable vehicles is a vital further step.

The NTA's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) provides a framework for the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure and services over the period 2016 - 2035.

The following RPOs are relevant:

RPO 8.1:

'The integration of transport and land use planning in the Region shall be consistent with the guiding principles expressed in the transport strategy of the RSES.'

RPO 8.2:

'The capacity and safety of the Region's strategic land transport networks will be managed and enhanced, including through the management of travel demand in order to ensure their optimal use.'

RPO 8.3:

'That future development is planned and designed in a manner which maximises the efficiency and protects the strategic capacity of the metropolitan area transport network, both existing and planned and to protect and maintain regional accessibility.'

RPO 8.4:

'Land use plans within the GDA shall demonstrate a consistency with the NTA's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area and plans with or outside of the GDA shall be consistent with the guiding principles expressed in the RSES.'

RPO 8.5:

'To support the preparation of a regional strategy for freight transport in collaboration with the relevant transport agencies and the other Assemblies.'

RPO 8.6:

'In order to give local expression to the regional level Transport Strategy within the Region in conjunction with the NTA, Local Transport Plans (LTP) will be prepared for selected settlements in the Region.' The settlements for which Local

Transport Plans will be made will include, but will not be limited to, Athlone, Dundalk, Drogheda, Arklow, Ashbourne, Balbriggan, Longford, Mullingar, Portlaoise, , Naas, Navan, Newbridge, Tullamore, and Wicklow-Rathnew and certain large settlements or development areas within the Dublin Metropolitan Area.

PO 8.7:

'To promote the use of mobility management and travel plans to bring about behaviour change and more sustainable transport use.'

RPO 8.8:

'The RSES supports delivery of the rail projects set out in Table 8.2, subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process.'

These projects include:

- Implement the extension of the Dunboyne/M3 Parkway line to Navan during the Mid Term Review of the GDA Transport Strategy;²
- Dart expansion Programme - new infrastructure and electrification of existing lines, including provision of electrified services to Drogheda, Maynooth and M3 Parkway on the Maynooth/Sligo Line.

RPO 8.9:

'The RSES supports delivery of the bus projects set out in Table 8.3 subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process.'

Table 8.3 includes a broad range of measures addressing all aspects of bus transport including routes, fare structures, passage information etc.

¹ The subject of a Draft Ministerial Direction, August 2019

RPO 8.10:

'The RSES supports appraisal and or delivery of the road projects set out in Table 8.4 subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process.'

These projects include:

- N2 Slane Bypass;
- N2 Rath roundabout to Kilmoon;
- N2 Ardee Bypass;
- N2 Ardee to Castleblayney;
- N3 Clonee to M50
- M4 Maynooth to Leixlip.

In addition, long term protection shall remain for the Eastern Bypass and the Leinster Outer Orbital Route.

RPO 8.11:

'Support the improvement, and protection, of the EU TEN-T network and the strategic function of the Dublin to Belfast road network.'

RPO 8.12:

'Support the delivery of a higher speed rail connection between Belfast and Dublin and Cork.'

RPO 8.13:

'Support the Local Link Rural Transport Programme throughout rural areas of the Region.'

RPO 8.14:

'The RSES supports delivery of the strategic park and ride projects set out in Table 8.5 subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and the outcome of the planning process.'

These projects include Dunboyne.

In terms of cycling the RSES focuses on implementation of the NTA Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan, delivery of the National Cycle Plan, provide safe cycling routes in towns and villages across the Region, enhance pedestrian facilities in all urban areas in the Region; and investment priorities for cycleways feasibility and route selection studies for cycleways shall identify and subsequently avoid high sensitivity feeding or nesting points for birds and other sensitive fauna.

The RSES sets out the following in respect of air transport:

RPO 8.17:

'Support the National Aviation Policy for Ireland and the growth of movements and passengers at Dublin Airport to include its status as a secondary hub airport. In particular, support the provision of a second runway, improved terminal facilities and other infrastructure.'

RPO 8.18:

'Improved access to Dublin Airport is supported, including Metrolink and improved bus services as part of BusConnects, connections from the road network from the west and north. Improve cycle access to Dublin Airport and surrounding employment locations. Support appropriate levels of car parking and car hire parking.'

RPO 8.19:

'Spatial planning policies in the vicinity of the airport shall protect the operation of Dublin Airport in respect to its growth and the safe navigation of aircraft from non-compatible land uses. Policies shall recognise and reflect the airport noise zones associated with Dublin Airport. Within the Inner Airport Noise Zone, provision of new residential and/or other noise sensitive development shall be actively resisted. Within the Outer Noise Zone,

provision of new residential and/or other noise sensitive development shall be strictly controlled and require appropriate levels of noise insulation in all cases.'

RPO 8.20:

'Spatial planning policies for areas located within the Public Safety Zones shall reflect the guidance set out in the ERM Report "Public Safety Zones, 2005" (or any update thereof) commissioned by the then Department of Transport and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, in assessing proposals for development falling within Airport Public Safety Zones.'

5.4 Vision for Movement Strategy

It is a strategic aim of this Development 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^[1]. It is the Vision of this Plan is to use the resources at the Council's disposal to provide safe, efficient and accessible transport networks which meet both local needs and wider regional and national strategic aims. Maintaining and improving transport networks remains a priority, particularly in relation to the delivery of important infrastructural development and transport measures which support the economic development strategy for the County. Achieving sustainable patterns of transport in accordance with national and regional policy as set out in Section 5.3 will enable settlements to function more efficiently and effectively.

5.5 Integration of Land Use and Transportation Planning

Land use planning can proactively influence travel behaviour; clustering of development coupled with improvements in street layouts, design and effective planning process can strongly influence how people make their daily journeys. Research has shown that travel by non motorised modes is highest in pleasant 'liveable' streets in areas of good permeability with direct access to public transport. It is a key priority of the National Planning Framework (NPF) to achieve effective density and consolidation rather than urban sprawl and thus improve mobilisation of core urban areas to achieve enhanced connectivity between regions. It is stated within the NPF that achieving effective density within centrally located urban areas and urban consolidation measures rather than more sprawl of urban development is a priority. It is advocated within the NPF that these measures will be delivered in accordance with the NTA Strategy for the GDA 2016-2035.

Consequently, it is therefore the policy of the Council to continue to support effective integration of land-use and transportation in order to generate and reinforce sustainable patterns of development in the County that reduce the need to travel by car. This policy focus is intended to, not only reflect the policy position as outlined in the NPF, and critically to take cognisance of the objectives of *'Ireland's Climate Change Strategy to 2020 and beyond'*.

It is a policy of the Council:

^[1] National Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035

MOV POL 1

To support and facilitate the integration of land use with transportation infrastructure, through the development of sustainable compact settlements which are well served by public transport.

MOV POL 2

To carry out strategic studies to identify and set out the delivery mechanisms for the necessary transport infrastructure to implement the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath.

MOV POL 3

To promote sustainable land use planning measures which facilitate transportation efficiency, economic returns on transport investment, minimisation of environmental impacts and a general shift towards the greater use of public transportation throughout the County.

MOV POL 4

To promote higher residential development densities in settlement centres along public transport corridors, that are not located in areas sensitive to flooding, or will increase temperatures of urban areas.

It Is the Objective of the Council:

MOV OBJ 1

To prepare and commence implementation of, Local Transport Plans (LTP), in conjunction with the NTA and relevant stakeholders, Drogheda (in conjunction with Louth County Council as part of the Joint Urban Plan), Ashbourne, Navan, Ratoath, other settlements where appropriate.

5.5.1 Demand Management

The NTA's Transport Strategy envisages that there will be limited provision of new road capacity in the Greater Dublin Area up to 2030. While investment in public transport networks will free up road space, the forecast for growth in population and employment will negatively affect congestion in the Greater Dublin Area. The NTA acknowledge that, even with all of the planned improvements aimed at reducing the dependency on car travel, it will not be possible to meet the targets in the Smarter Travel Policy without significant demand management measures of a fiscal nature.

Management of demand for road use is broadly grouped into three categories:

- Control measures where access to, and use of, the road infrastructure or on and off street parking spaces is controlled e.g. on street parking controls, ramp metering, dedication of road space to certain transport modes, better development management to reduce demand and need to travel,
- Fiscal measures where pricing mechanisms are utilized to achieve road usage modification,

- Other complementary measures used in combination with 1 and 2 above e.g. mobility management plans, car clubs, lift sharing, marketing and promotion of non-car modes of transport.

The Strategy aims to provide an efficient and effective transport system across the region and to accommodate future travel growth in a managed and balanced way. Increased public transport provision, coupled with enhanced cycling and walking facilities in the urban areas, will provide the means to cater for much of the increased travel demand. However, without complementary demand management measures the full benefits of the Strategy will not be achieved.

Accordingly the Plan will support the NTA in its prioritisation of the following:

- *Encourage land use policies which support the provision of development in locations and at densities which enable the efficient provision of public transport services;*
- *Set maximum parking standards⁵ for all new developments, with the level of parking provision applied being based on the level of public transport accessibility;*
- *Reduce the availability of workplace parking in urban centres to discourage car commuting, where alternative transport options are available;*
- *Implement, at the appropriate time, demand management measures to address congestion issues on the radial national routes approaching the M50 motorway, to ensure that these routes retain sufficient capacity to fulfil their wider strategic functions;*
- *Secure the introduction or expansion of on-street parking controls, and charging*

structures, that seek to reduce commuter parking and which contribute to greater parking turnover for non-commuting purposes;

- *Support and facilitate the implementation and expansion of:*

- 1) Workplace Travel Plans for all large employers⁶;*
- 2) Tailored travel planning information provision for residential and commercial/retail areas;*
- 3) Travel Plans for schools, colleges and all education campuses; and*
- 4) Car club schemes, car-pooling and car sharing.*

5.6 Strategic Infrastructure

5.6.1 Challenges

The State is not yet in a position to invest in transport networks at the same levels as before the economic crisis and the scope to implement major investment programmes in areas such as transport is tightly constrained.

A significant gap still exists between the funding allocation for transport measures and the minimum funding levels required to maintain the existing systems in adequate condition. Such restricted funding levels leave little scope for network improvements and capacity increases. The challenge now faced by the Local Authorities is securing increased investment levels in the future and ensuring that a strategic focus is maintained as to where and how investment is directed and utilised. The Irish economy is facing a better future. For transportation system this brings with it challenges and opportunities. In

⁵ See Chapter 11 Development Management

⁶ See Chapter 11 Development Management

the absence of appropriate levels of investment, targeted economic growth could be undermined by increased levels of congestion which results in a loss of efficiency and negatively affects community life. All transport investment therefore must be focused and prioritised to secure the most advantageous outcomes with the focus, as outlined in the NPF, RSES and the NTA Transport Strategy, on improved accessibility within urban areas and on strategic regional routes and corridors.

5.6.2 Key Principles

The following are considered to constitute the key principles underlying future investment in land transport networks:

- 1) Funding should focus on the maintenance and renewal of identified strategically important elements of the existing land transport system, so as to protect earlier investment and maintain essential functioning.
- 2) Inclusion of measures to address current and future urban congestion is considered essential.
- 3) Inclusion of measures to improve the efficiency and sustainability of urban transport including improved and expanded public transport; capacity and walking and cycling infrastructure, improved traffic management and bus priority; and better use of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), where appropriate.
- 4) Any further investment should be targeted to maximise the contribution of land transport networks by enhancing the efficiency of the existing network, particularly through increased use of ITS applications or through investments that

improve connections to key seaports and airports or support other identified national and regional spatial planning priorities, where appropriate.

- 5) In the case of roads, investment should provide access to poorly served regions, promote access for large-scale employment proposals and complete missing links or address critical bottlenecks and safety issues, including those in Slane.
- 6) Secure implementation of transport projects supported by national and regional spatial planning policies, along with other demand management measures where appropriate.

It is the goal of this Plan to ensure that future transport investment, as governed by these principles, will seek to maintain and improve the quality of life of citizens and be consistent with environmental, climate and biodiversity objectives, imperatives and obligations, including those arising from the EU Habitats Directive.

5.7 Sustainable Transport

The promotion of use and increased delivery of sustainable modes of transport is fundamental to achieving Ireland's carbon emission reduction requirements of 20% by 2020 and 30% by 2030. In addition to the reduction of emissions, failure to deliver public transport investment will result in a highly congested network that cannot meet the economy's transport needs. *The provision of a well-functioning, integrated public transport system, enhancing competitiveness, sustaining economic progress and*

*enabling sustainable mobility choices for citizens supports the overall objectives of Ireland 2040*⁷. Given the current funding constraints in major transport investment programmes additional public transport capacity requirements for the GDA area must be met in the medium to long term through investment in lower-cost alternatives. The Plan will seek to support and facilitate an increase in modal share for cycling and increases in the use of the bus network in the County. Emphasis will also be placed on supporting the delivery of the rail line to Navan in accordance with the Transport Strategy for the GDA 2016-2035.

5.7.1 Rail

At present, rail services are available at stations located in Dunboyne, Pace (M3 Parkway), Enfield, Laytown and a limited service provided from Gormanston. There are rail stations located immediately adjoining the County which are also used by Meath residents – Maynooth, Kilcock, Clonsilla, Drogheda and Balbriggan. The Short Hop Zone (SHZ) rail prices operated by Irish Rail currently operate as far as Balbriggan and Kilcock. Given the close proximity of a number of train stations in County Meath, i.e. Laytown, Gormanston and Enfield, the pricing discrepancy is having an undesirable impact on user behaviour. It is diverting rail users to a considerable extent to utilise stations outside of the County in order to avail of cheaper fares thereby creating more congestion at certain locations. This is not a sustainable model and with population growth continuing in County Meath, the problem is certain to be further exacerbated in the future. Meath County Council is committed to working with Irish Rail to review the operation of the Short Hop Zone (SHZ) rail prices and encourage an extension of same to stations in Laytown, Gormanston and Enfield.

It is a priority of the National Development Plan to provide fast, high-frequency electrified services to Drogheda on the Northern Line which stops at Gormanston and Laytown Stations in the County and to M3 Parkway on the Maynooth/Sligo Line. As part of the DART expansion works to Drogheda through the planned electrification of the Northern rail line and the associated upgrades to the rail network it is considered there is an opportunity to include a new railway station at Bettystown to improve access to rail services for residents of Bettystown and to encourage more sustainable travel patterns in the East Meath area. This Plan supports the prioritisation of these projects and will continue to support TII in the roll out of rail improvements and upgrades throughout the County⁸. The Council would also support the delivery of a further rail station in the Northern Environs of Drogheda, given the designation of Drogheda as a Regional Growth Centre.

The provision of a rail line from Pace (M3 Parkway) to Navan remains a key objective of the Local Authority in order to facilitate the development of the key town as designated in the RSES in the County. This was supported in the RSES which included an objective 'to support the delivery of a number of rail projects including the implementation of the extension of the Dunboyne/M3 Parkway line to Navan during the Mid Term Review of the GDA Transport Strategy.' At present, there is a rail service to Dublin from all 12 administrative capitals with the exception of Navan putting it at a competitive disadvantage⁹. The delivery of this critical infrastructure will strengthen the transport links in the County and will significantly improve the County's economic competitiveness as well as having a meaningful improvement on the quality of life of the County's residents¹⁰.

⁷ [Page 144 Project Ireland 2040- National Planning Framework](#).

⁸ National Development Plan 2018-2027 page 58:

⁹ Completion of Northern Metro Swords is included.

¹⁰ At the time of writing this matter was the subject of a Ministerial Draft Direction.

The preparation of the Railway Order application for Phase II of the Navan Rail project was substantially completed including the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement and Natura 2000 Appropriate Assessment in 2011. A route which maintained an alignment largely in keeping with the historic Navan – Dublin rail route was selected as the preferred option and extensive consultations were undertaken by Irish Rail with officials of Meath County Council and all relevant stakeholders. The Transport Strategy for the GDA 2016-2035 outlines the NTA’s policy position with regard to the delivery of Phase II of the Navan Rail Line and has noted that the extension of the commuter rail line to Navan has been previously proposed and assessed in the as part of the examination of the Navan-Dunboyne-Blanchardstown-Dublin City Centre corridor. It states that *‘based on current population and employment forecasts, the level of travel demand between Navan, Dunshaughlin and various stations to the city centre is considered insufficient to justify the development of a high-capacity rail link at this time. It is intended that, as part of the next Strategy review, the likely future usage of a rail connection to Navan will be reassessed, taking into account the level of development that will have taken place over the next six years in Navan and Dunshaughlin and their environs. Pending that review, the corridor previously identified for a rail link to Navan should be protected from development intrusion’*.¹¹

This Plan maintains a strong policy stance to ensure that the detailed designed alignment is protected from further development, and that this protection also extends to potential stations and park and ride sites along the route. This Plan will generally ensure, through the inclusion of a specific zoning objective R1 Rail Corridor which seeks *‘to provide for a strategic rail*

corridor and associated physical infrastructure’ (as illustrated on Map Series No. 5.1) that the design route of Phase II of the Navan Rail Line (as confirmed by the NTA) will generally be reserved free from development.

It is further noted that recent support delivered to the project by the RSES, supported strongly by MCC significantly improves future prospects of delivery of this key infrastructure for County Meath and the designated Key Town of Navan.

It is the policy of the Council:

MOV POL 5

To actively pursue in conjunction with Irish Rail the implementation of the extension of the Dunboyne/M3 Parkway line to Navan during the Mid Term Review of the GDA Transport Strategy in accordance with the precepts of the RSES.¹²

MOV POL 6

To promote, facilitate and advance the delivery of Phase II of the Navan railway line project and associated rail services in cooperation with other relevant agencies.

MOV POL 7

To support the Dart expansion Programme including new infrastructure and electrification of existing lines, including provision of electrified services to Drogheda, Maynooth and M3 Parkway on the Maynooth/Sligo Line and on the Dublin-Belfast/Northern Rail Line.

It is the objective of the Council:

¹¹ [NTA Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area page 56:](#)

¹² This is subject to the Draft Ministerial Direction issued in relation to the RSES 2019-2031.

MOV OBJ 2

To improve, in conjunction with the NTA and Irish Rail, facilities at existing stations.

MOV OBJ 3

- (a)** To protect and safeguard the detailed designed alignment of Phase II of the Navan rail route and surrounding lands (including identified station locations), as illustrated on Map Series No. 5.1 in Volume 4, free from development and any encroachment by inappropriate uses which could compromise its future development as a rail facility.
- (b)** To explore in conjunction with Irish Rail and other stakeholders the feasibility of a future rail spur off the Navan-Dublin Rail line from Dunshaughlin to serve Ashbourne and Ratoath.

MOV OBJ 4

To facilitate and encourage the upgrading of existing railway stations, and protect, as required, lands necessary for the upgrading of existing railway lines or stations or the provision of new railway stations throughout the County.

MOV OBJ 5

To facilitate the provision of a train station at Bettystown (in addition to the existing station at Laytown) as part of the DART expansion works to Drogheda through the planned electrification of the Northern rail

line by Irish Rail.

MOV OBJ 6

To encourage, support and work in conjunction with Irish Rail to review the operation of the Short Hop Zone (SHZ) rail prices with an extension to stations in Laytown, Gormanston Enfield and Drogheda.

MOV OBJ 7

To support the delivery of an additional train station in the Northern Environs of Drogheda as part of the future Joint Urban Plan.

MOV OBJ 8

To explore the feasibility of a train station in conjunction with Irish Rail and Louth County Council as part of the Joint Urban Area Plan.

5.7.2 Bus

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. Bus Éireann currently operates Commuter and/or Expressway services to and from all major employment centres in the County to Dublin. The high level of service also reflects the fact that other national expressway services to the North West and West are routed through the County. Bus Éireann also provides public transport services linking population centres

in the County and adjoining counties such as Drogheda to Navan, Navan to Kells and Navan to Trim. Bus Éireann's commuter network into Dublin City Centre is constantly evolving and improving to meet the changing demographic profile of the Greater Dublin Area. A number of private services including Ashbourne Connects, Collins, and Matthews Coaches which serves the population centres in East Meath, are also in operation and play an important role in meeting the overall demand for transport services. These compete with, and complement, the existing public transport provisions of Bus Éireann. Bus Éireann also provide a local bus service in Navan. National bus routes are complemented by Dublin Bus in Clonee Ashbourne, Ratoath and Dunboyne.

Notwithstanding this high level of service, in the context of restricted investment in future major transport infrastructure, the NTA as part of the transport strategy for the GDA has undertaken a number of studies which have identified those routes where demand for travel necessitates significant levels of investment in order to minimise delays. Improvements will include, enhanced bus lane provision on these corridors, removing current delays on the bus network in the relevant locations and enabling bus services to provide a faster alternative to car traffic along these routes.

Arising from this analysis a Core Bus Network was identified which comprises sixteen radial bus corridors, three orbital bus corridors and six regional bus corridors, three of which pass through County Meath and include;

1. M1, via Dublin Port Tunnel
 - Serves long distance bus routes from Belfast, Dundalk, Derry, Monaghan and Drogheda; and
 - Serves other regional bus routes from

Balbriggan, Skerries and East Meath.

2. M2, via Dublin Port Tunnel
 - Serves regional bus routes from Ashbourne and Slane.
3. M3/ N3, via Navan Road
 - Serves regional bus routes from Cavan, Navan, Trim and Dunshaughlin.

Given the funding restrictions on major transport programmes the NTA are recommending that improvements to the Quality Bus Corridor network are prioritised and implemented. Projects specific to the County proposed under the NTA's Transport Strategy for the GDA 2016-2035 include:

 - Enhanced bus service along the M3/N3
 - The provision of a bus hub in Navan
 - Enhancement of bus services on the N2

Investment will also be made available for the maintenance of the existing bus network outside of the core bus network identified by the NTA, including the provision of bus priority measures at locations where delays are reducing efficiency. Funding will also be made available for a variety of bus infrastructure improvements in relation to bus stops, travel information and bus shelters.

There has been an increased frequency of local bus services largely as a result of the establishment of Flexibus, Meath Accessible Transport Ltd.¹³ Flexibus run a daily route between Trim and Navan to assist passengers who wish to access education, training or employment. Regular weekly services run between a number of towns and villages while Dial-A-Ride services are available from a number of centres. The improvement in public transport between larger towns and between villages and towns is of paramount importance to reduce

¹³ Flexibus is one of the projects around the country, which are funded by the Department of Transport under the Rural Transport Initiative. Flexibus carried over 114,144 passengers in 2016 (figures obtained from Flexibus).

isolation and improve linkages between the towns, villages and their hinterlands.

It is the policy of the Council to:

MOV POL 8

To cooperate 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.

MOV POL 9

To ensure that the design and planning of transport infrastructure and services accords with the principles of sustainable safety, in order that the widest spectrum of needs, including pedestrians, cyclists, the ageing population and those with mobility impairments are taken into account.

MOV POL 10

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.

MOV POL 11

To facilitate in conjunction with relevant statutory agencies alternative transport modes to the private car, including

enhanced delivery of public transport services along regional corridors (as defined in the NTA's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035); frequent local bus services linking residential areas to District Centres and Town Centres, and which also serve shopping areas, employment areas and other activity centres, and connecting to key transport interchange points.

MOV POL 12

To support the implementation of recommendations presented in the NTA's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 and any subsequent reviews thereof.

It is an objective of the Council to:

MOV OBJ 9

To provide bus priority measures on existing and planned road infrastructure, where appropriate, in collaboration with the NTA, Bus Éireann and TII¹⁴ (where relevant).

MOV OBJ 10

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.

¹⁴ The National Roads Authority (NRA) was the state body responsible for the national road network. The NRA was established as part of the Roads Act 1993 and commenced operations on 23 December 1993 in accordance with S.I. 407 of 1993. The NRA merged with the [Railway Procurement Agency](#) and was effectively dissolved on 1 August 2015. The merger of the two agencies is called [Transport Infrastructure Ireland \(TII\)](#).

MOV OBJ 11

To require Mobility Management Plans and Traffic Assessments for proposed trip intensive developments, as appropriate. Please refer to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives.

MOV OBJ 12

To deliver, in conjunction with the NTA and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, a Public Transportation Hub in Navan to accommodate national, commuter, regional and local bus services.

MOV OBJ 13

To work with the NTA and Bus Eireann to make all existing public transport services throughout the county more accessible for wheelchair users and those with disabilities.

MOV OBJ 14

To work with the NTA and relevant stakeholders to provide bus services in rural communities in the County.

5.7.3 Park and Ride Facilities

Park and Ride facilities integrate car use with public transport and assist those living in remote locations not well served by public transport to access public transport connections. It is important that park and ride facilities improve public transport accessibility without unduly

intensifying road congestion, or increasing the total distance travelled by car. Park and ride sites should not be located where they might encourage transport users who would otherwise access public transport locally to drive further to access a site, thereby adding to congestion.

It is thus considered appropriate to include a policy in the Plan to provide Park and Ride schemes which improve public transport accessibility. These schemes shall be developed at appropriate locations which will not exacerbate road congestion or increase car travel distances. These locations shall be close to high quality road corridors leading from Core towns with good bus priority to commuter destinations in the metropolitan area.

It is the policy of the Council:

MOV POL 13

To promote and support the provision of Park-and-Ride facilities which improve public transport accessibility without exacerbating road congestion, or which cause increased car travel distances, at appropriate locations within the County.

MOV POL 14

To support the NTA to extend bus routes to the M3 Parkway Train Station in order to deliver a strategic multi modal park and ride facility at this location.

It is an objective of the Council:

MOV OBJ 15

To assess and determine the potential for bus-based Park and Ride facilities, in particular, close to high quality road corridors leading from settlements in the Core Area, with good bus priority to commuter destinations in the Dublin Metropolitan area.

MOV OBJ 16

To identify and develop suitable lands to provide for Park and Ride facilities at appropriate locations in the County.

MOV OBJ 17

To identify and develop suitable lands to provide for additional Park and Ride facilities at appropriate locations in Navan.

MOV OBJ 18

To support the delivery of a new car parking facility at Laytown Train Station in conjunction with the NTA and Irish Rail.

MOV OBJ 19

To facilitate the provision of a new car parking facility at Enfield Train Station in conjunction with the NTA and Irish Rail.

MOV OBJ 20

To implement suitable charging structures for Park and Ride facilities to make it more

likely that those who need the service (i.e. those outside walking distance and where alternative public transport options are not available), will obtain parking. In addition, implement where appropriate, suitable measures on local roads adjacent to Park and Ride facilities to discourage commuters from parking on such roads.

5.7.4 Taxi

Accessible taxi and hackney services are a vital element in the public transport offering providing a demand-responsive 24 hour door-to-door service. Accessible taxis are often the only means of public transport available for those using wheelchairs or with mobility impairments. An accessible integrated public transport service is an essential prerequisite to enable people with disabilities to participate in the normal activities of daily living i.e. work, education, leisure and social activities. The NTA Strategy seeks to meet a target for wheelchair accessible taxis of 10% of the fleet by 2020, with the full fleet to be wheelchair accessible by 2035. It is desirable that taxis are modern and suitable for the needs of all users, and that they do not have an undue impact on local air quality or CO₂ emissions.

The Council will continue to support improvements in taxi and hackney services in the County and will seek to ensure that all public transport services complement each other through the development of effective interchange opportunities throughout the County.

Please also refer to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives.

It is the policy of the Council:

MOV POL 15

To support and facilitate the provision of an accessible taxi and hackney service in the County particularly in the main urban centres.

It shall be an objective of the Council:

MOV OBJ 21

To provide public transport interchange facilities, including facilities for taxis, at appropriate points on the public transport network particularly in the main urban centres in cooperation with the NTA.

MOV OBJ 22

To facilitate the development of properly designated taxi ranks in order to improve public transport infrastructure and services at suitable locations such as retail development and leisure facilities in conjunction with the NTA.

5.7.5 Electric Vehicles (EV)

Electric Vehicles (EV) refer to both Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV) and Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEV). In line with the Government target to electrify all new cars and vans by 2030, the NPF acknowledges the need to move away from *'polluting and carbon intensive propulsion systems to new technologies such as electric vehicles and introduction of electric and hybrid traction systems for public transport fleets'*. There

are a number of charging points around the County and this Plan promotes the further installation and expansion of charging points for these vehicles in order to achieve the 2030 targets for full electrification.

It is a policy of the Council:

MOV POL 16

To support the provision of electricity charging infrastructure for electrical vehicles both on street and in new developments in accordance with car parking standards and best practice.

It is an objective of the Council:

MOV OBJ 23

To facilitate the provision of electricity charging infrastructure for electric vehicles both on street and in new developments in accordance with car parking standards and best practice.

MOV OBJ 24

To liaise and collaborate with relevant agencies to support and encourage the growth of electric vehicles and EBikes with support facilities/infrastructure, through a roll-out of additional electric charging points in collaboration with relevant agencies at appropriate locations including retrofit of charging points in existing urban centres and park and ride facilities.

5.7.6 Cycling & walking

The Council recognises cycling and walking to be healthy, safe, ecologically-sound and socially-just forms of movement. Walking and cycling are the most sustainable modes of transport available in terms of their positive impacts on the environment. The NTA's strategy for Transport in the GDA emphasises the need for additional walking and cycling infrastructure in the region and outlines a number of improvements required to encourage more people to walk which includes improvements to the existing environment for people with mobility, visual and hearing impairments.

Planning policy can encourage walking to become the principal method of movement for shorter journeys through the arrangement of land uses and by utilising good urban design. Providing a comprehensive network of safe, well-lit and convenient footpaths (both road-side and segregated) within new residential areas with links to schools, local neighbourhood centres, public transport stops and workplaces will encourage people to walk more. The Council will continue to improve walking facilities in the County in conjunction with the NTA.

As a consequence of the ambitious objectives outlined in the National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF) which seeks 10% of all journeys in 2020 to be taken by bicycle, the NTA commissioned the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan. This document outlines existing and required cycling infrastructure in both urban and rural areas of the region. Information outlined in that report will provide for cycle infrastructure projects to be prioritised in terms of the importance to the strategic network and the likely cycle demand for such a scheme. The Network Plan has provided Local Authorities with an evidence based strategy for the

implementation of cycle infrastructure that will see tangible returns for investment.

The fundamental issue arising from the NCPF in relation to the County is the overall fragmentation of the existing cycle network. Poor linkages within towns are common place as is the absence of any network linkages between urban centres. The NCPF identified potential linkages in the network and particularly mentioned the potential to link Ashbourne, Ratoath and Dunshaughlin as a cluster.

While the Council has been successful in the delivery of improvements to the cycle network in recent years, it will continue efforts to make improvements in this area in accordance with the recommendations of the NCPF.

The Council has enjoyed a successful roll out of the Greenway programme in the County with the success of the Boyne Greenway and the construction of the Royal Canal Greenway which should be completed in 2019 and remains a priority for Government¹⁵. The Council will continue its efforts in the delivery of further greenway facilities in the County including all future phases of the Boyne Greenway subject to obtaining relevant consents and further phases of the Royal Canal Greenway which forms part of the Eurovelo Route in Europe¹⁶. Significant progress has been made on the Boyne Greenway with funding secured under the National and Regional Greenway Fund to enable the advancement of plans for the Navan to Newgrange section. The Council has the opportunity to work in conjunction with Fingal and Louth County Council in relation to Joint proposals to develop a cycle route between Newgrange and Newbridge House, Donabate.

The RSES recognises that there is potential for a coast to coast network of national greenways, including the Royal and Grand Canals and

¹⁵ [National Development Plan page 52](#)

¹⁶ For further information on the development of greenway see Chapter 4 Economic Development.

the Barrow Way, with regional water-based trails along the Old Rail Trail Greenway, and the Boyne Valley to Lakelands Greenway on the old Kingscourt line. Meath County Council has applied to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for funding for the advancement of the Lakelands Greenway (Navan – Kingscourt)¹⁷ which will form part of the northern greenway extending into Counties Cavan, Monaghan and Louth.

Cross border greenway projects are recognised within the NPF as an opportunity to maximise market exposure from a tourism perspective and the provision of a North – South long distance cycling route is supported within this document. The Council will seek to support the delivery of a North – South Greenway in conjunction with neighbouring Local Authorities and those within Northern Ireland. The Strategy for the future development of National and Regional Greenways was launched in July 2018. The RSES includes an objective to support the extension of the Boyne Greenway to include Navan to promote sustainable transport choices and as a recreation asset for the town.

5.7.7 Green Schools

The Green-Schools programme is an environmental themed education programme, environmental management system and award scheme that promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole school action for the environment. The aim of Green-Schools is to increase the students' and participants' awareness of environmental issues and transfer this knowledge into positive environmental action in the school and wider community. One of the themes of Green-Schools is focused on Travel. Walking School Buses consist of adults walking groups of pupils to and from school along set

routes, with children joining the walking bus at various pick-up locations along the route. Many schools start the Walking School Bus on a one-day per week basis and increase its schedule over time. Initiatives such as Walk to School Week/Walk on Wednesdays can also be used to encourage children to become more active in their communities. These programmes facilitates children to walk safely to and from school, and to get used to this means of travel. The Council will continue to support An Taisce in the development of the Green Schools programme throughout the County.

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

MOV POL 17

To identify and seek to implement a strategic, coherent and high quality cycle and walking network across the County that is integrated with public transport and interconnected with cultural, recreational, retail, educational and employment destinations and attractions.

MOV POL 18

To support the provision of a long distance inter-connecting walking/cycling route(s) between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland.

MOV POL 19

To support the NTA in the development of a strategic pedestrian network plan for the main urban centres of the County.¹⁸

¹⁷ There is an approved Planning Scheme in place for this Greenway.

¹⁸ [For further information on the development of greenway see Chapter 4 Economic Development.](#)

MOV POL 20

To encourage, where appropriate, the incorporation of safe and efficient cycleways, accessible footpaths and pedestrian routes into the design schemes for town centres/neighbourhood centres, residential, educational, employment, recreational developments and other uses.

MOV POL 21

To require that adequate facilities for the secure parking of bicycles be provided at convenient locations close to public transport nodes and public transport interchanges.

MOV POL 22

To prioritise the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists in proximity to public transport nodes.

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

MOV OBJ 25

To implement, in conjunction with the NTA, the recommendations of the NTA strategy with regard to walking and cycling infrastructure.

MOV OBJ 26

To revise road junction layouts, where

appropriate, to provide dedicated pedestrian and cycling crossings, reduce pedestrian crossing distances, provide more direct pedestrian routes, and reduce the speed of turning traffic.

MOV OBJ 27

To implement at appropriate locations pedestrian permeability schemes and enhancements.

MOV OBJ 28

To request the submission of a quality audit pedestrian and cycling permeability plans as part of new housing developments.

MOV OBJ 29

To implement at appropriate locations pedestrianisation schemes, particularly in central areas of high pedestrian footfall, such as core retail areas.

MOV OBJ 30

To continue the development of a network of Greenways in the County in accordance with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport Strategy for Future Development of Greenways.

MOV OBJ 31

To engage in the Compulsory Purchase Order process when required in order

to facilitate the timely delivery of the Greenway programme within the County.

MOV OBJ 32

To identify the provision of a trail head/ public car park at the Hill of Down Rural Node proximate to the Greenway, to facilitate the re-opening of the rail station, subject to feasibility.

5.8 Developments of National and Regional Strategic Importance

5.8.1 Slane Bypass

A bypass for Slane has been a long-standing objective of the Council and has the support of the majority of the local residents, who have campaigned for its construction for many years. The bypass is noted within the National Development Plan 2018-2027 as key infrastructure *'investment to support the ambition for development of the border region'* and is identified as a priority for delivery²⁰. Further, the RSES (RPO 8.10 of the Strategy refers) supports the appraisal and delivery of the N2 Slane Bypass. It is an important infrastructural development that is required as a matter of urgency. Since the refusal of the scheme by An Bord Pleanála in 2012, the Council and the TII have carried out a number of studies looking at traffic management alternatives through Slane and along the N2 aimed at reducing the number of HGVs travelling through the village and across Slane bridge. These studies examined the effects of various HGV bans, tolling measures, speed

limits and other traffic management options on the road network.

Two public consultation meetings were held in relation to these studies in November 2012 and March 2015 and the findings were presented to the Council. The outcome of these studies concluded that traffic management options would not satisfactorily address the particular circumstances in Slane and were not shown as representing viable alternatives to a bypass.

An east-west bypass option in conjunction with the proposed north-south bypass has been considered however detailed studies indicate that there were insufficient benefits to warrant this additional bypass at this time. Work has now recommenced on the preparation of an application for consent to develop an N2 bypass for Slane village and funding and support is being provided by the TII to do so. The provision of a bypass in Slane has been prioritised in terms of funding and is identified as a priority project in Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016-2021. Traffic management alternatives will continue to be examined as part of these studies.

There is agreement that the potential safety risks that affect the future well being of all road users and communities, particularly the Slane community must be addressed. In seeking a solution the Council recognises that a balance must be achieved between environmental, historical and archaeological considerations and the safety and other negative impacts caused by the current traffic situation in Slane village.

It is an objective of the Council:

²⁰ [National Development Plan 2018-2027 page 31.](#)

MOV OBJ 33

To support and facilitate the delivery of the bypassing of Slane, which is considered to comprise essential infrastructural development and to construct same subject to obtaining the relevant development consents required and to reserve and protect route option corridors from development which would interfere with the provision of the project. Development of the project will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process. Where adverse effects on European site integrity are identified, alternative routes or designs will be developed to ensure that the project will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site(s), the project will not be progressed unless and alternative solution can be implemented which avoids/reduces the impact to a level that the integrity of the European Site(s) is (are) unaffected.

5.8.2 Leinster Outer Orbital Route

The RSES indicates that long term protection shall remain for the outer orbital route (Leinster Outer Orbital Route) extending from Drogheda to the Naas/Newbridge area with intermediate links to Navan and other towns. The NTA Strategy for the GDA 2016 -2035 notes that while this project is not planned for implementation during the period of the Strategy, the finalisation of the route corridor and its protection from development intrusion is recommended.

It is the policy of the Council:

MOV POL 23

To support the reservation of the indicative route of the Leinster Outer Orbital Route, which is considered to comprise important infrastructural development, free of developments which could interfere with the provision of the project.

It is an objective of the Council

MOV OBJ 34

To reserve the indicative route of the Leinster Outer Orbital Route free of developments which could interfere with the provision of the project.

5.8.3 N2 Corridor

The N2 corridor functions as a vital cross border economic artery which is essential to facilitate strategic traffic movement and to maintain and improve accessibility to employment areas. The importance of this North-South route and its role in maintaining an “open all island” economy post Brexit is recognised within both the National Development Plan 2018-2027²¹ and the NPF²². The NTA Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 includes an objective to provide ‘*enhancements of the N2/M2 national route inclusive of a bypass of Slane, to provide for additional capacity on the non-motorway sections of this route, and to address safety issues in Slane village associated with, in particular, heavy goods vehicles.*’²³ The National Development Plan makes particular reference to and prioritises the upgrade of the N2 from Rath Roundabout to

²¹ [Page 43 National Development Plan 2018-2027](#)

²² [Page 142 Project Ireland 2040-National Planning Framework](#)

²³ [Page 82 National Transport Study for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035](#)

Kilmoon Cross section of road which is already underway. The delivery of these works will continue to be supported and facilitated by the Council and the Council will seek the delivery of the Slane Bypass in the future in conjunction with TII and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

It is an objective of the Council:

MOV OBJ 35

To continue to support and facilitate TII, Fingal County Council, Louth County Council and Monaghan County Council in the planning and delivery of upgrades to the N2, as appropriate.

5.9 Roads Infrastructure

Whilst the Council is committed to the promotion of sustainable means of travel, and the encouragement of modal change from the private car, it is recognised that road infrastructure retains a central position in the overall transportation network, catering for the movement of buses, goods vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, as well as the private car. In undertaking transport policies, the Council will strive to provide, maintain and enhance road infrastructure to ensure the sustainable economic development of the County. Whilst traffic reduced noticeably during the recession, now, as the economic recovery takes hold, traffic numbers are growing steadily and particularly strongly in the south of the County. The Council is successfully implementing an ambitious Economic Development Strategy 2014-2022 and there is also further pent up demand for housing in the context of measures contained in Rebuilding Ireland²⁴. Both of the foregoing will

inevitably require additional roads to be built and existing roads to be modified and upgraded.

5.9.1 National Roads

The County is well serviced by the national road network with the M1 Dublin - Belfast (formerly N1, now R132), the N2 Dublin - Derry, M3 Cavan-Dublin (formerly N3, now R147), and M4 Dublin to Galway, Castlebar and Sligo (formerly N4, now R148), all traversing through the County linking the Dublin metropolitan area to the regions. The RSES recognises the importance of maintaining, improving and protecting the strategic function of the key transport corridors including the imperative to improve and protect the strategic function of the Dublin to Belfast International road corridor, which forms part of the TEN-T core network. The national secondary roads, N51 and N52, are medium distance through-routes connecting important towns. The N52 is a particularly important infrastructural development and strategic route, linking Dundalk and Mullingar-Athlone-Tullamore. The County is very reliant on its road infrastructure for intra and inter county movement and access.

The development of the national road network is critically important for national inter-urban traffic in order to provide ready access to ports, airports and other strategic locations. The National Development Plan recognises the importance of achieving steady-state maintenance and safety of the National Roads network as a priority in order to ensure that the existing extensive transport networks, which have been greatly enhanced over the last two decades, are maintained to a high level to ensure high quality levels of service, accessibility and connectivity for transport users. Although responsibility for National Roads comes under

²⁴ Chapter 2 Core Strategy

the auspices of TII, the Council in conjunction with TII carries out major upgrading and improvements to National Roads in the county. These works include the provision of pavement overlays to existing roads, the provision of new sections of road and the provision of bypass roads or relief routes to towns on routes where their provision is necessary on planning, traffic, safety or environmental grounds.

Given that there are continuing restrictions on funding, the first priority for road investment is likely to be the expenditure required to maintain, renew, manage and operate the extensive existing network.

The NTA's Transport Strategy for the GDA 2016-2026 includes provision to further develop and enhance the national road network including the delivery of the following projects relevant to the County:

- *Junction upgrades and other capacity improvements on the M1 motorway, including additional lanes south of Drogheda, where required;*
- *Enhancements of the N2/M2 national route inclusive of a bypass of Slane, to provide for additional capacity on the non-motorway sections of this route, and to address safety issues in Slane village associated with, in particular, heavy goods vehicles;*
- *Widening of the N3 between Junction 1 (M50) and Junction 4 (Clonee), plus related junction and necessary changes to the existing national road network²⁵;*
- *Provision of additional service areas on the national road network in line with national policy;*
- *Provision of necessary upgrades to the national secondary road network, including*

bypasses, in line with the "Principles of Road Development" set out in Section 5.8.3; and

- *Various signage, safety interventions, junction improvements and local reconfigurations on the national road network.*

5.9.2 Regional and Local Roads

Regional and local roads serve an important economic role and have a valuable social and community function. These roads account for 81% of the country's roads and are often the sole means of access for local economic activity, for example, designated towns such as Trim.

There are extensive lengths of road which the Council are required to maintain. This maintenance programme is financed from the Council's own resources and/or supplemented by State grants. As outlined in 'Investing in our Transport Future – A Strategic Investment Framework (DTTAS, 2015)', the level of funding required to maintain the existing road network will result in opportunities for new investment. Funding for maintenance will continue to be constrained which will have implications as to how such funding is targeted nationally. Local Authorities will be required to define a '*strategic road network of national, regional and strategically important local roads*²⁶' and identifying funding targeted in these areas. There is an increased emphasis nationally on project appraisal requirements which identify and prioritise upgrades that make the most appropriate use of available funding.

The Council will work in conjunction with Kildare County Council to deliver the section of the Maynooth Outer Orbital Relief Road within its administrative area. The RSES has

²⁵ [This project is identified as a priority for delivery under the National Development Plan 2018-2027 \(page 43\)](#)

²⁶ Investing in our Transport Future – A Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport 2015

a specific objective to support the continued development of Maynooth, co-ordinated with the delivery of strategic infrastructure including road linkages forming part of the Maynooth Outer Orbital Route in a manner which supports future development and population growth and builds on synergies with Maynooth University promoting a knowledge-based economy. Further, the RSES includes an objective to, *'Support the delivery of road infrastructure to release strategic residential and employment lands for sustainable development and to improve connectivity and the efficient movement of people and services in the town'.*

It is the policy of the Council:

MOV POL 24

To safeguard the capacity and safety of the National road network by applying the provisions of the Department of Environment Community and Local Governments – *'Spatial Planning and National Roads-Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2012'*.

MOV POL 25

To implement the actions of the Meath Road Safety Strategy and promote road and traffic safety measures in conjunction with Government Departments, the Road Safety Authority and other agencies.

MOV POL 26

To provide for and carry out improvements to sections of national, regional and county roads that are

deficient in terms of alignment, structural condition or capacity, where resources permit, and to seek to maintain that standard thereafter. To ensure that, where possible, any maintenance and improvement strategies have regard to future climates.

MOV POL 27

To regulate, control and improve signage throughout the County and avoid proliferation of roadside signage, especially outside the 50-60kmh speed limit areas.

MOV POL 28

To promote the carrying out of Road Safety Audits on new road schemes, road and junction improvements and traffic management schemes in accordance with the TII Publication TII-GE-STY-01024 and advice contained in the DTTAS (DTO) Traffic Management Guidelines 2012.

MOV POL 29

To liaise with TII and DTTAS regarding the revision of speed limits in the County.

MOV POL 30

To liaise with the NTA and TII (where appropriate) on appropriate control measures within its remit, designed to better manage the demand for road space to allow the efficient movement of essential traffic.

MOV POL 31

To have regard to the TII's Policy Statement on 'Service Areas on Motorways and High Quality Dual Carriageways' in the assessment of proposals for such developments.

It is an objective of the Council:

MOV OBJ 36

To facilitate the delivery of all of the roads projects outlined in the National Development Plan 2018-2027 and National Transport Authority's Transport Strategy for the GDA 2016-2035, in conjunction with the NTA, TII, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and other stakeholders. Development of these road projects will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process. Where adverse effects on European site integrity are identified, alternative routes or designs will be developed to ensure that the project will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site(s), either alone or in combination with any other projects. If despite the implementation of mitigation measures, there remains a risk that the proposals will adversely affect the integrity of any European Site(s), the project will not be progressed unless and alternative solution can be implemented which avoids/reduces the impact to a level that the integrity of the European Site(s) is (are) unaffected.

MOV OBJ 37

To develop an annual strategic road network plan for upgrading and required works for national, regional and strategically important local roads for the targeting of funding.

MOV OBJ 38

To develop in consultation with the TII, a programme for the upgrading, improvement and maintenance of the national road network within the County.

MOV OBJ 39

To develop and implement, in consultation with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport a programme for the upgrading, improvement and maintenance of the non national road network in the County.

MOV OBJ 40

To implement a programme of traffic and parking management measures in towns and villages throughout the County, as resources permit.

MOV OBJ 41

To require provision of parking standards in accordance with the standards set out in Chapter 11 Development Management for all developments.

MOV OBJ 42

To implement maintenance and improvement of roads in the County as set out in the Schedule of Municipal District Works and the Council's Annual Roadwork's Programme funded from the Council's own resources and State Agency grants.

MOV OBJ 43

To support essential public road infrastructure including, bypasses of local towns and villages and proposed national road schemes and where necessary reserve the corridors of any such proposed routes free of development, which would interfere with the provision

of such proposals. Such road schemes include those specified in the non-exhaustive list in Table 5.1: Each of these projects will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process. Where adverse effects on European site integrity are identified, alternative routes or designs will be developed to ensure that the project will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site(s), either alone or in combination with any other projects. If despite the implementation of mitigation measures, there remains a risk that the proposals will adversely affect the integrity of any European Site(s), the project will not be progressed unless and alternative solution can be implemented which avoids/reduces the impact to a level that the integrity of the European Site(s) is (are) unaffected.

Table 5.1

Scheme Name	Description of Works
Slane By-pass (N2)	To deliver key strategic infrastructure including Slane Bypass incorporating new bridge over the River Boyne.
Enhancements of the N2/M2 national route inclusive of a bypass of Slane, to provide for additional capacity on the non-motorway sections of this route, and to address safety issues in Slane village associated with, in particular, heavy goods vehicles.	To continue to support and facilitate TII, Fingal County Council, Louth County Council and Monaghan County Council in the planning and delivery of upgrades of the N2 as appropriate.
N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon Cross	Improvements of road and junctions to address current capacity constraints.
M1 Motorway	
M1 Junction 9 Drogheda (M1 South Junction)	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity.
M1 Junction 8 Duleek	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity.
M1 Junction 7 Julianstown/Stamullen	Upgrading of this junction to improve capacity inclusive of the facilitation of vehicular access to / from Stamullen via the City North Business Campus to the M1 Interchange.
M3 Motorway	
M3 Junction 4 Clonee	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity.

Scheme Name	Description of Works
M3 South of Junction 4	Introduce an additional lane on both M3 carriageways in order to manage capacity on the network, in co-operation with planned M3 upgrades with Fingal County Council and TII.
M3 Junction 5 Dunboyne	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity.
M3 Junction 8 Navan South	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity.
M3 Junction 9 Navan North	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity.
N52 Grange – Clontail (formally known as Fringestown Scheme)	Re-alignment of the existing N52 and R162/N52 junction from a point west of the R162 junction eastwards to Clontail.
N51 Dunmoe Phase II	Realignment of N51 between Blackcastle Demense and Cruicetown. Final phase of N51 Navan – Slane.
N51 Halltown	Construction of junction improvement and re-alignment of minor roads.
R132 Julianstown Bypass	Examine feasibility and thereafter if appropriate progress the design and delivery of a preferred option.
R147 Blackbull roundabout	To replace the Blackbull roundabout with a signalised junction and the provision of a signalised controlled access on the R147.
N51 Slane to Louth County boundary	Re-alignment including widening of Mattock Bridge, and junction improvements.
R150 Bettystown – Laytown Spine Road	To continue to support the delivery of the North –South Spine Road linking Bettystown – Laytown.
N52/R154 Junction	Improve junction and re-align regional road to introduce a staggered arrangement.
N52 Balrath Junction	Re-align N52 and improve junction layout.
N3-N4 Link road	Provision of Ongar to Barnhill link road
R162 Navan Kingscourt Road and R157 Dunboyne Maynooth Road	Safety Upgrades
Strategic Local Bypasses / Relief Roads (Map 5.2 refers)	Examine feasibility and progress where appropriate local bypass and relief roads within the County.

MOV OBJ 44

To continue to deliver targeted capacity road upgrades within the County to eliminate congestion blackspots.

signalised junctions to facilitate access to Dunboyne North for all modes of transport from a high quality regional road.

MOV OBJ 45

To support the delivery of two new

MOV OBJ 46

To continue to support the delivery of key strategic roads within Dunboyne to include an eastern distributor road to

facilitate rail-focused development, new bus routes and reduce traffic levels in the town.

MOV OBJ 47

To promote the delivery of key strategic roads in the Key Town of Navan to include but not limited to: 1) link road from Dublin road to Trim road, 2) distributor road from R153 at Farganstown and future bridge across the River Boyne to N51 and North Navan 3) link road from Rathaldron road to R147 inclusive of bridge across the Blackwater 4) Trim Road to N3 Kilcarn Road, 5) Commons Road to N51 Athboy Road, (6) N51 Athboy Road to Rathaldron Road. Each of these projects will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process. Where adverse effects on European site integrity are identified, alternative routes or designs will be developed to ensure that the project will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site(s), either alone or in combination with any other projects. If despite the implementation of mitigation measures, there remains a risk that the proposals will adversely affect the integrity of any European Site(s), the project will not be progressed unless an alternative solution can be implemented which avoids/reduces the impact to a level that the integrity of the European Site(s) is (are) unaffected. In relation to proposals involving the construction of new bridge crossings across the River Boyne and River Blackwater, where adverse effects on the integrity of the Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA are identified, alternative locations and/or designs will be developed to ensure the bridge structures

will not adversely affect the integrity of the European Site(s) either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. It is reasonable to assume that at the detailed design stage any potential for a project element to impact on European Sites could, and will, be resolved through the exploration of alternative locations or designs while still fulfilling their function/role in supporting the overarching vision, guiding principles and strategic objectives/aim of the CDP.

MOV OBJ 48

To work in conjunction with Kildare County Council to deliver the section of the Maynooth Outer Relief Road located within the administrative area of Meath County Council.

MOV OBJ 49

To promote the delivery of the following key strategic roads included but not limited to: Ratoath Outer Relief Road, Bryanstown Link Road (Drogheda), Navan Road – Dublin Road Link, Trim, M3 Junction 6/R125 to R147 distributor road. Each of these projects will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process. Where adverse effects on European site integrity are identified, alternative routes or designs will be developed to ensure that the project will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site(s), either alone or in combination with any other projects. If despite the implementation of mitigation measures, there remains a risk that the proposals will adversely affect

the integrity of any European Site(s), the project will not be progressed unless and alternative solution can be implemented which avoids/reduces the impact to a level that the integrity of the European Site(s) is (are) unaffected.

MOV OBJ 50

To prepare updated Road Safety Plans in line with the National Road Safety Strategy and in consultation with the Road Safety Authority and relevant stakeholders.

MOV OBJ 51

To improve the visual quality of landscaping and naming of roundabouts in various locations throughout the County.

MOV OBJ 52

To carry out a transport study for Drogheda in conjunction with Louth County Council as part of the future Joint Urban Plan.

MOV OBJ 53

To carry out transports studies in the County and in conjunction with other Local Authorities as required.

5.9.3 Section 48 and 49 Levies

Financial contributions will be sought as part of the development management process for certain development under the provisions of Section 48 and Section 49 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). Section 48 (general) schemes relate to proposed provision of public infrastructure and facilities which benefit development within the area of the Planning Authority, and are applied as a general levy on development.

A 'special' contribution under Section 48(2) (c) may be required where specific exceptional costs not covered by the general scheme are incurred by a Local Authority due to a specific development.

Section 49 (supplementary) schemes relate to the separately specified infrastructural service or projects – such as Dunboyne- Navan rail or roads infrastructure, which benefit a specific area (normally a corridor). Where schemes overlap with another Local Authority, the Section 49 Scheme will be developed in conjunction with that Local Authority.

It is the objective of the Council:

MOV OBJ 54

To utilise, where appropriate, the provisions of Section 48 and 49 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) to generate financial contributions towards the capital costs of providing local and strategic transport infrastructure, services or projects in the county. This will be done in conjunction with adjoining Local Authorities, where appropriate.

5.9.4 Exceptional Circumstances

Government policy regarding access onto national roads as provided for in the *“Spatial Planning & National Roads Guidelines”* seeks to avoid the creation of any additional access point from new development / intensification of traffic from existing entrances onto national roads outside the 60 kph speed limit. Section 2.6 of the Guidelines provides for exceptional circumstances to the above general policy provision. Planning Authorities may identify stretches of national roads where a less restrictive approach may be applied as part of the Development Plan process. Two scenarios arise, firstly in relation to developments of national and regional strategic importance and secondly, in relation to lightly trafficked sections of National Secondary Routes.

The Guidelines provide that a less restrictive approach may be adopted in the case of developments of national and regional strategic importance which by their nature are most appropriately located outside urban areas, and where the locations concerned have specific characteristics that make them particularly suitable for the developments proposed.

The Development Plan has identified a number of locations where exceptional circumstances to the general policy may be considered, as follows:

1. N52 south of Balrath Cross to facilitate bioenergy manufacturing plant and CHP plant
2. Navan North (Junction 9) to Mullaghboy Roundabout on N51 (New Junction Only);
3. Navan South (Junction 8) to Kilcarn Roundabout on R147 (New Junction Only);
4. N2 at Slane in the vicinity of the existing

Grasslands Fertilizers facility (Seveso Site)

5. N51 at Slane Distillery and Castle;
6. N2 at Knockharley in the vicinity of existing regional landfill facility
7. N2 at Rath Roundabout to junction of Curragha Road

These are identified on Map 5.3.

It is the policy of the Council:

MOV POL 32

To ensure the protection of the existing roads infrastructure while improving the capacity and safety of the road network to meet future demands.

MOV POL 33

To avoid the creation of any additional access point from new development/ intensification of traffic from existing entrance onto national roads outside the 60kph speed limit, except at the following locations:

1. N52 south of Balrath Cross to facilitate bioenergy manufacturing plant and CHP plant(Map 5.3.1);
2. Navan North (Junction 9) to Mullaghboy Roundabout on N51 (New Junction Only) (Map 5.3.2);
3. Navan South (Junction 8) to Kilcarn Roundabout on R147 (New Junction Only) (Map 5.3.3);
4. N2 at Slane in the vicinity of the existing Grasslands Fertilizers facility (Seveso Site) (Map 5.3.4);
5. N51 at Slane Distillery and Castle (Map 5.3.5);

6. N2 at Knockharley in the vicinity of existing regional landfill facility (Map 5.3.6);
7. N2 at Rath Roundabout to junction of Curragha Road (Map 5.3.7).

Each of these projects will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process. Where adverse effects on European site integrity are identified, alternative routes or designs will be developed to ensure that the project will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site(s), either alone or in combination with any other projects. If despite the implementation of mitigation measures, there remains a risk that the proposals will adversely affect the integrity of any European Site(s), the project will not be progressed unless an alternative solution can be implemented which avoids/reduces the impact to a level that the integrity of the European Site(s) is (are) unaffected.

MOV POL 34

To review, as part of the Local Area Plan process, land at strategic locations adjoining urban related motorway junctions which has previously been identified for employment generating uses, subject to compliance with the Spatial Planning and National Roads – Guidelines for Planning Authorities. In this regard, the following junctions will be examined:

- M1 Motorway Junction 7 (Julianstown)
- Junction 8 (Duleek)
- Junction 9 (Drogheda)
- M3 Motorway Junction 4 (Clonee)

- Junction 5 (Dunboyne)
- M3 Motorway Junction 6 (Dunshaughlin)
- Junction 8 Navan South
- Junction 9 Navan (North)
- N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon

The Planning Authority will continue to support development proposals in such circumstances where all of the criteria specified in Section 2.7 of the “Spatial Planning & National Roads Guidelines” are adhered to.

5.10 Climate Change

As set out in the Draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, 43.4% of County Meath’s emissions coming from transport, it is a priority area of action as part of the strategy to address same. Providing more sustainable travel choices to our residents is a strategic priority that should reduce transport carbon emissions while delivering number of key economic, social and community benefits. A focus on residential development in sustainable locations, accessible to public transport infrastructure utilising brownfield lands in our existing settlements is essential to deliver a reduction in emissions.

It is an objective of the Council:

MOV OBJ 55

To undertake a risk assessment of County Meath transport infrastructure to identify areas at high risk of climate change impacts (e.g. flooding), over the life of the Development Plan.

MOV OBJ 56

To ensure that any transport maintenance and improvement strategies ensure future climates are considered, to allow appropriate selection of materials and prioritisation of road for repair.

5.11 Freight

Efficient freight transport is essential to support economic activity. Given the geographic size of Ireland and the proximity of Dublin Port to the various centres in the GDA, movement by road is, and will continue to be, the dominant mode of freight transfer in the region, and throughout the wider State. The NTA Transport Strategy for the GDA, seeks to retain sufficient capacity within the road network to ensure that freight can be moved reliably and quickly to key destinations including ports and airports and has outlined a number of measures to achieve this within the Strategy. The Council will continue to support the NTA with the implementation of these measures in order to ensure the efficient movement of freight through the County. The potential impact of Brexit is a significant concern which must be factored into plans for the effective and efficient transport of freight.

Tara Mines has one of the few freight flows still operating on Irish railways today, for the transportation of zinc ore from Navan to Dublin (via Drogheda). Up to four trains a day are operated, and each of these is estimated to take the equivalent of forty lorries off the road. Irish Rail have been undertaking research into multimodal freight movement and have successfully completed three trials which increased load capacity up to 50%. Longer trains

on the network will boost the competitiveness of rail freight to industry. The environmental benefits of rail freight would also be enhanced by operating higher capacity services – currently moving freight by rail instead of road reduces emissions by 75% per unit, longer trains could see emissions reduced to as little as one-tenth of the road equivalent. Irish Rail is continuously working with its customers as well as Freight Forwarders, Ports and the Irish Exporters Association to identify further opportunities and trends for rail freight development within the Irish and European market.

It is a policy of the Plan to facilitate and support the improvement of freight movements in the county via both road and rail. Facilities for truck parking are desirable to prevent nuisance and annoyance, and for safety reasons. It must be borne in mind that the road network represents the working environment for many people involved in the movement of goods and services. It is therefore important that service facilities and truck parking is provided, in appropriate areas, to cater for their needs. It is also important to protect investment in the road network and protect key arteries, which are vital for movement of freight and are essential for commercial activity in the metropolitan area and hinterland areas from becoming overly congested.

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

MOV POL 35

To co-operate with and support the NTA and TII (where appropriate) on measures designed to improve freight transport in and throughout the County.

MOV POL 36

To support the preparation of a regional strategy for freight transport in collaboration with the relevant transport agencies and the other Regional Assemblies.

It is the objective of the Council:

MOV OBJ 57

To identify appropriate locations for freight intensive developments, and require the preparation of Distribution and Servicing Plans²⁷ for such developments as part of the planning process.

MOV OBJ 58

To assess the potential for, and, if appropriate, introduce, HGV management measures in town centres.

MOV OBJ 59

To require the provision of HGV parking facilities at on-line motorway service areas, petrol filling stations and other appropriate locations within the County in accordance with relevant planning guidelines and government policy²⁸.

5.12 Aviation Sector

The development and safeguarding of Dublin Airport is fundamental to the economic growth of the County given its proximity to Dublin

Airport. The economic benefit to the region is outlined in the InterVISTAS report Dublin Airport Economic Study 2015. This study confirms Dublin Airport as an essential driver of the Irish Economy, as a primary gateway serving the country for air passengers and cargo. It is estimated that 97,400 jobs are supported by the airport and that €6.9bn is contributed to Irish GDP. In this context the Plan will seek to support and facilitate the development and expansion of Dublin Airport.

Parts of the County are located within both the outer and inner noise protection zones and the outer public safety zone for the airport. There is a need to minimise the adverse impact of noise without placing unreasonable restrictions on development. Both noise zones are shown in the Plan maps nos. 5.4.1 & 5.4.2, an Outer Zone within which the Council will continue to restrict inappropriate development, and an Inner Zone within which new provisions for residential development and other noise sensitive uses will be actively resisted.

Guidance on Public Safety Zones and land use is provided in the document '*Public Safety Zones, 2005*' by ERM Ltd. The Council will follow the advice of the Irish Aviation Authority regarding the effects of proposed development on the safety of aircraft and the safe and efficient navigation thereof. Impacts of green energy infrastructure such as wind farms and photovoltaic's will be examined and considered under the Development Management Chapter of the Plan. The Irish Aviation Authority require that all planning applications for Solar PV arrays within a 15km radius of airports shall be accompanied with a Glint and Glare assessment which shall be referred to them for comment. These assessments should have regard to potential Glint and Glare towards existing and planned aviation receptors, in particular (i) Glare

²⁷ Distribution and Servicing Plans should outline traffic routes for HGVs in order for the Local Authority to properly assess potential impacts on road infrastructure.

²⁸ See Chapter 11 Development Management for further details

towards the 2 mile (3.2) km approach path for runways and (ii) Glare towards Air traffic control towers.

It is the policy of the Council:

MOV POL 37

To support aviation policy as set out in 'A National Aviation Policy for Ireland 2015'. In particular, through supporting the role of Dublin Airport as a key tourism and business gateway to the County and the wider Eastern and Midland Region.

MOV POL 38

To promote appropriate land use patterns in the vicinity of the flight paths serving Dublin Airport, having regard to the precautionary principle, based on existing and anticipated environmental and safety impacts of aircraft movements.

MOV POL 39

To implement the policies to be determined by the Government in relation to Public Safety Zones for Dublin Airport.

MOV POL 40

To take account of the advice of the IAA with regard to the effects of any development proposals on the safety of aircraft or the safe and efficient navigation thereof.

MOV POL 41

To refer all planning applications for Solar PV arrays located within a 15km radius of Dublin Airport to the IAA.

It is the objective of the Council:

MOV OBJ 60

- 1) To strictly control inappropriate development and require noise insulation where appropriate within the Outer Noise Zone, and actively resist new provision for residential development and other noise sensitive uses within the Inner Noise Zone, as shown on Map 5.4.1 and 5.4.2.
- 2) To ensure that under no circumstances shall any dwelling be permitted within the predicted 69 dB LAeq 16 hours noise contour.
- 3) To require that comprehensive noise insulation is installed for any house permitted. Any planning application shall be accompanied by a noise impact assessment report produced by a specialist in noise assessment which shall specify all proposed noise mitigation measures together with a declaration of acceptance of the applicant with regard to the result of the noise assessment impact report.

MOV OBJ 61

To ensure that development which would give rise to conflicts with aircraft

movements on environmental or safety grounds on lands in the vicinity of Dublin Airport and on the main flight paths serving Dublin Airport is restricted.

MOV OBJ 62

To ensure that residential development in areas likely to be affected by levels of noise inappropriate to residential use is avoided.

MOV OBJ 63

- 1) To require that planning applications within a 15km radius of airports for Solar PV arrays shall be accompanied by a Glint and Glare Assessment.
- 2) These assessments shall consider potential Glint and Glare towards existing and planned aviation receptors, in particular (i) Glare towards the 2 mile (3.2) km approach path for runways and (ii) Glare towards Air traffic control towers.

CHAPTER 6

Infrastructure Strategy

6.1 Introduction

The sustainable future socio- economic growth of the County is dependent on the provision of the required water and wastewater infrastructure and ensuring high quality reliable service provision. A plan led approach in accordance with the County's Core, Settlement and Housing Strategies is critical to securing economic investment, creating sustainable and attractive communities and in supporting the future development of the County.

One of the key challenges is the ability to address and keep pace with the infrastructural demands of a growing County while safeguarding public health and managing the protection of key environmental resources in the context of a changing climate. In this regard the Council, in conjunction with other agencies and authorities needs to ensure that development of infrastructural services occurs in tandem with and facilitates physical development to ensure the continued economic growth of the County and the delivery of residential accommodation for the growing population.

Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives sets out detailed requirements for the content of planning applications for infrastructure projects.

6.2 Vision

"To develop, protect, improve and extend water, wastewater, surface water and flood alleviation services throughout the County and to prioritise the provision of water services infrastructure to sustain and complement the overall strategy for socio-economic and population growth and to achieve improved environmental protection. These service improvements must be considered in the

context of addressing the causes of climate change through reducing reliance on fossil fuels and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Achievement of these environmental imperatives can only be guaranteed by means of effective and ambitious action across all sectors which will require demonstrable behavioural change in our society."

6.3 Irish Water

Since the adoption of the 2013 Meath County Development Plan there have been significant changes in responsibility for Water Services in Ireland. Irish Water was formed (in July 2013) as a semi-state company under the Water Services Act 2013. As of January 2014 Irish Water replaced Local Authorities as the single provider of water and wastewater services. Irish Water is responsible for the operation of public water and waste water services nationally including, strategic planning, policy development, service provision, customer service and capital investment planning and delivery.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the environmental regulator of Irish Water and the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) is the economic and customer service regulator. The Council will work closely with Irish Water to inform and influence the timely provision of infrastructure within the County in line with the Core and Settlement Strategies of this Plan.

The Council is contracted to manage and maintain all aspects of water and wastewater provision, operation and maintenance and capital project management in the County, on behalf of Irish Water¹.

The Council remains the designated Water Authority for the assessment and approval of individual domestic on-site wastewater treatment systems in the County and is

¹ Service Level Agreement in place until 2025.

responsible for the rural water programme (including group schemes, private regulated water supplies and well grants), surface water drainage, flooding and monitoring of surface water quality.

6.4 Water Services

Irish Water prepared a Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP) in 2015 that set out the strategic objectives for the delivery of water services in Ireland up to the year 2040. The WSSP identified current and future challenges regarding the provision of water services nationally and identified specific priorities to be addressed in the short to medium term. The WSSP is to be reviewed every five years to ensure that the plan is relevant and up to date. The WSSP provides the context for shorter term (circa 5 years) capital investment programmes that will address key water service areas such as water resources management, wastewater compliance and sludge management.

It is acknowledged within the WSSP that the *“Future development of water services must be in line with agreed National and Regional development plans. We will therefore work with regional and local planning authorities and other agencies in the forward planning of water services infrastructure to meet social and economic growth”* (Chapter 1, Pg 1).

The current Irish Water Capital Investment Programme (CIP) 2017-2021 outlines the indicative priorities and investments in water services infrastructure over the five year period. This CIP aims to deliver improvements in drinking water quality, leakage detection and remediation, wastewater compliance, business efficiencies and customer service.

6.5 Statutory Context

Water Services Acts 2007-2014

These Acts provide the legislative basis in relation to the planning, operation, delivery and maintenance of water treatment and supply and wastewater collection and treatment services.

EU Floods Directive 2007

The EU Directive on the assessment and management of flood risks [2007/60/EC], often referred to as the ‘Floods’ Directive, came into force late in 2007². The Floods Directive was transposed into Irish Law in 2010 (Statutory Instrument No. 122 of 2010 European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010. The Regulations set out the responsibilities of the OPW and other public bodies in the implementation of the Directive and detail the process for implementation of the measures set out in the Flood Risk Management Plans.

6.6 Policy Context

Greater Dublin Area Strategic Drainage Study-Dublin Region Local Authorities-2005

The Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS) was commissioned in 2001 to carry out a strategic analysis of the existing foul and surface water systems in Dublin City, Fingal, South Dublin, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow County Councils. It delivered an overview of the performance of the drainage infrastructure in the region’s catchments and proposed infrastructural improvement works to facilitate the anticipated future growth in the catchment to the year 2031 and beyond. Since the establishment of Irish

² /www.cfram.ie/home/eu-directive/

Water (IW) the main elements of this policy have been incorporated into IW's policy.

The GSDS concluded that in addition to optimising the capacity of the existing wastewater treatment plants in the GDA that a new regional wastewater treatment facility, including a new orbital sewer to intercept flows from the Ringsend catchment was required in north Dublin with an outfall to the Irish Sea. The site selection process was completed in 2013. An Bord Pleanála are currently assessing a Strategic Infrastructure Development application for a new treatment plant and outfall, a decision is due in 2019. This plant is expected to be operational by 2024 will serve the Meath towns of Dunboyne, Ashbourne and Ratoath and the villages of Clonee and Kilbride.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) 2005

Following on from the GSDS 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. SuDS aim to mimic the natural drainage of a site to minimise the effect of a development on flooding and pollution of waterways. The Council and Irish Water strongly endorse and advocate the comprehensive application of SuDS in the County in the interests of environmental sustainability.

Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Houses- Environmental Protection Agency-2010, updated 2012 & 2013

The EPA Code of Practice: Wastewater

Treatments Systems for Single Houses establishes an overall framework of best practice in relation to the development of wastewater treatment and disposal systems in un-sewered rural areas, in order to promote the protection of the environment and specifically water quality. All planning applications for rural dwellings on unserviced sites are required to demonstrate compliance with the Code of Practice³.

Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Water Services- Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government-2018

These Guidelines are intended to provide best practice guidance in relation to the interface between the statutory planning and development functions of the Planning Authorities and the delivery of water services by Irish Water. The key aims of the guidelines are to:

- Provide advice to planning authorities on the operational framework within which Irish water must operate to deliver water services;
- Establish mechanisms for effective engagement between Planning Authorities and Irish water across all relevant functions of Planning Authorities, and
- Ensure that the planning process, in setting out a spatial framework for national growth and development, will relate to and inform the planning and delivery of water services by Irish Water at national, regional and local levels.

6.7 Drinking Water

As the National Water Service Authority, Irish Water is now responsible for managing the

³ See also Chapter 9, Rural Development

provision and supply of drinking water.

Approximately 45 million litres of potable water was treated and supplied through 64 separate public water supply schemes and a watermain distribution network of over 1,800km in County Meath in 2018.

The 2016 census indicates that almost 50,000 private households (out of a total of 64,234 private households) in the County and 6,000 businesses throughout the County are served by public watermains. The remaining households and business premises are served by either Group Water Schemes or private wells, which do not fall within the remit of Irish Water.

Practical water conservation measures including active leakage detection, demand management and pressure management played and will continue to play a major role in reducing the demand for potable water, thus facilitating additional development and improving the level of service to existing consumers in the County through the existing watermain networks.

Notwithstanding adoption of water conservation measures, existing water supply sources do not have the capacity or resilience to meet likely future demand in Dublin and the Midlands. A preferred scheme has been published which proposes the supply of water from the Parteen Basin on the Lower River Shannon, with water treatment nearby at Birdhill, County Tipperary. Treated water would then be piped 170km to connect to the Greater Dublin network and provide treated water supplies to communities in North Tipperary, Offaly, Laois, Westmeath, Kildare, Meath and Wicklow. Irish Water intend to seek planning permission for this project in 2019-2020.

6.8 Private Wells

Private bored wells used as a source of water supply to single dwellings are the responsibility of the householder. Such wells are not regulated under the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014 and Irish Water has no regulatory function in this regard. The Council is responsible for providing guidance and advice in relation to the protection of water quality and in this regard the Council administers and manages well grants on behalf of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHP&LG).

It is the policy of the Council:

INF POL 1

To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water in the development and upgrade of water supply systems to ensure that the County has an adequate, sustainable and economic supply of suitable quality piped water for all users.

INF POL 2

To utilise the existing water supply in an efficient and equitable manner and in the best interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.

INF POL 3

To seek to secure water resources for the County in conjunction with Irish Water from any project supplying water to the Greater Dublin Area from the River Shannon or any other water source.

INF POL 4

To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water during the lifetime of the Plan to seek to secure investment in the provision, extension and upgrading of the piped water distribution network across the County to serve existing and future populations and facilitate the sustainable economic growth of the County, in accordance with the requirements of the Core and Settlement Strategies.

INF POL 5

To require that in the case of all developments where public watermains are available or likely to be available and have sufficient capacity, that such development shall connect to them.

INF POL 6

To advise and assist in the upgrade/provision of group-water schemes in the County.

INF POL 7

To continue to support Irish Water's Water Conservation Programme.

INF POL 8

To continue to work with Irish Water to ensure the protection of public health through the ongoing provision of high quality drinking water in compliance with drinking water standards.

INF POL 9

To consider the potential for the provision of temporary water treatment facilities for new developments but only where a permanent solution has already been identified and committed to by Irish Water but has not yet been implemented. The provision of such temporary facilities shall only be considered where the solution is environmentally sustainable and would not affect the quality status of water sources. Adequate provision shall be made by the developer for the operation and maintenance of the proposed temporary facility for the duration of its required existence and thereafter for its decommissioning and removal from site.

INF POL 10

To liaise and work in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the protection and improvement of the County's water resources.

It is an objective of the Council:

INF OBJ 1

To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water to promote the sustainable development of water supply and 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 OBJ 2

To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water to ensure that an adequate supply of drinking water for domestic, commercial, industrial and other uses is available for the sustainable development of the County.

INF OBJ 3

To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water during the lifetime of the Plan to develop and identify an additional sustainable water source serving the Eastern and Midlands Region while also facilitating the sustainable development of the County, in accordance with the requirements of the Core and Settlement Strategies.

INF OBJ 4

To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water in the delivery of the Capital Investment Plan 2017-2021 and any subsequent Capital Investment Plans.

INF OBJ 5

To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water to realise the Navan and Mid-Meath/ East Meath Water Supply Scheme. Each of these projects will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process. Where adverse effects on European site integrity are identified, alternative routes or designs will be developed to ensure that the project will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site(s), either

alone or in combination with any other projects. If despite the implementation of mitigation measures, there remains a risk that the proposals will adversely affect the integrity of any European Site(s), the project will not be progressed unless and alternative solution can be implemented which avoids/reduces the impact to a level that the integrity of the European Site(s) is (are) unaffected.

INF OBJ 6

To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water in their implementation of water conservation measures

INF OBJ 7

To promote the sustainable use of water and water conservation in existing and new development within the County and encourage demand management measures among all water users.

INF OBJ 8

To protect both ground and surface water resources and work with Irish Water to develop and implement Water Safety Plans to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchment.

INF OBJ 9

To proactively implement the Rural Water Programme.

INF OBJ 10

To provide guidance and advice regarding the protection of water supply to private wells with the overall responsibility remaining with the householder.

6.9 Wastewater

The provision of well maintained quality wastewater treatment infrastructure is essential to facilitate sustainable development in the County, while also protecting the environment and public health. Irish Water is now responsible for the treatment and disposal of wastewater where public wastewater facilities exist within settlements.

There are over 40 wastewater treatment plants and more than 1,000 km's of sewer network in County Meath. Irish Water currently collects and treats the wastewater from the majority of the counties' urban centres. Wastewater from a number of these centres is discharged to and treated in wastewater treatment plants outside the County as follows:

- Wastewater from Ashbourne, Ratoath, Kilbride, Dunboyne and Clonee is discharged into Dublin where it is treated in Ringsend;
- Wastewater from the Kilcock Environs is discharged into the Leixlip Wastewater treatment plant;
- Wastewater from the Southern Environs of Drogheda, Bettystown/Laytown/Mornington/Donacarney and Julianstown discharge to the Drogheda Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS) carried out an in depth assessment of the Greater Dublin drainage system. A key recommendation of the GDSDS Strategy, provides for the expansion of Ringsend Wastewater Treatment Plant to its ultimate capacity and also the development of a new Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, Orbital Drainage Network and Marine Outfall in the northern part of the GDA. This is known as the Greater Dublin Drainage (GDD) Project.

Irish Water is progressing the GDD Project and it is envisaged that it will be realised by 2024.

The Council will continue to work with Irish Water to advance and realise capital expansions and upgrades of wastewater infrastructure for the continued sustainable growth of the County.

In unserviced areas and outside the main settlements, the main method of sewage disposal is by means of individual septic tanks and proprietary wastewater treatment systems. The requirements for these systems are set out in the EPA *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment Systems and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (2010)*. For larger developments the requirements are set out by the EPA *Wastewater Treatment Manuals – Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels (1999)* and EPA *Guidance on the Authorisation of Discharges to Groundwater (EPA 2011)*.

Please Refer to Chapter 9, Rural development Strategy.

It is the policy of the Council:

INF POL 11

To liaise and work in conjunction with

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.

INF POL 12

To require that in the case of all developments where the public foul sewer network is available or likely to be available and has sufficient capacity, that development shall be connected to it.

INF POL 13

To consider the potential for the provision of temporary wastewater treatment facilities for new developments but only where a permanent solution has already been identified and committed to by Irish Water but has not yet been implemented. The provision of such temporary facilities shall only be considered where the solution is environmentally sustainable and would not affect the quality status of receiving waters. Adequate provision shall be made by the developer for the operation and maintenance of the proposed temporary facility for the duration of its required existence and thereafter for its decommissioning and removal from site.

INF OBJ 11

To ensure that all development shall connect to the public foul sewer network where available within the County subject to sufficient capacity being available in the relevant wastewater treatment plant.

INF OBJ 12

The Planning Authority shall consider the provision of temporary wastewater treatment facilities for new developments only in circumstances where a permanent solution is identified and committed to by Irish Water. The temporary solution shall only be considered where it is deemed to be environmentally sustainable and would not affect the water quality status of receiving waters. Adequate provision shall be made by the developer for the operation and maintenance of the temporary facility for the duration of the operation of the required infrastructure.

INF OBJ 13

To ensure that septic tanks, proprietary effluent treatment systems and percolation areas are located and constructed in accordance with the recommendations and guidelines of the EPA and the Council in order to minimise the impact on surface water of discharges.

It is an objective of the Council:

6.10 Surface Water and Flood Risk Management

Under Clause 3.5 of the Service Level Agreement between Irish Water and the Local Authorities it is a requirement that both parties act in good faith to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in respect of surface water drainage and flood management. A MoU has recently been agreed in principle between Irish Water and the Council and is expected to be formally signed off during the life of this Plan.

6.10.1 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

The Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (2001) contains five policy documents as follows:

- Environmental Management;
- Drainage of New Developments;
- Climate Change;
- Inflow/Infiltration and Basements.

The study sets out a design approach and criteria for drainage infrastructure within new development to ensure that future development does not increase flooding and/or the pollution of waterways. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can best be summarised as offering a “total” solution to rainwater management and is applicable in both urban and rural situations. New development is required to incorporate ‘Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems’ (SuDS) measures. SuDS are effective technologies which aim to reduce flood risk, improve water quality and enhance biodiversity and amenity.

It is the policy of the Council:

INF POL 14

To co-operate with the EPA and other authorities in the continued implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive.

INF POL 15

To continue efforts to improve water quality under the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, as amended and by implementing the measures outlined under the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) and complying with the requirements of the European Communities Environment Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 and other relevant regulations.

INF POL 16

To ensure that all planning applications for new development have regard to the surface water management policies provided for in the GDSDS.

INF POL 17

To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water in the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for surface water drainage and flood management, including the separation of foul and surface water drainage networks where feasible and undertake drainage network upgrades to help remove surface water misconnection and infiltration.

It is an objective of the Council:

INF OBJ 14

To require the use of SuDS within Local Authority Developments and other infrastructural projects in accordance with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works.

INF OBJ 15

To require the use of SuDS in accordance with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works for new developments (including extensions).

INF OBJ 16

To ensure that all new developments comply with Section 3.12 of the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works V6 which sets out the requirements for new developments to allow for Climate Change.

INF OBJ 17

To ensure that all new commercial developments provide on-site petrol/oil interceptors and silt traps as per Section 20 of the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works V6.

INF OBJ 18

To ensure that new developments provide for the separation of foul and surface water drainage networks within application site boundaries.

INF OBJ 19

To ensure that developments permitted by the Council which involve discharge of wastewater to surface waters or groundwaters comply with the requirements of the EU Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations and EU Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations.

6.10.2 Flood Risk Management

The Office of Public Works (OPW) is the lead State body responsible for the coordination and implementation of Government policy on the management of flood risk in Ireland. The OPW is also the National Authority for the implementation of the EU Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks [2007/60/EC].

The EU Floods Directive and the National Flood Policy Review Report (2004) set the parameters for flood management in Ireland. The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DECLG and OPW (2009) addresses flood risk management within the planning system. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) of the County is being prepared to support the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan. The SFRA was carried out in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009) and will form part of the Development Plan.

In response to the Floods Directive, the Council in partnership with Fingal County Council and the Office of Public Works (OPW) completed a catchment based flood risk assessment and

management study of 19 rivers and streams in the Fingal and East Meath area, the *Fingal East Meath Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (FEM-FRAMS)*. The FEMFRAMS was completed in 2012 and covered the east of the County including inter alia the Broadmeadow, Mosney, Delvin, Mayne and Nanny rivers. The OPW began a national programme of river catchment based Flood Risk Assessment and Management. The Catchment Flood Risk Assessments and Management Studies (CFRAMS) has been completed on river catchments of all key watercourses and coastal areas in the County and has been included within a review of the FEMFRAMS.

Over the past number of years there have been significant instances where flooding has occurred in areas of the County causing damage to homes and businesses. However, relative to other counties the extent of flooding in the County has been low. Meath is a maritime county and given the reality of global warming there are areas which are at risk of coastal, fluvial or pluvial flooding. As a result of climate change, there is a likelihood of increased rainfall and rising sea levels. This reality in combination with the ongoing urbanisation of catchments, means that the flood risk to property is likely to increase in the future.

A major function performed by floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas is to hold excess water until it can be released slowly back into a riverine system or the sea, or seep into the ground as a storm or tidal surge subsides. Vulnerable floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas should, therefore, be identified and preserved to the maximum extent possible, in both urban and rural areas, as "Green Infrastructure". Zoning of land for this purpose enhances opportunities for the creation of habitats which promote and protect flora and fauna and thus increase diversity etc.

6.10.2.1 Pluvial flooding:

Pluvial flooding occurs as a result of high intensity rainfall where the volume of run-off exceeds the capacity of the existing surface water network and the excess water cannot be absorbed. It is usually associated with high intensity extreme rainfall events (typically >30mm/h) resulting in overland flow and ponding in depressions in the topography. In urban situations surface water drainage systems and surface watercourses may be completely overwhelmed.

Effective utilisation of SuDS can alleviate and mitigate against such flooding. An example of such a system is a constructed swale⁴.

6.10.2.2 Fluvial flooding

Fluvial flooding occurs when the capacity of a watercourse is exceeded or the channel is blocked or restricted, and excess water spills out from the channel onto adjacent low-lying areas (the floodplain).

6.10.2.3 Groundwater flooding

Groundwater flooding occurs when the level of water stored in the ground rises as a result of prolonged rainfall to meet the ground surface and flows out over it i.e. when the capacity of this natural underground reservoir is exceeded.

6.10.2.4 Coastal flooding

The Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Study (ICPSS) was commissioned in 2003 by the OPW and has been updated on a number of occasions, most recently in November 2013 for the North-Eastern region (which includes the Meath coastline). This study identifies locations along the north-east coast at risk of coastal flooding and coastal erosion. In addition the ICPSS

⁴ A swale is a depressed land form, a gradual depression typically located in open spaces. The use of the swale is to carry or hold flood waters.

provides a strategic assessment of coastal erosion around the Irish coastline using aerial photography records of the coastline from 1973-75, 2000 and 2006 as the primary basis for the erosion assessment. This Study provides strategic current scenario and future scenario (up to the year 2100) coastal flood hazard maps and strategic coastal erosion maps for the national coastline.

Coastal erosion is intrinsically linked with coastal flooding as the loss of natural coastal defences (such as sand dunes) due to erosion can increase the risk of flooding in coastal areas. Flood Risk areas for both fluvial and coastal flooding are shown on the maps included within the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as part of the preparation of the Plan (See Volume 5 of the Plan).

It is the policy of the Council:

INF POL 18

To implement the “Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (DoEHLG/OPW, 2009) through the use of the sequential approach and application of Justification Tests for Development Management and Development Plans, during the period of this Plan.

INF POL 19

To implement the findings and recommendations of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment prepared in conjunction with the County Development Plan review, ensuring climate change is taken into account.

INF POL 20

To require that a Flood Risk Assessment is carried out for any development proposal, where flood risk may be an issue in accordance with the “Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (DoECLG OPW, 2009). This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to and from the potential development and shall consider the impact of climate change.

INF POL 21

To consult with the Office of Public Works in relation to proposed developments in the vicinity of drainage channels and rivers for which the OPW are responsible.

INF POL 22

To retain a strip of 10 metres on either side of all channels/flood defence embankments where required, to facilitate access thereto.

INF POL 23

To consult, where necessary, with Inland Fisheries Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant agencies in the provision of flood alleviation measures in the County.

INF POL 24

To ensure that flood risk management is incorporated into the preparation

of Local Area Plans in accordance with 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)'.

INF POL 25

To have regard to the recommendations of the Fingal East Meath Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (FEMFRAMS) and the Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (CFRAMS).

INF POL 26

To undertake a review of the 'Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Meath' in light of the completed flood mapping which has been developed as part of the Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study.

INF POL 27

To liaise with the Office of Public Works in relation to proposed developments in the vicinity of drainage channels and rivers for which the OPW are responsible, prior to the making of determinations/assumptions on surface water management proposals.

INF POL 28

To consult with the Office of Public Works in relation to proposed developments which include the construction, replacement or alteration of a bridge or

culvert and to require that the developers obtain consent from the OPW under Section 50 of the EU (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010 and Section 50 of the Arterial Drainage Act 1945, where appropriate.

INF POL 29

To facilitate the provision of new, or the reinforcement of existing flood defences and protection measures where necessary and in particular to support the implementation of flood schemes being progressed through the planning process during the lifetime of the Plan. The provision of flood defences will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process. If adverse effects on European Site integrity are identified, alternative locations and/designs will be developed to ensure that flood defence structures will not adversely affect the integrity of European Sites, either alone or in combination with any other plans or projects. If, despite the implementation of mitigation measures, there remains a risk that the proposals will adversely affect the integrity of the European Sites, the project will not be progressed unless an alternative solution can be implemented which avoids/reduces the impact to a level that the integrity of the European Site(s) is(are)_unaffected. It is reasonable to assume that at the detailed design stage any potential for a project to impact on European Sites could, and will, be resolved through the exploration of alternatives locations or designs while still fulfilling their function/role.

It is an objective of the Council:

INF OBJ 20

To implement the *Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG/OPW 2009)* or any updated guidelines. A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment should be submitted where appropriate.

INF OBJ 21

To restrict new development within floodplains other than development which satisfies the Justification Test, as outlined in the *Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 for Planning Authorities* (or any updated guidelines).

INF OBJ 22

To ensure flood relief measures are suitably designed to protect the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites, and to avoid direct or indirect impacts upon qualifying interests or Natura 2000 sites that would result in adverse effects on site integrity.

INF OBJ 23

To protect and enhance the County's floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas subject to flooding as "green infrastructure" which provide space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, and ensure that development does not impact on important wetland sites within river/stream catchments.

INF OBJ 24

To identify existing surface water drainage systems vulnerable to flooding and develop proposals to alleviate flooding in the areas served by these systems in conjunction with the Office of Public Works. The delivery of such proposals will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process. If adverse effects on European Site integrity are identified, alternative locations and/designs will be developed to ensure that flood defence structures will not adversely affect the integrity of European Sites, either alone or in combination with any other plans or projects. If, despite the implementation of mitigation measures, there remains a risk that the proposals will adversely affect the integrity of the European Sites, the project will not be progressed unless an alternative solution can be implemented which avoids/reduces the impact to a level that the integrity of the European Site(s) is(are)_unaffected. It is reasonable to assume that at the detailed design stage any potential for a project to impact on European Sites could, and will, be resolved through the exploration of alternatives locations or designs while still fulfilling their function/role.

INF OBJ 25

To require the use of SuDS to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage techniques where appropriate, for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.

INF OBJ 26

To discourage the use of hard non-porous surfacing and pavements within the boundaries of rural housing sites.

INF OBJ 27

To encourage the use of Green Roof technology particularly on apartment, commercial, leisure and educational buildings.

INF OBJ 28

To ensure that proposals for the development of solar farms are not located within areas identified as being within Flood zones A or B as per the *Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009* for Planning Authorities (or any updated guidelines).

6.11 Water Quality

The County has a rich and extensive aquatic environment consisting of coastline, rivers, streams, lakes and estuarine waters (surface waters) and ground waters (underground water). The Rivers Boyne and Blackwater are the prime watercourses within the County. The Royal and Boyne Navigation Canals, also form part of this aquatic environment. Collectively, they constitute an important economic, recreational, ecological and aesthetic resource for the County.

The Council is responsible for maintaining,

improving, enhancing and protecting the ecological quality of all waters in the County by implementing pollution control measures, licensing of effluent discharges, implementing and monitoring compliance with environmental legislation and drawing up pollution contingency measures on a local and regional level. This role is likely to become even more critical as changes in water availability are predicted as an outcome of climate change.

6.11.1 Water Framework Directive

The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD, 2000/60/EC), which was published in 2000 and transposed into Irish law in 2003 (SI No 722 of 2003 *‘established a framework for community action in the field of water policy’*). The overall objective of the Directive and associated Regulations is to prevent deterioration in the status of any waters and achieve at least ‘good ecological status’⁷.

The county lies within a single National River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for the 26 counties. The RBMP for Ireland 2018-2021 was published in April 2018. The Council is currently implementing the River Basin Management Plan, in fulfilment of its WFD obligations, and the associated programme of measures as detailed within this plan. The main thrust of the Plan is as follows:

- Plan to result in the protection and improvement of water quality in approximately 726 water bodies in Ireland by deploying 43 specialist local authority investigative assessment personnel;
- A €1.7 billion investment in urban wastewater treatment infrastructure by the year 2021 in 255 urban areas;
- A greater focus on protecting drinking

⁷ <http://www.wfdireland.ie/>

water sources in over 700 public and private drinking water supplies and a €73 million per year investment by Irish Water to reduce leakage;

- Extension of the local authority-led domestic wastewater treatment systems grant scheme;
- New agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme to promote best agricultural practice regarding water quality in 190 targeted areas.

In order to encourage greater implementation of the RBMP the Local Authority Waters and Communities Office (LAWCO) has established a Local Authority Catchments Team employed to undertake scientific assessments initiating the roll out of mitigation measures at a local level and to increase the level of community participation and to raise public awareness of water quality⁸.

A regional integrated Catchment Management Programme for the Eastern and Midlands region has been published setting out the precise areas prioritised for action. A schedule of works for the Catchment Assessment Team has been devised setting out how community and stakeholder engagement will take place.

6.11.1.1 Rivers

In total 25 rivers are sampled by the Council for the purposes of physio-chemical monitoring⁹ under the WFD at 67 river sampling locations, which complements the EPA's biological monitoring. This operational and surveillance monitoring programme is key to directing the implementation of the River Basin Management Plans and also determines whether the targets and objectives of the Water Framework Directive are being achieved.

Based on the results obtained from the WFD monitoring programme including an assessment of pressures, impacts and water quality investigations, extended deadlines have been included in the RBMP. Such extended timelines will facilitate the achievement of environmental objectives in a significant number of water bodies, primarily on the basis that it will not otherwise be technically feasible to achieve these targets by earlier dates. In such cases targets are to be achieved by 2021, 2027 or beyond 2027.

Water quality monitoring and analysis by the EPA and the Council has demonstrated a long term trend of reducing nutrient concentrations (Nitrogen and Phosphorus) in watercourses in the County since the late 1990's. Recent EPA analysis however indicates nutrient concentrations have been rising in many watercourses since 2004.

EPA data on the biological quality of watercourses, based on monitoring up to 2017, indicates that 19% of monitored river sites in Co. Meath achieved Good Status or better, while 81% of monitored river sites in Co. Meath are at less than Good Status, i.e currently failing WFD objectives.

Significant work is required if the objectives of the WFD are to be achieved within the timeframes adopted in the RBMP. It is equally important that where water quality is of good status that this status is protected. This presents a significant challenge in meeting WFD objectives, particularly in respect of technical resources available to the Council.

6.11.1.2 Lakes

There are 4 lakes in the County which are designated WFD operational monitoring lakes,

⁸ <http://watersandcommunities.ie/about/>

⁹ <http://www.epa.ie/water/wm/rivers/>

namely Lough Sheelin, Lough Bracken, Lough Bane and Annagh or White Lake. The EPA Water Quality in Ireland Report 2010-2015, published in 2017, reports that the water quality in White/Annagh lake was classified as being of good status and Lough Bane was classified as being of high status, Lough Sheelin and Lough Bracken were both classified as being of moderate status.

6.11.1.3 Coastal and Transitional (Estuarine) Waters

The Meath coastline extends for a distance of approximately 10 km and stretches from the mouth of the River Boyne at Mornington, bordering County Louth to Gormanston at the mouth of the River Delvin, bordering County Dublin.

EPA monitoring of coastal and transitional waters under the WFD classifies the coastal waters off the Co. Meath coast as being of Good Status and the Boyne Estuary is classified as being of moderate status.

Laytown/Bettystown is the only bathing area in Co. Meath designated in accordance with the Bathing Water Quality Regulations, 2008 (S.I. No. 79 of 2008). The Council is responsible for the implementation of the Bathing Water Quality Regulations. This includes monitoring (on a weekly basis during the bathing season) and reporting bathing water quality results to the EPA, making up-to-date information and advice available to the public and responding in the event of incidents which could impact on bathing water quality. Laytown/Bettystown is classified at good quality by the EPA in 2018, based on rolling monitoring results attained during the 4 year period 2015-2018.

The County's coastline is also part of a

designated Shellfish Area namely 'the Balbriggan/Skerries Shellfish Area'. In 2011, The Council adopted Pollution Reduction Plans for the purposes of protecting the quality of its shellfish waters, particularly with a view to establishing the potential risk of microbial contamination to the quality of such waters from both on site wastewater treatment systems and agricultural sources.

Mornington Beach attained a 'Green Coast Award' in 2017¹⁰. The Green Coast Award is a symbol of environmental excellence and has been established to acknowledge, promote and protect the environment of beaches in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Wales. The award is for beaches which meet EC bathing water quality standards, but which are also prized for their natural, unspoilt environment.

A Beach Management Plan for Bettystown and Laytown beaches was approved by the Laytown-Bettystown Municipal District in February 2019. It addresses, inter alia, environment and wildlife, management of the beach, beach cleaning, access and parking, bye-laws and communications/signage. The implementation of some of the recommendations contained therein will require some revisions to the County Meath Foreshore Bye Laws 2010, a process that will involve further public consultation and approval by the Elected Members.

6.12 National Maritime Spatial Plan

Ireland's Integrated Marine Plan "*Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth*" (HOOW-2012) includes a National Policy Objective for the preparation of a National Maritime Spatial Plan (MSP). This plan will establish a strategic framework for the

¹⁰ An Taisce with support from Department of Climate Change, Community and Environment, Fáilte Ireland and Coca Cola

realisation of the benefits of our coastal waters in a sustainable way.

EU Directive 2014/89/EU post dates HOOW and establishes an EU wide framework for Maritime Spatial Planning. Ireland transposed the Directive through the EU (Framework for Maritime Spatial Planning) Regulations 2016. These Regulations include a requirement for Ireland to develop a Maritime Spatial Plan (or plans) on a ten years cycle.

It is anticipated that the Draft National Maritime Spatial Plan will be published in Q4 of 2019 or early 2020 and the plan is expected to be finalised in 2020. Consideration of the objectives of the plan will form part of the decision making process for marine developments and activities.

It is the policy of the Council:

INF POL 30

To implement the policies and objectives as set out within the National Maritime Spatial Plan to realise the full benefits of our ocean wealth in a managed and sustainable way ensuring climate change is taken into account.

6.13 Groundwater

The EPA report annually on 46 groundwater bodies in County Meath. Overall groundwater quality within the County is very good with only two groundwater bodies classified at poor status in the EPA Water Quality in Ireland report 2010-2015 published in 2017. The Council engages in ongoing consultation with the EPA in this regard. Groundwater is a major natural resource in the County providing between 20%-25% of drinking

water supplies. In rural areas that are not served by public or group water schemes, ground water is usually the only source of supply. For this reason, it is essential that this natural resource is protected.

In conjunction with the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) a Groundwater Protection Scheme has been prepared for the County. This provides guidelines for the planning and licensing authorities in carrying out their functions, and a framework to assist in decision-making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater. The Scheme aims to maintain the quantity and quality of groundwater and in some cases improve it, by applying a risk assessment based approach to groundwater protection and sustainable development.

Groundwater protection responses for the different areas have been developed for potential hazards such as landfills, on-site wastewater treatment systems and septic tanks for single houses, and land spreading of organic wastes¹¹.

In accordance with the EU Water Policy, Abstractions Registration Regulations 2018, all abstractions from groundwater or surface water above 25m³/day are required to be registered with the Environmental Protection Agency.

It is the policy of the Council:

INF POL 31

To protect and develop, in a sustainable manner, the existing groundwater sources and aquifers in the County and to manage development in a manner consistent with the protection of these resources.

¹¹ The Groundwater Protection Scheme is available at www.gsi.ie.

INF POL 32

To ensure, through the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan(s) and the associated Programmes of Measures and any other associated legislation or revised plans with all relevant stakeholders, the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters throughout the County.

INF POL 33

To protect recognised salmonid water courses (in conjunction with Inland Fisheries Ireland) such as the Boyne and Blackwater catchments, which are recognised to be exceptional in supporting salmonid fish species.

It is an objective of the Council:

INF OBJ 29

To strive to achieve 'good status' in all water bodies in compliance with the *Water Framework Directive* and to cooperate with the implementation of the *National River Basin Management Plan 2018-202*.

INF OBJ 30

To ensure the County's natural coastal defences, such as beaches, sand dunes, salt marshes and estuary lands, are protected and are not compromised by inappropriate works or forms of development.

INF OBJ 31

To employ soft engineering techniques as an alternative to hard coastal defence works, as appropriate.

INF OBJ 32

To identify, prioritise and implement necessary coastal protection works subject to the availability of resources, whilst ensuring a high level of protection for natural habitats and features, and to ensure due regard is paid to visual and other environmental considerations in the design of any such coastal protection works. This will include the identification of coastal areas sensitive to climate change and consequent coastal erosion.

INF OBJ 33

To protect the special character of the coast by preventing inappropriate development, particularly on the seaward side of coastal roads. New development, wherever possible, shall be accommodated within existing developed areas.

INF OBJ 34

To strictly control the nature and pattern of development within coastal areas and ensure that it is designed and landscaped to the highest standards, and sited appropriately so as not to detract from the visual amenity of the area. Development shall be prohibited where the development poses a significant or

potential threat to coastal habitats or features, and/or where the development is likely to result in altered patterns of erosion or deposition elsewhere along the coast.

INF OBJ 35

To prohibit development along the coast outside existing urban areas where such development is not adequately safeguarded over the lifetime of the development without the need to construct additional coastal defences.

INF OBJ 36

To protect and develop, in a sustainable manner, the existing groundwater sources and aquifers in the County and manage development in a manner consistent with the sustainable management of these resources in conformity with the *EU Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 and the second cycle National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021*, and any subsequent plan and the Groundwater Protection Scheme.

INF OBJ 37

To implement the recommendations of the Meath Groundwater Protection Scheme(s).

INF OBJ 38

To establish riparian corridors free from new development along all significant

watercourses and streams in the County as follows:

- A 10 metre wide riparian buffer strip measured from the top of the bank either side of all watercourses in urban areas;
- A 30m wide riparian buffer strip from top of bank to either side of all watercourses is required as a minimum outside of urban areas.

6.14 Climate Change

Mitigation of the causes and impacts of climate change is one of the cross cutting themes of this Development Plan. In December 2015 the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 was enacted. The Act establishes the national objective of transitioning to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy in the period up to and including the year 2050.

While Ireland is taking positive steps to mitigate the causes of climate change, the Country will, however, inevitably experience the changed conditions being forecast for increasing global temperatures and possible significant changes in rainfall patterns over the next 100 years. The future forecast for Ireland is for drier summers, wetter winters, stronger storms and warmer average temperatures throughout the year. CO₂ emissions are largely emanating from the agricultural, transport, energy and residential sectors. It is necessary to address the causes of climate change by reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and our greenhouse gas emissions.

Adaptation/climate proofing measures to counteract these harmful impacts will form

part of an overall comprehensive response. A comprehensive response is required in order to meet our National commitments including that 16% of energy consumption by 2020 will be from renewable sources, with a sub-target of 10% in the transport sector. A non-legally binding target requires that at least 40% of electricity is to come from renewable energy by 2020. These challenges will require significant investment, the implementation of adaptation and mitigation measures across all sectors and the achievement of significant behavioural changes.

6.14.1 Statutory Context

Framework Convention on Climate Change- United Nations- (UNFCCC) 1992

A range of international climate change agreements and frameworks have been approved that provide information on climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptations. The work of the UNFCCC provides individual participant states with detailed technical information, including current and future climate change projections, which enables determination of practical adaptation measures to improve long term resilience.

Adaptation Strategy- European Union- 2013

The European Union published its Adaptation Strategy in April 2013 with the overall aim of increasing climate resilience across Europe. Through increased coordination and a more consolidated approach, the Adaptation Strategy will enhance the preparedness and effectiveness of various governance levels to respond to the impacts of climate change.

The Strategy is focused on three key objectives:

- Promoting action by Member States

- 'Climate-proofing' action at EU level
- Better informed decision making

The primary adaptation initiatives promoted by the Strategy are achieved through the provision of mitigation and adaptation requirements within EU sector policies and funding mechanisms. The initiatives run across a range of areas including:

- infrastructure and buildings
- marine and inland water issues
- forestry
- agriculture; and
- social cohesion

Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act-Dept of Communications, Climate Action and Environment-2015

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 is the key policy instrument which addresses climate change. This Act sets out a roadmap for Ireland's transition towards a low carbon economy and details mechanisms for the implementation of the National Mitigation Plan (NMP), published in July 2017. The aim of these mechanisms is to lower Ireland's level of greenhouse emissions. In addition, the Act requires a National (Climate Change) Adaptation Framework (NAF) to provide responses to changes caused by climate change.

Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended

The Act sets out provisions for climate change within Section 10 (2) (n). These include requirements to:

- Reduce energy demand in response to the likelihood of increases in energy and other costs due to long-term decline in non-renewable resources,
- Reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas

emissions, and

- Address the necessity of adaptation to climate change; in particular, having regard to location, layout and design of new development.

National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (NCCAF) -Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government-2013

The NCCAF provides guidance on the role of Local Authorities in local climate change adaptation and guidance on the preparation of Local Adaptation Plans.

6.14.2 Policy Context

National Adaptation Framework - Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland - Department of Communications, Climate Change and the Environment -2018

The National Adaptation Framework (NAF) sets out Ireland's first statutory strategy for the application of adaptation measures in different Government sectors, including the Local Authorities. This 'NAF - Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland' was published on 19 January 2018. The Framework aims to reduce the vulnerability of the State to the negative effects of climate change but also seeks to promote any positive effects that may occur.

This NAF will build on the substantial work already carried out under the existing NCCAF and ensure that climate adaptation in Ireland is brought forward in line with EU and international best practice.

National Mitigation Plan- Department of Communications, Climate Change and the Environment -2017

In July 2017 the first National Mitigation Plan

was published which represented an initial step to set Ireland on a pathway to decarbonising its economy.

It is a whole-of-Government Plan addressing the following core sectors:

- Electricity Generation
- Built Environment
- Transport
- Agriculture

The measures set out in the plan lay the foundations for transitioning Ireland to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. In support of this, the Plan also includes over 100 individual actions for various Ministers and public bodies to progress and implement.

National Planning Framework (NPF)

The NPF states that: *"While the overall quality of our environment is good, this masks some of the threats we now face. Some of the key national environmental challenges include the need to accelerate action on climate change"*.

National Policy Objective NPO 8 seeks to drive a transition towards a low carbon and climate resilient society. This policy objective will seek to drive investment choices to mirror goals set down within the National Mitigation Plan and National Adaptation Framework incorporating a more renewable energy focused approach prioritising energy sources such as solar, wind and wave.

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy - 2019-2031

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) published in June 2019 sets out an integrated policy to enable the creation of sustainable regions with the capability to be

resilient to future climate change. The Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) contained in the RSES are designed to promote efficiencies in water and energy use and the move towards a low carbon economy. They aim to encourage a modal shift towards green transport and energy options in addition to bolstering the robustness of local regional ecosystems through a regional green infrastructure strategy.

In the specific context of climate change RPO 7.29 refers to the preparation of a greenhouse gas inventory for the region to inform the preparation of a strategic mitigation action plan. RPO 7.31 requires Local Authorities to develop Climate Action Strategies (CAS) as well as local climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. The Meath Climate Action Strategy is at an advanced stage of preparation and is due to be published in Q3 2019.

6.15 Energy

Ireland's island location on the edge of Europe accentuates the need for secure and continuous energy supplies. Despite a reduction in energy consumption in recent times, Ireland's expenditure on energy imports remains significant. International, EU and National policies all promote a much more energy-efficient society relying on sustainable renewable energy sources. This will ensure that we secure our international competitiveness by increased use of and demand for indigenous resources and increased security of supply. Consequently policies and objectives promoting energy efficiencies and the development of indigenous resources will be pursued during the lifetime of this Plan.

This Development Plan has an overarching role in progressing a sustainable energy future for

the County by recognising the central role of land use planning in promoting a low carbon society and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

6.15.1 Statutory Context

EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 2010 (2010/31/EU) (EPBD)

This Directive seeks to promote high energy performance within buildings and aims to strengthen the provisions of Directive 2002/91/EC which it supersedes. The EPBD also contains a target that by 31st December 2018, all new public buildings owned and occupied by public bodies are nearly zero energy consumption buildings (NZEB's).

EU Energy Efficiency Directive 2012 (2012/27/EU).

This Directive was transposed into Irish Law as S.I. 426 of 2014, European Union (Energy Efficiency) Regulations 2014, sets out the policy roadmap up to 2020 and identifies measures that are required to be introduced by Member States in order for the EU to meet its binding energy efficiency and emissions targets.

National Energy Policy White Paper-Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Economy- Department of Communications Climate Action and the Environment-2015-2030.

This national energy policy framework was developed in the context of the significant role played by European institutions in determining energy policy, markets, and regulation. It takes account of European and International climate change objectives and agreements, as well as Irish social, economic and employment priorities.

Building Regulations-Part L-S I No 259-Department of Housing Planning and Local Government-2011

The Part L Amendment Regulations 2011 applies to dwellings, both new and existing. These regulations relate to the application of Part L contained in Technical Guidance Document L - Conservation of Fuel and Energy.

6.15.2 Policy Context

Climate Change and Energy Package-European Union- 2010

At European Level the '20/20/20' commitments agreed under the EU 'Climate Change and Energy Package' set three targets for 2020 as follows:

- A minimum 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions based on 1990 levels.
- 20% reduction in primary energy use compared with projected levels, to be achieved by improving energy efficiency.
- 20% of final energy consumption to be produced by renewable energy resources.

Europe 2020 Strategy

This strategy was adopted in 2010 and aims to enable Europe to emerge from the economic crisis in a stronger position, setting out five headline targets one of which includes climate change.

Ireland's National Targets to 2020 are as follows:

- Reduce emissions in the non-traded sector by 20% compared to 2005 levels.
- Increase the share of renewables in final energy consumption to 16% and to move towards a 20% increase in energy efficiency.

Ireland's 4th National Energy Efficiency Action Plan- Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment 2017-2020.

Ireland's 4th National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) published in 2017 reaffirms the country's commitment to delivering a 20% reduction in energy demand across the economy by 2020 in tandem with a more challenging target of 33% reduction in public sector energy use. The NEEAP outlines energy efficient measures that will be implemented to reach the national energy saving targets.

Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities-Statement on Housing Policy-Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2007.

This document supported the adoption of new technology and innovative approaches to design and construction of dwellings leading to enhanced quality and energy performance over their lifetime¹².

Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland-The Energy Policy Framework-Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources 2007-2020, 2007;

This White Paper contained a number of proposals regarding the energy market generally including the adoption of new technology and innovative approaches to design and construction of dwellings

Towards Nearly Zero Energy Buildings in Ireland-Planning for 2020 and Beyond-Department of Environment, Community and Local Government-2012

This document was published in 2012 by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. The public sector aim to improve its energy efficiency by 33% by 2020

¹² Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities' which promotes high standards in design and environmental performance

as set out in the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) and, in accordance with the requirements of Directive 2010/31/EU on the energy performance of buildings (recast), “would be seen to lead by example in order to demonstrate clearly to all sectors what is possible through a programme of strong and committed actions”.

Wind Energy Development Guidelines- Department of Environment, Community and Local Government-2006

These Guidelines set out the parameters for the appropriate siting and design of wind farm developments. They emphasise the importance of wind energy as a renewable energy resource.

Draft Review of Wind Energy Guidelines, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government 2017

The emerging preferred draft review of the 2006 Wind Energy Guidelines was published in June 2017¹³. This review is in the context of ensuring that Ireland can deliver on its EU renewable energy targets, while simultaneously addressing the concerns of local communities in the areas where wind farm developments are proposed.

Draft Bioenergy Plan for Ireland, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources- 2014.

Ireland has significant potential to develop its bioenergy resources to generate electricity for use as transport fuels, heating and cooling buildings and for conversion into bio-chemicals as industrial raw materials.

6.15.3 Renewable Energy

Section 9.2 of the NPF states the following in relation to energy “Ireland’s national energy policy is focused on three pillars: (1) sustainability, (2) security of supply and (3) competitiveness. The

Government recognises that Ireland must reduce greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels from the energy sector by at least 80% by 2050, while at the same time ensuring security of supply of competitive energy sources to our citizens and businesses”.

The potential feasible renewable energy options for the County include, but are not limited to, a balanced mix of:

- Bioenergy - crops, forestry;
- Biomass - anaerobic digestion, combined heat and power (CHP);
- Geothermal - hot dry rock reservoirs, groundwater aquifers;
- Hydro energy - small and micro hydro systems;
- Solar - passive solar heating, active solar heating;
- Waste - landfill methane gas collection;
- Wave - wave action, and;
- Wind - onshore wind, offshore wind (single turbines and groups).

RPO 7.34 of the RSES sets out that EMRA is proposing, in conjunction within its constituent Local Authorities within the region, to identify Strategic Energy Zones (SEZ). These zones will designate areas suitable for larger energy generating projects; the role of community micro energy production in urban and rural settings will be explored and the potential for renewable energy production within areas specifically identified for industrial development will also be considered. The SEZ’s for the region will ensure that all environmental considerations are taken on board at an early stage within the initial analysis prior to their identification. A regional landscape strategy is to be developed to support the delivery of projects within SEZ’s.

¹³ The review has been conducted by the Minister for Communications, Climate Change and the Environment in conjunction with the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government and relevant stakeholders.

6.15.3.1 Solar Energy

There are a range of technologies available to exploit the benefits of harnessing energy of the sun, including solar panels, solar farms, solar energy storage facilities all of which contribute to a reduction in energy demand. Solar technologies can be designed into buildings or retrofitted. Large scale solar farms have been positively considered on suitable sites within the County in the recent past. As of May 2019, twenty solar photovoltaic farms have been granted planning permission across the County but none have commenced development. A number of other solar farm proposals are at the pre-planning stage.

Proposals for the development of solar farms will not be permitted within areas identified as being within Flood zones A or B as set out in the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 for Planning Authorities (or any updated guidelines).

6.15.3.2 Wind Energy

Wind energy has been the most significant source of renewable electricity. In 2017, installed wind capacity has increased to 2,851 MW across the island of Ireland. However, if Ireland is to reach our 2020 renewable electricity target, the build rate of onshore wind farms must accelerate from an historic average of 180 MW per year to at least 250 MW per year¹⁴.

The growth of renewable energy and in particular wind energy requires the modernisation and expansion of electricity infrastructure. Ireland continues to face challenges inherent to successfully further deploying renewable energy in electricity, heat and transport, including predictable and transparent frameworks, regulatory certainty,

cost efficiency and effectiveness and social acceptance.

The Council will continue to support and encourage the principle of development of wind energy, in accordance with Government policy and having regard to the provisions of the Landscape Characterisation Assessment of the County and the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006) or any revisions thereof.

6.15.3.3 Geothermal

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland commissioned a study in 2004 on geothermal energy in Ireland. This study identified potential national resources of geothermal energy. This report found that the most abundant warm springs are found in the Mallow area in north County Cork and the Dublin/Meath/Kildare area. The highest recorded geothermal gradient at 1000 metres in the Republic is 28.4 degrees Celsius/km and is located in the vicinity of the north of County Meath. The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) is currently undertaking a further study on shallow geothermal energy resources in Ireland. This project aims to produce best practice guidance for the geothermal systems in Ireland, suitability maps for the utilisation of shallow geothermal energy resources and a database of existing systems.

6.15.3.4 Bioenergy

Bioenergy is solar energy that has been bound up in biomass during the process of photosynthesis. The photosynthesis process uses solar energy to combine carbon dioxide from the atmosphere with water and various nutrients from the soil to produce plant matter – biomass. The Council will encourage the production of bio-crops for biomass in the generation of renewable energy.

¹⁴ Source: Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment 2017

6.15.3.5 Hydro Energy

The Council encourages the use of rivers, where suitable, within the County for the development of Hydro Energy, and in particular, will be supportive of developments along the banks of rivers which propose hydro energy to provide an element of their energy requirements. The Council will not encourage the use of the canal system which is designated for tourist and amenity use for this purpose. In all proposals, the Council will consult with the National Parks & Wildlife Section (NPWS) of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Inland Fisheries Ireland with regard to the impact of such proposals for the free passage of fish, salmonid qualities of the river and ecological impact of any sites of E.U. or national designation.

6.15.3.6 Energy Efficiency

The Council support the concept of generating renewable energy at a 'local' level and is cognisant of the benefits that accrue to local communities, for example using solar energy as a means to empower communities to take control of the production and consumption of energy. Local community engagement will form a key part of the Council's future energy strategy, and this engagement could be developed through the Public Participation Network (PPN) which could be used to inform people of the economic, environmental and social benefits of moving away from solid/fossil fuels towards a low carbon economy.

The Council will endeavour:

- To promote the rational uses of energy;
- To promote renewable energy;
- To promote and disseminate energy information;

- To protect the environment;
- To reduce energy waste in all sectors of society, and;
- To encourage the replacement of imported fossil fuels with regionally generated renewable energy in an effort to ensure security of energy supply, where it is feasible.

Ireland is committed to achieving its renewable energy and efficiency targets by 2020 as set down by the European Commission under the renewable energy directive¹⁵.

It is the policy of the Council:

INF POL 34

To promote sustainable energy sources, locally based renewable energy alternatives, where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity, natural and built heritage, or local amenities.

INF POL 35

To seek a reduction in greenhouse gases through energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources utilising the natural resources of the County in an environmentally acceptable manner consistent with best practice and planning principles.

INF POL 36

To support the implementation of the National Climate Change Strategy and to facilitate measures which seek to reduce

¹⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/renewable-energy>

emissions of greenhouse gases.

INF POL 37

To seek to improve the energy efficiency of the County's existing building stock in line with good architectural conservation practice and to promote energy efficiency and conservation in the design and development of all new buildings in the County, in accordance with the Building Regulations Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Energy).

INF POL 38

To encourage that new development proposals maximise energy efficiency through siting, layout, design and incorporate best practice in energy technologies, conservation and smart technology.

INF POL 39

To encourage the attainment of high standards of energy efficiency and environmental sustainability in development, including the following:

- 1 - Bio-climatic site design¹⁶
- 2 - Water Conservation;
- 3 - Ventilation;
- 4 - Energy Efficient Strategies;
- 5 - Daylight Analysis;
- 6 - High Insulation Standards,
- 7 - Smart technologies, and;
- 8 - Renewable Energy.

INF POL 40

To support and encourage pilot schemes which promote innovative ways to incorporate energy efficiency.

INF POL 41

To encourage the development of wind energy, in accordance with Government policy and having regard to the Landscape Character Assessment of the County and the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006) or any revisions thereof.

INF POL 42

To support the identification, in conjunction with EMRA, of Strategic Energy Zones, areas suitable to accommodate large energy generating projects within the Eastern and Midlands Regional area.

INF POL 43

To require that development proposals in respect of solar panel photovoltaic (PV) arrays in the vicinity of Dublin Airport shall be accompanied by a full glint and glare study to assess the potential impact upon aviation safety (Refer to Chapter 5 Movement, Section 7.11, Aviation Sector).

INF POL 44

To support Sustainable Energy Communities and local community group initiatives to develop clean energy

¹⁶ Refers to the design of buildings that are in harmony with their natural surrounds and local climate. Incorporating bio-climatic design saves energy, cost, protects the environment and improves indoor living conditions for the residents

opportunities within the county.

INF POL 45

To support the development and implementation of a local Climate Action Strategy which should identify vulnerability climate risks, quantify emissions produced, identify costs and prioritise adaptation actions in accordance with the National Adaptation Framework.

It is the objective of the Council:

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.

INF OBJ 40

To seek to reduce reliance on fossil fuels in the County by reducing the energy demand of existing buildings, in particular residential dwellings.

INF OBJ 41

To promote the generation and supply of low carbon and renewable energy alternatives, having regard to the opportunities offered by the settlement hierarchy of the County and the built environment.

INF OBJ 42

To support the recording and monitoring of renewable energy potential in the County in partnership with other stakeholders including the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI).

INF OBJ 43

To require, where feasible and practicable, the provision of Photovoltaic solar panels in new residential developments, commercial developments, and public buildings for electricity generation/storage and/or water heating purposes so as to minimise carbon emissions and reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels and reduce energy costs.

INF OBJ 44

To require, where feasible and practicable, the provision of green roof technology for all new public buildings (Council buildings, school buildings, hospitals, community centres, sports facilities, libraries, Garda stations etc) to assist in flood alleviation, insulation and improved biodiversity, and to actively promote these measures where appropriate in new commercial and

industrial buildings.

INF OBJ 45

To ensure that all plans and projects associated with the generation or supply of energy or telecommunication networks are subject to an Appropriate Assessment Screening and those plans and projects which could, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site (or sites) undergo a full Appropriate Assessment.

INF OBJ 46

To support the implementation of the actions of the Meath Climate Action Strategy and review and update the Energy Management Action Plan 2011-2012, "Think Globally Act Locally".

INF OBJ 47

To investigate the preparation of a Renewable Energy Strategy promoting technologies which are most viable in the County.

INF OBJ 48

To support Ireland's renewable energy commitments by promoting the use of district heating systems in urban residential and enterprise developments, where such developments will not negatively impact upon the surrounding

landscape, environment, biodiversity or local amenities.

INF OBJ 49

To support the use of heat pumps as an alternative to gas boilers, where appropriate, for domestic and commercial development.

6.15.4 Energy Networks Infrastructure

6.15.4.1 Electricity and Gas Networks

The two main energy sources currently serving the County are electricity and gas. The County's location within the Greater Dublin Area together with the potential for significant economic and supporting residential development within the Plan period demonstrates the importance of ensuring that the existing networks can be upgraded and can provide enhanced capacity. This capacity is essential to facilitate the future development of the County in line with the Core and Settlement Strategies.

The RSES highlights the importance of reducing energy consumption from fossil fuel sources and promotes the use of more sustainable sources such as wind, wave solar and biomass. The use of smart technology systems and the recognition that buildings can act as both generators and consumers of energy and the promotion of electric vehicles will all place greater pressure on the national electricity grid. Thus, the strengthening of the national grid is important for a number of reasons

including improving security of supply for the domestic, residential and enterprise market as well as attracting high-end enterprise which often require significant energy capacity and reliability.

6.15.4.2 North-South Interconnector

The north-south interconnector is an above ground electricity connection proposal linking the existing converter station at Woodland, Batterstown, Co. Meath and traversing through Meath, Cavan and Monaghan linking to a converter station at Turleenan in County Tyrone. Planning permission was granted by An Bord Pleanála for the sections in Counties Meath, Cavan and Monaghan in December 2016. Following a successful legal challenge, planning permission for the northern section of the interconnector has been delayed.

Section 10.3 of the RSES outlines the following in relation to future north-south electricity interconnections “Increased connectivity with other grids is also needed and projects such as the *north-south interconnector are of great importance for the region*”.

It is the policy of the Council:

INF POL 46

To support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity and gas supplies, and associated networks, to serve the existing and future needs of the County and to facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects that may be brought forward during the lifetime of the plan including the delivery and integration, including linkages of renewable energy

proposals to the electricity transmission grid in a sustainable and timely manner.

INF POL 47

To co-operate and liaise with statutory and other energy providers in relation to power generation in order to ensure adequate power capacity for the existing and future business and enterprise needs of the County.

INF POL 48

To ensure that energy transmission infrastructure follows best practice with regard to siting, design and least environmental impact in the interest of landscape protection.

INF POL 49

To require that, in all new developments, multiple services are accommodated in shared strips underground and that access covers are shared, whenever possible.

INF POL 50

To require that the location of local energy services such as electricity, be undergrounded, where appropriate.

INF POL 51

To seek to avoid the sterilisation of lands proximate to key public transport

corridors such as rail, when future energy transmission routes/pipelines are being designed and provided.

INF POL 52

To seek to generally avoid the location of overhead lines in Natura 2000 sites unless it can be proven that they will not affect the integrity of the site in view of its conservation objectives i.e. by carrying out an appropriate assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the E.U. Habitats Directive.

INF POL 53

To ensure that development proposals, including quarrying and mining operations involving explosives, do not negatively impact on the gas network. The Council shall refer applications for developments in proximity to the natural gas network to Gas Networks Ireland and will have regard to their comments in the assessment of the application.

It is the objective of the Council:

INF OBJ 50

To ensure that all plans and projects associated with the generation or supply of energy or telecommunication networks will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment Screening and that those plans or projects which could, either individually or in-combination with other

plans and projects, have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site (or sites) undergo a full Appropriate Assessment.

INF OBJ 51

To seek the delivery of the necessary integration of transmission network requirements to facilitate linkages of renewable energy proposals to the electricity transmission grid in a sustainable and timely manner.

6.16 Information and Communication Technologies

The provision of a high quality competitive telecommunications service is considered essential in order to promote industrial and commercial development, to improve personal and household security and to enhance social inclusion and mobility. The increased usage of new technologies has placed an increased reliance on the provision of such services in all areas for industrial, commercial, tourism and social development. The expansion of these services is key to meeting the needs of the County's population and a modern digital economy.

6.16.1 Statutory Context

EU Directive 2014/61/EU (SI. 391 of 2016)

This Directive pertains to the reduction of cost of deploying high-speed communications networks to limit operators ability to develop their own network and to use existing ducting in place.

6.16.2 Policy Context

Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities -Department of the Environment- July 1996

The Guidelines provide guidance on locational and other requirements for antennae support structures. The Guidelines also address the issue of access roads to base stations.

Code of Practice on Sharing of Radio Sites- Commission for Communications Regulation, 2007

This Code of Practice explores the potential of facilitating of sharing of radio sites between 3G Operators.

Circular Letter PL07/12-Department of Environment, Community and Local Government-October 2012

This Circular provides direction for all forms of telecommunications infrastructure in terms of the recommended duration of permissions, separation distances from residences/schools, bonds and a register of structures.

Draft Digital Strategy for County Meath-2019

The Strategy will address aspects such as Digital Infrastructure, Digital Education, Digital Enterprise & Economy and a Digital Council. A draft is scheduled to go out for public consultation in Q3 of 2019, and the Strategy is expected to be adopted in Q4 of 2019.

6.16.3 Broadband

Broadband is one of the key drivers in maintaining competitiveness and supporting socio-economic development. It provides a connectivity that has transformed the way people and businesses operate.

The National Broadband Plan is the Government's plan to deliver high speed broadband services to all businesses, farms, and households in Ireland. It will ensure that people living and working in rural areas have the same digital opportunities as those in urban areas. The contract for the National Broadband Plan State intervention area was awarded in November 2019. The Council will seek to promote enhancement of broadband delivery in County Meath in the period of the Development Plan in accordance with National policy in order to:

- Promote the attractiveness of regional locations outside of the main urban centres for economic development both indigenous and FDI;
- Facilitate more flexible working arrangements such as working from home;
- Reduce social isolation.

6.16.4 Telecommunications Antennae

The Council recognises the essential need for high quality communications and information technology networks in assuring the competitiveness of the County's economy and its role in supporting regional and national development generally.

It shall be the preferred approach that all new support structures fully meet the co-location or clustering policy of the current guidelines or any such guidelines that replace these, and that shared use of existing structures will be insisted upon where the numbers of masts located in any single area are considered to be excessive. The placement of appropriately designed antennae on street furniture and lamp posts will be supported in suitable locations. Specific care and attention will be required in designated

ACA's.

Due to the physical size of mast structures and the materials used to construct them, such structures can severely impact on both rural and urban landscapes. When assessing planning applications, great care needs to be taken to minimise damage through discreet siting, appropriate and good design. In the assessment of individual proposals, the Council will also consider rights of way and walking routes. The design of mast structures should be simple and well finished. They should employ the latest technology in order to minimise their scale and visual impact. Mast structures are most visible and exposed within upland/hilly or mountainous areas. In these locations, softening of the visual impact can be achieved through planting of shrubs, trees etc. as a screen or backdrop, if appropriate. Disguised masts e.g. as trees, will be encouraged in appropriate locations.

In accordance with circular PL07/12¹⁷, the Plan will seek to support applications for telecommunications infrastructure in appropriate locations in compliance with all environmental requirements.

It is the policy of the Council:

INF POL 54

To facilitate the delivery of a high capacity Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure and broadband network and digital broadcasting throughout the County.

INF POL 55

To seek to have appropriate modern ICT, including open access fibre connections

in all new developments and a multiplicity of carrier neutral ducting installed during significant public infrastructure works such as roads, rail, water and sewerage, where feasible.

INF POL 56

To promote orderly development of telecommunications infrastructure throughout the County in accordance with the requirements of the *“Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities”* July 1996, except where they conflict with Circular Letter PL 07/12 which shall take precedence, and any subsequent revisions or expanded guidelines in this area.

INF POL 57

To promote best practice in siting and design in relation to the erection of communication antennae, having regard to ‘Guidance on the potential location of overground telecommunications infrastructure on public roads’, (Dept of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources, 2015).

INF POL 58

To encourage and facilitate pre-planning discussions with service providers and operators prior to the submission of planning applications.

¹⁷ Circular Letter PL 07/12 Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines, Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, October 2012.

INF POL 59

To encourage co-location of antennae on existing support structures and to require documentary evidence as to the non-availability of this option is proposals for new structures. The shared use of existing structures will be required where the numbers of masts located in any single area is considered to have an excessive concentration.

INF POL 60

To assess proposals for the location of telecommunication structures in sensitive landscapes in accordance with the policies set down within the Landscape Character Assessment.

It is the objective of the Council:

INF OBJ 52

To support the delivery and implementation of the National Broadband Plan.

INF OBJ 53

To require that open access communications cables and associated infrastructure are undergrounded in urban areas with particular reference to Architectural Conservation Areas in order to protect the visual amenities of streetscapes.

INF OBJ 54

To secure high quality of design of masts, towers and antennae and other such infrastructure in the interests of visual amenity and the protection of sensitive landscapes, subject to radio and engineering parameters.

6.17 Waste Management

The Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 defines waste as *“any substance or object which the holder discards, intends to discard or is required to discard, by the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)”*. Maintaining economic progress in the County is contingent on a good environment and the availability of necessary waste management facilities. Waste management policy is predicated on the EU Waste Hierarchy of prevention, preparing for reuse, recycling, energy recovery and sustainable disposal. Waste management involves measures to protect the environment and human health by preventing or reducing the adverse impacts of the generation and management of waste.

6.17.1 Statutory Context

Waste Framework Directive-European Commission- 2008/98/EC

This Directive incorporates the Polluter Pays Principle along with the waste hierarchy. Article 4 of the Directive outlines the following *“Member states shall take the necessary measures to ensure that waste is recovered or disposed of without endangering human health and without processes or methods which*

could harm the environment, and in particular avoiding the following negative impacts:

- risk to water, soil, plants or animals;
- causing nuisance through noise or odours; and
- adversely affecting the countryside or places of special interest”

The Directive (2008/98/EC) sets out measures to progressively divert and reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste sent to landfill by 2016. The Directive specifies the priorities for waste management as follows:

- Prevention
- Preparing for Re-Use
- Recycling
- Other Recovery (e.g. Energy Recovery)
- Disposal

Waste Management Acts-Environmental Protection Agency- 1996-2013

These Acts contain a number of key legal obligations, including requirements for waste management planning, waste collection and movement, the authorisation of waste facilities, measures to reduce the production of waste and/or promote its recovery.

EC (Waste Directive) Regulations 2011 (SI NO 126 of 2011), EC Directive 2008/98/EC

These Regulations set a 70% target for the re-use, recycling and recovery of man-made construction and demolition waste and was transposed into Irish Law in 2011. The EPA Report-“Progress towards EU waste targets” published in August 2017 states that Ireland is on track to achieve this target by December 2020.

European Union (Household food waste and bio-waste) Regulations 2015.

These Regulations increase the amount of food waste to be recovered through the production of energy, compost and digestate, thereby creating opportunities for added jobs and value. The Regulations will also facilitate the achievement of the targets set out in the Landfill Directive (Directive 99/31/EC) for the diversion of biodegradable municipal waste from landfill sites, by directing source-segregated household food waste to composting and to other forms of treatment.

6.17.2 Policy Context

A Resource Opportunity Waste Management Policy in Ireland, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government 2012

This document sets out the measures through which Ireland will make further progress to become a recycling society, placing a focus on resource efficiency and seeking the elimination of land filling of municipal waste. It is based on five key principles, prevention, preparing for reuse, recycling, recovery and disposal.

The Eastern Midlands Region Waste Management Plan-Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Management Office- 2015 -2021

The overall vision of the Regional Waste Management Plan is that waste should be seen as a valuable material resource. The Plan supports a move towards achieving a circular economy which is essential if the region is to make better use of resources and become more resource efficient. The move to a circular economy replacing the outdated industrial model of ‘take-make-consume-dispose’, is essential to deliver the resource efficiency ambition of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The Plan

contains three targets:

- Reduction of 1% per annum in the quantity of household waste generated over the period of the Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Plan;
- Prepare for a reuse and recycling rate of 50% of Municipal waste by 2020;
- Reduce to 0% the direct disposal of residual municipal waste to landfill from 2016 onwards in favour of higher value pre-treatment processes and indigenous recovery practices.

By virtue of the Waste Management Acts, 1996-2013, the objectives of the Waste Management Plan are deemed to be included in the Development Plan. Where the objectives of the Development Plan and the Waste Management Plan are in conflict, the objectives in the Waste Management Plan shall prevail. The adoption of the Waste Management Plan is an executive function.

Draft Waste Facility Siting Guidelines- Southern Region Waste Management Office-2016

The 2015-2021 Regional Waste Management Plan included the policy action G.3.1 which required the preparation of Waste Facility Siting Guidelines to advise on the siting of waste management infrastructure thus protecting the environment, human health and advising what represents a sustainable use of selected lands.

6.17.3 Waste Infrastructure

In terms of waste infrastructure, the County is well served with a wide range of waste facilities from waste transfer stations, a Waste to Energy facility, landfill, a construction and demolition waste facility and a network of recycling facilities

supported by the Council. Recycling is a key component of sustainable waste management. Navan, Trim, Kells and Dunboyne are served by recycling centres. The remainder of the County is served by a network of bring banks which accept a broad diversity of materials. The Waste Management Plan notes that finding suitable locations for bring banks is a challenging task for all Local Authorities. The Council will continue to promote awareness of and promote an increase in the amount of waste that is re-used and recycled to reflect the objectives of the waste hierarchy.

6.17.3.1 Circular Economy

Waste is defined as any item that is discarded. The circular economy is one where materials remain in use at their highest value for the longest period of time and are then up cycled/ recycled or re-used, thereby minimising the volume of residual waste.

6.17.3.2 Prevention and Minimisation

In line with the principles of sustainable development, the Council will continue to promote a waste prevention and minimisation programme to target all aspects of waste in the County, focusing on both commercial and domestic waste producers. It is considered that raising the awareness of citizens and businesses owners with regard to their responsibilities as producers of waste is essential.

6.17.3.3 Reuse

The Council will promote an increase in the amount of waste reused and recycled consistent with the current *Eastern Midlands Region Waste Management Plan*. Re-use, can contribute to the

community and local economy.

6.17.3.4 Recycling

Ireland has made considerable progress in recent times in its recycling performance which ultimately is a reflection of growing awareness among the public.

6.17.3.5 Recovery

The Indaver Waste to Energy facility (WtE) in Duleek is a privately owned recovery facility with capacity beyond the lifetime of this Plan.

6.17.3.6 Disposal

The Knockharley regional landfill, near Kentstown, accessed off the N2 National Primary Route is a privately operated landfill facility which has capacity beyond the lifetime of this Plan. It is recognised that a contingency capacity for landfill is required to facilitate emergency situations for example, the management of waste from a foot and mouth disease outbreak.

6.17.3.7 Construction and Demolition Waste

The *Eastern Midlands Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021* states that Construction and Demolition Waste (C&D) consists of all wastes that arise from C&D activities which include excavated soil from contaminated sites, however the definition is one that is being continuously subjected to change. The *Regional Waste Management Plan* recognises that at many of these sites it is deposition rather than improvement that is the primary activity and this can have complications for habitats. Given the move away from landfill which is a significant outlet for C&D waste, alternative recovery

options will be required to facilitate C&D Waste in the future years. The *EC (Waste Directive) Regulations 2011*, set a 70% target for the re-use, recycling and recovery of man-made C&D waste in Ireland by 2020. It is imperative that capacity to manage C & D Waste is made available and this is a requisite to facilitate key economic development in the County. In addition an outlet is required for uncontaminated, non-hazardous soils, which are subject to export at present.

6.17.3.8 Hazardous Waste

Hazardous waste is generated by every sector of society and is for the most part managed by authorised operators. The Environmental Protection Agency has prepared a revised *National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2014-2020*. It takes into account progress that has been made since the previous plan and the waste policy and legislative changes that have also occurred and includes an objective regarding self sufficiency in managing hazardous waste.

6.18 Litter Management

Litter is an environmental problem that significantly detracts from the visual appearance of both urban and rural areas. The Council recognises the importance of protecting the County from indiscriminate dumping and bill posting and of keeping the environment free from litter. Each Local Authority is obliged to prepare a Litter Management Plan for its area. The Draft Litter Management Plan 2019-2021 was published in Q3 of 2019. It sets out the Council's objectives to prevent and control litter as well as measures to raise public awareness of the issue. Local Authorities are responsible for the prevention and control of litter and they

have the power to take enforcement action against individuals who break these laws.

Gardai also have the power to issue on-the-spot fines for litter offences. The Tidy Towns is a well established environmental competition in Ireland and is organised by the Department of Communications, Climate Change and the Environment. The nature of the competition has evolved over time from being largely an anti-litter competition to being a much more broad ranging environmental competition with categories including inter alia Community involvement and planning, built environment and streetscape, landscaping and open spaces, bio-diversity, litter control, waste management, streets and residential areas, approach roads and back areas.

There are a significant number of other local voluntary community groups established throughout the County who are also very actively involved in maintaining a high standard of maintenance within our local communities outside of the formal Tidy Towns process. These groups receive significant support from the Council in terms of the supply of equipment.

6.19 Air Pollution

Air pollution has been acknowledged as the main environmental cause of premature death in Europe. Poor air quality also adversely impacts on the economy with increased healthcare costs and lost working days.

The Council's role in relation to air quality is to promote a reduction in air pollution, through the implementation of relevant legislation and through the provision of advice and guidance on best practice. Air pollution challenges include:

- Transport emissions, primarily from road transport (cars, buses and HGV's) rail, air and shipping;
- Industrial and agricultural emissions;
- Emissions from domestic burning of fossil fuels;
- Emissions from fire-house fires, gorse fires, bog land fires etc. Which may result in localised poor air quality;

Ireland's first National Clean Air Strategy¹⁸ is being developed and submissions were invited on the draft Strategy during 2018. *"This Strategy will provide the framework for a set of cross-Government policies and actions to reduce harmful emissions and improve air quality and public health to meet current and future EU and international obligations"*.

Primary responsibility for monitoring air quality, as well as the nature and extent of emissions is assigned to the EPA. Under the Air Pollution Act 1987, primary responsibility for addressing local instances of air pollution is assigned to local authorities.

Results of air quality monitoring can be viewed on the EPA website¹⁹. The EPA has introduced the National Ambient Air Quality programme (AAMP) which will see a greater number of monitoring locations established, one location is to be introduced in Navan, later in 2019.

Good air quality and progress in the climate change area go hand in hand. The Paris Climate Change agreement informs and promotes positive improvements in this area.

6.20 Noise Pollution

Noise is defined as being *"so loud, so continuous, so repeated, of such pitch or duration or occurring*

¹⁸ www.dccae.gov.ie/documents/CleanAirStrategy

¹⁹ www.epa.ie/air/quality/monitor

*at such times that it gives a person reasonable cause for annoyance*²⁰.

Environmental noise means unwanted or harmful outdoor sound created by human activities, including noise emitted by means of transport, road rail and air traffic and from sites of industrial activity. It is among the most frequent sources of complaint regarding environmental issues in Ireland and throughout Europe, especially in densely populated urban areas and residential areas.

The EU Environmental Noise Directive requires that Local authorities prepare Strategic Noise Maps and action plans, which set out mitigation proposals to reduce the negative impacts caused by noise. These plans will identify quiet areas which are deemed to have positive health effects upon our population.

The Council prepared a Noise Action Plan (2018) in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Noise Regulations (SI 140 2006). The Noise Action Plan (is largely transport based) proposes strategic long term management of environmental noise from transport systems i.e. traffic noise.

Parts of the County are located within the outer and inner noise zones and the outer public safety zone for Dublin airport and planning restrictions are in place for both the outer and inner noise zones. Any planning applications for development in these zones will be referred to the Dublin Airport Authority for comment in order to minimise any potential adverse impacts.²¹

6.21 Light Pollution

Artificial light is necessary for the operation of industry, recreational amenities and for

illumination within our homes, however inappropriate or excessive light can be especially harmful to wildlife and human health, due to sleep patterns being disrupted. With increased development comes increased light pollution and therefore measures to minimise the harmful impacts of light pollution must be introduced to ensure that new developments are appropriately lit and that environmentally sensitive areas are protected.

It is the policy of the Council:

INF POL 61

To facilitate the implementation of National Waste legislation and National and Regional Waste Management Policy.

INF POL 62

To encourage and support the provision of a separate collection of waste throughout the County in accordance with the requirements of the Waste Management (Household Food Waste) Regulations 2009, the Waste Framework Directive Regulations, 2011, the Waste Management (Commercial Food Waste) Regulations 2015 and other relevant legislation to meet the requirements of the Regional Waste Management Plan.

INF POL 63

To encourage the development of waste infrastructure and associated developments in appropriate locations, as deemed necessary in accordance with the requirements of the current Eastern Midlands Region Waste Management

²¹ See Section 5.11 Aviation Sector and map 11.1 in Vol 4 of the Plan

Plan and the Draft Waste Facility Siting Guidelines 2016 (when finalised) or any subsequent replacement guidelines.

INF POL 64

To encourage and support the expansion and improvement of a three bin system (mixed dry recyclables, organic waste and residual waste) in order to increase the quantity and quality of materials collected for recycling in conjunction with relevant stakeholders.

INF POL 65

To adopt the provisions of the waste management hierarchy and implement policy in relation to the County's requirements under the current or any subsequent Waste Management Plan. All prospective developments in the County shall take account of the provisions of the regional waste management plan and adhere to the requirements of the Plan. Account shall also be taken of the proximity principle and the inter-regional movement of waste.

INF POL 66

To ensure that hazardous waste is addressed through an integrated approach of prevention, collection, and recycling and encourage the development of industry-led producer responsibility schemes for key waste streams.

INF POL 67

To continue to promote and encourage education and awareness on all issues associated with waste management, at school, household, enterprise and community level.

INF POL 68

To promote and facilitate communities to become involved in environmental awareness activities and community-based recycling initiatives or environmental management initiatives that will lead to local sustainable waste management practices.

INF POL 69

To require the provision of bring banks, bottle banks or other appropriate recycling facilities as part of the overall development in the case of new or extended commercial, employment, educational, recreational facilities and managed residential developments²².

INF POL 70

To encourage the recycling of construction and demolition waste and the reuse of aggregate and other materials in future construction projects.

It is the objective of the Council:

²² See Section 11.8 Development Management Standards re Commercial Development

INF OBJ 55

To facilitate the transition from a waste management economy to a green circular economy to enhance employment opportunities and increase the value recovery and recirculation of resources.

INF OBJ 56

To facilitate the provision of appropriate waste recovery and disposal facilities in accordance with the principles set out in the appropriate Waste Management Plan applicable from time to time made in accordance with the Waste Management Act 1996 (as amended).

INF OBJ 57

To support developments necessary to manage food waste in accordance with the requirements of the current Waste Management (Food Waste) Regulations and the regional Waste Management Plan.

INF OBJ 58

To continue to expand environmental awareness initiatives designed to create increased public awareness of waste prevention, minimisation, reuse and resource efficiency.

INF OBJ 59

To co-operate with the Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment, the Environmental

Protection Agency and other relevant stakeholders in implementing proposals which discourage or illegal or improper disposal of waste and promote the diversion of recyclable items from the waste streams including “bottle return and refund” schemes.

INF OBJ 60

To seek to ensure, in cooperation with relevant authorities, that waste management facilities are appropriately managed and monitored according to best practice to maximise efficiencies to protect human health and the natural environment.

INF OBJ 61

To promote and facilitate high quality sustainable waste recovery and disposal infrastructure/technology including composting (anaerobic digester) plants for managing organic solid waste, at appropriate locations, with the County subject to the protection of the amenities of the surrounding environment including European Sites, and in keeping with the EU waste hierarchy.

INF OBJ 62

To identify suitable sites for additional recycling centres and bring bank facilities subject to the availability of appropriate funding and infrastructure, through the public or private sector, as appropriate.

INF OBJ 63

To seek the effective engagement of local communities in the County to promote their role in recycling waste and tackling the problem of illegal dumping within the County through liaison with the Environmental Awareness Officer.

INF OBJ 64

To encourage community/voluntary groups to establish additional waste services or facilities (e.g. small scale facilities for recycling, reuse/repair) in their area and assist them to develop a strategy to provide such facilities for and with members of their community.

INF OBJ 65

To ensure that during the assessment of planning applications through the Development Management process that provision for household waste recycling is adequately addressed in all new residential developments.

INF OBJ 66

To liaise, work with and support Irish Water in the preparation of a National Sludge Management Plan and seek to implement the recommendations of that plan.

INF OBJ 67

To support the development of

infrastructure necessary to meet the objectives of the Meath's Sludge Management Plan having regard to the Waste Facility Siting Guidelines (when adopted).

INF OBJ 68

To require developers to prepare construction and demolition waste management plans for new construction projects over certain thresholds which shall meet the relevant recycling/recovery targets for such waste in accordance with the national legislation and national and regional waste management policy.

INF OBJ 69

To support the development of facilities to cater for commercial waste not provided for within the kerbside collection system such as the WEEE, C & D type waste and hazardous materials in accordance with the requirements of the Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan.

INF OBJ 70

To continue to reduce incidents of littering through the continued implementation and updating of the Councils Litter Management Plan.

INF OBJ 71

To continue to support and work with local and Tidy Towns initiatives in the maintenance and conservation of our

local urban and rural communities throughout the County.

INF OBJ 72

To continue to monitor air and noise quality results submitted from selected locations throughout the County in co-operation with the Health Service Executive and the Environmental Protection Agency.

INF OBJ 73

To support the collation of air quality and greenhouse gas monitoring data in support of a regional air quality and greenhouse gas emission inventory.

INF OBJ 74

To support and facilitate the preparation of strategic noise maps and action plans, in conjunction with EMRA, that support proactive measures to avoid, mitigate and minimise noise, in all instances where it is likely to have adverse impacts.

INF OBJ 75

To require that outdoor lighting proposals minimise the harmful effects of light pollution and to ensure that new street lighting is appropriate to a particular location and that environmentally sensitive areas are protected from inappropriate forms of illumination.

CHAPTER 7

Community Building Strategy

7.1 Introduction

The creation of healthy, socially inclusive communities is a cross cutting theme of the Development Plan. The County faces a number of challenges in particular the unsustainable levels of out bound commuting which is having significant impacts on community building and volunteerism. The spatial implementation of the Meath Economic Strategy focuses on the creation of 'live work' communities by promoting of economic development in tandem with an inclusive and diverse community structure. This will allow people not just to live in the County, but also to invest in, work in and learn in Meath. Only then will citizens be able to enjoy the benefits of the rich cultural and natural environment of the County. A community's quality of life does not solely depend on housing, employment and infrastructure support, but also on social and personal enhancement.

Understanding the County's demographic structure is central to preparing a strategy which will address future community needs. The average age in the County in 2016 was 35.2 years (33.8 in 2011) in comparison to 37.4 for the State (36.1 in 2011). 83.4% of the population in the County is below the age of 65. This compares with an average of 79.6% for the State. Child dependency¹ in the County is the highest in the State with 39% of the population under the age of 14 in comparison to an average of 32.3% for the State. Old dependency² in the County increased from 13.5% in 2011 to 16.6% in 2016. However this remains substantially below the figure for the State, which stood at 20.4%.

In summary the age profile of the County's population is young when compared with the state, therefore generating immediate

requirements for additional childcare, educational facilities, playgrounds etc. In line with national population trends the County's population is ageing which will require specific responses to ensure we deliver age friendly communities into the future. This response will influence design of housing, delivery of transport and community facilities etc.

7.2 Statutory Context

Section 10(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, sets out a list of mandatory objectives to be included in a Development Plan. A number of these objectives relate to social infrastructure, either directly or indirectly.

The Local Government Reform Act, 2014 gives legislative effect to the proposals contained in the Government's document 'Putting People First, Action Programme for Local Government' 2012 and provides for a range of changes to the organisation and work of Local Authorities. The Local Government Reform Act recognises the importance of economic and community integration and includes a requirement for Councils to prepare a Local Economic and Community Plan, (LECP) every six years.

7.3 Policy Context

In working towards establishing viable and sustainable communities, it is important to ensure that the Plan is underpinned by policies and proposals that are consistent with overarching national guidance and policies in respect of social and community development.

National Planning Framework, (NPF)

The NPF in Chapter 6 'People, Homes and

¹ Persons aged 0-14 (Source: CSO Census 2016)

² Persons aged 65+(Source: CSO Census 2016)

Communities' outlines how location, place and accessibility influence the quality of life that people enjoy.

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

The RSES addresses a wide range of issues including education, health, sports and community facilities. The RSES aims to address mis-alignment in the Region across a range of factors including school provision, facilities and child-friendly amenities. RPO 9.16: In areas where significant new housing Relevant additional national guidance and policies to be considered are as follows:

- Putting People First Action Programme for Effective Local Government, 2012, Dept. of Environment, Community and Local Government.
- National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan 2013-2015, National Disability Strategy Implementation Group.
- National Women's Strategy 2007-2016, Department of Justice and Equality.
- Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach, 2012, National Disability Authority.
- Get Ireland Active, National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland, 2016.
- Charter for Rural Ireland, 2016 Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.
- Our Communities: A Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland, 2015, Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

This chapter reflects the overarching principles of the aforementioned national policy documents.

7.4 Local Community Development Committees and Local Economic and Community Plans

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 required the establishment of Local Community Development Committees (LCDC's) within all Local Authorities. The Meath Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) was established in 2014 to develop, coordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. County and City Development Boards (CDBs) were abolished in June 2014 under the 2014 Act. Local and community development activity previously undertaken by the Meath County Development Board generally now comes within the remit of the LCDC. One of the primary functions of the LCDCs is to develop, implement and monitor a six-year Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for the Local Authority administrative area. Central to the Meath LECP 2016-2021 is the understanding that economic, local and community development is mutually supportive in building sustainable communities with strong local economies. The purpose of the LECP is therefore to identify objectives and implement actions to strengthen and develop both the economic and community dimensions of the County over a six year period.

The Plan is based on and seeks to progress the following values:

- Community;
- Community development;
- Equality and Human Rights;
- Sustainability;

- Sense of Place;
- Partnership.

The Development Plan and the Local Economic and Community Plan effectively operate along parallel and supportive lines. The LECP provides a supporting framework for economic and local community development of Meath, whereas the County Development Plan provides an overarching strategy and statutory policy support for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County at a spatial level. Consequently the statutory policies and objectives of the County Development Plan must be complementary to and consistent with the high level goals and objectives of the LECP. The LECP sets out five goals:

- To promote and secure the wellbeing of all people and communities in the County.
- To stimulate and support a dynamic competitive economy to best meet the needs and aspirations of the people and communities in the County.
- To build and enable the resilience of all people and communities in the County.
- To stimulate and empower a flourishing for all people and communities in the County.
- To develop and implement ongoing renewal in public sector bodies that addresses how they fulfil their mandates and work with other stakeholders.

The foregoing goals are reflected in the policies and objectives of this chapter. The LECP is now required to be reviewed ensure compliance with the adopted RSES.

7.4.1 Joint Policing Committees

The Garda Síochána Act, 2005 established Joint Policing Committees (JPCS), whose function is *'To serve as a forum for consultations, discussions and recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the Local Authority's administrative area'*.

JPCs are a successful example of how a collaborative approach between Local authorities, An Garda Síochána and the community & voluntary sector can support policing and enhance community safety.

Key functions of the JPC, as cited in section 36(2) of the Garda Síochána Act are as follows:

(a) Keep under review:

- (i)** The levels and patterns of crime, disorder and anti social behaviour in that area (including the patterns and levels of misuse of alcohol and drugs, and
- (ii)** The factors underlying and contributing to the levels of crime, disorder and anti social behaviour in the area

JPCs are required to approach their work strategically, so as to ensure a coordinated and focused approach in tackling crime, disorder and anti social behaviour within their administrative areas. Accordingly, JPC s must develop a six year strategic plan, and to report on their implementation in Annual Reports to the Policing Authority. The Meath JPC is implementing the Joint Policing Committee Strategy 2015-2020.

7.5 Vision for Community Building

To enable our communities to have sufficient resources to support economic, social and environmental wellbeing, the creativity to flourish, and the strength to be resilient. This will in turn support the creation of a vibrant, sustainable, and competitive economy, based on shared goals and collaboration between statutory, community, voluntary, environmental and private sectors.

7.6 Social Inclusion

One of the overall aims of the Plan is the promotion of social inclusion. Social inclusion can be defined in many different ways but one of the most common understandings is that, through acting inclusively, society can ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, community life – regardless of their age, ability, nationality, religion or any of the many other characteristics which makes society diverse. It is, therefore, important that our living, working and leisure environments are designed and maintained in a manner that is accessible to all.

At a local level the Council, through its Social Inclusion Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 and considered policies, encourages and proactively promotes an ethos of social inclusion.

The Development Plan policies and objectives which advocate the development of sustainable communities with good quality public realm, access to housing, community facilities and public transport are central to the promotion of social inclusion in the County. The Plan also

seeks to promote equality of opportunity and protection of human rights enshrined in the UN charter. The Council is fully committed to developing a more socially inclusive society and promoting participation and access for all.

7.6.1 Community Participation

The community and voluntary sector has always played a considerable and positive role in promoting community development in the County. Public Participation Networks (PPN) have been introduced throughout Ireland as part of Local Government reform. Meath PPN is the link through which the Council connects to and engages with the community, voluntary, social inclusion and environmental sectors Countywide, for consultation and information sharing. The PPN enables the public to take an active role in influencing plans and policies of the Council. Membership of the PPN is open to all community and voluntary groups in the County. Currently there are over 550 member groups from the community and voluntary, social inclusion and environmental sectors across the County. (2017)

The Meath LECP, the NPF and RSES encourage community participation and endeavour to equip local communities with the necessary tools and resources to problem solve, address challenges and flourish.

The Pride of Place Initiative is one example of active community participation in the County whereby communities' work in partnership with the Council to encourage best practice, innovation and leadership in providing vibrant sustainable communities that improve the quality of life for all through environmental improvements to towns and villages.

7.6.2 Diverse and Inclusive Communities

There are several groups considered to have specific planning and design needs. These include children, young people, and people with a disability or illness, lone parent young families, older people, travellers and members of ethnic minority groups. It is a policy of the Council to recognise that people with special needs have access to and enjoy an appropriate living environment and the Council supports the provision of facilities for people with special needs.

7.6.2.1 Children and Young People

The birth rate in the County declined from 3,527 in the 2011 Census to 2,805 in 2016. There was a 10.1% reduction in the pre-school population in the same period³. However, the County experienced a 14.4% increase in the primary school population to 27,198 persons, the second highest in the Country. There was a significant increase of 18.1 % in the secondary school population in the County, also the second highest in the Country. The County, with an average of 1.51 children per family, was also recorded as having the highest average number of children per family in the Country in 2016. These figures will inform decision making on present and future needs for facilities such as childcare facilities, play areas, sports facilities, schools, health centres etc in the County.

According to the 2016 Census commuting times rose in every County with Meath having one of the longest average commute times nationally, of almost 35 minutes. One in five parents in the County of 0-4 year old child had a commute of over one hour. This has a major impact

on quality of life, community participation, volunteerism and community building in the County.

Meath Children and Young Peoples Services Committee (CYPSC) bring together the main statutory, community and voluntary providers of services to children and young people in the County. They provide a forum for joint planning and co-ordination of activities to ensure that children, young people and their families receive improved and accessible services. The Council is a member of the CYPSC committee and works closely with other agencies to implement actions that respond to children and young people's needs.

Meath Comhairle na nÓg provides a forum for young people (aged between 12-18) in the County to discuss local and national issues of relevance to them. Comhairle na nÓg is recognized as the official structure for participation by young people in the development of policies and services. Meath Comhairle na nÓg is represented on a number of boards locally and at Dáil na nÓg nationally and is under the direction of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

7.6.2.2 Older People

While the population of Meath increased by 5.9% from 184,135 in 2011 to 195,044 in 2016, there was a 27.4 % increase in the persons aged 65 and over, one of the largest increases in the country. The changing demographics and the ageing of the County's population profile pose challenges for the development of responsive social policies. The 'Age Friendly Ireland' Initiative is a key policy document that provides leadership and guidance in identifying the needs and opportunities of an ageing population and is now embedded within the local government

³ Source: Census 2016

system. The Council is committed to this initiative and the current Meath Age Friendly County Strategy 2017-2020 sets out solution focussed commitments for improvement to the key areas of infrastructure, transportation, services and information. The strategy provides an overall response to the issues being experienced by this group across the County. The Council hosted the National Age Friendly Ireland Programme in 2018.

Engagement with the Age Friendly initiative means that Meath will seek to obtain the following outcomes for its citizens:

- Be a great place to live, work and grow older.
- Ensure critical services are accessible and timely, and delivered in a cost effective and efficient manner.
- Have easily accessible public buildings, shops and services.
- Incorporate older people's views into significant decision making processes.
- Promote a positive attitude to ageing and address negative stereotypes regarding older people.
- Create opportunities for older people to be engaged with their County socially, as employees and volunteers.

The Age Friendly Alliance nominated Trim to be an Age Friendly Town in 2013. Kells was nominated to be an Age Friendly Business Town in 2013. As part of this a number of businesses carried out age friendly improvements to their premises to enhance the overall visitor experience for the older person. A Kells Age Friendly Business Directory was also compiled and distributed which identified businesses that have signed up and what they have to offer to the Older Person. It is proposed to further

expand age friendly initiatives throughout the County including 'walkability' surveys to identify potential mobility constraints and age friendly solutions.

High quality public realm can create inclusive communities and age-friendly spaces. When public realm is attractive and accessible, older people, and indeed people of all ages, can enjoy more active and connected lives. Practical changes and age friendly led design thinking can help to create environments which provide enhanced access for all. Design and maintenance in the context of public realm can make the difference between a healthy and active lifestyle, or one characterised by limited mobility and high levels of social isolation. The Council fully recognises the contribution an age friendly approach to the design of public realm can make to older people's quality of life.

Housing is a key social policy functional area that needs to adapt in order to meet the changing needs of older people. The NPF supports national policy to assist older people to live with dignity and independence in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. In particular it highlights the need for well-designed lifetime adaptable infill and brownfield development close to existing services and facilities, supported by universal design and improved urban amenities.

It is the policy of the Council that proposals for accommodation for the elderly should be located in existing residential areas well served by social infrastructure and amenities such as footpath networks, public transport (where possible) and local facilities and services to allow for better care in the community, independence and access and ensure that residents are not isolated. In order to provide suitable housing for older people throughout

the County, the Council will continue to work closely with other housing bodies and agencies associated with the provision of housing for older people and/or assisted living accommodation.

The National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland, 2009 sets standards for the provision of care facilities for the elderly in relation to the design and layout of the internal and external environment of care facilities.

Refer to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives for further information.

In accordance with the requirements of the NPF, (more specifically National Policy Objective 30), relevant information and analysis is included in Chapter 2 Core Strategy which sets out in greater detail the accommodation needs of this demographic.

7.6.2.3 People with Disabilities

People with disabilities and the mobility impaired face particular physical barriers to access and movement not only in buildings, but on footpaths, streetscapes, open spaces etc. The Council will encourage integration of accommodation within a mix of housing types providing mobility and access for people with disabilities in order to remove barriers to involvement in community and employment activities. All proposals for development shall have regard to the provisions of the National Disability Authority's document 'Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach – Planning and Policy' (2012) in order to ensure that access and movement through the development is available to all users of the development.

7.6.2.4 Traveller Community

Meath's Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 assessed the need for Traveller accommodation in the County and sets out the Council's policy regarding the provision of same. According to the 2016 Census, 971 members of the Travelling Community are living in Meath. The Council will, as necessary, continue to update its accommodation programme for the Travelling Community and will promote the use of mainstream public services that are accessible, relevant and welcoming to enable the Travelling Community to integrate fully and participate in wider society.

7.6.2.5 Migration and Diversity

Meath is becoming an increasingly diverse County. According to the Census 2016, non Irish nationals account for 10.1% of County's population in comparison to 11.6% nationally. Certain areas of the County have a more ethnic or culturally diverse population than others and service provision and community facilities in these areas should reflect the varying needs of the community.

Cultúr, a community organisation, works with ethnic minorities in the County, including immigrants, migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees. The Cultúr Strategic Plan 2015-2018 aims to promote the empowerment, participation, self determination and rights of ethnic minorities who experience or are at risk of poverty, social exclusion or racism.

Migrant integration is a dynamic, multi-faceted and long term process aimed at mutual accommodation and acceptance by both the migrant and host populations. The process of migrant integration involves and affects migrants, Local Government institutions, and the local community. Meath and Louth County

Councils are currently preparing a Joint Migrant Integration Strategy, 2019-2022 which will reflect the National Migrant Integration Strategy, National Policy Objectives and the Meath and Louth LECs. The strategy will ensure that integration issues continue to be reflected in strategic policy documents.

The strategy focuses on a number of thematic objectives as follows:

- Employment and economic Activity;
- Education and Training;
- Active civic and civil participation;
- Social inclusion-engaging and interacting with service providers, expressing culture and identity and addressing discrimination.

7.7 Social Infrastructure

Community infrastructure is an essential part of all communities. Facilities such as community centres, sports centres, libraries and playgrounds can serve as a focal point for communities they serve, and provide venues for local sporting, cultural, community, education and social events. 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. There are a large number of voluntary agencies and community initiatives that continue to play a central role in contributing to the delivery of a wide variety of local social infrastructure.

The Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines (2009) emphasise the need to integrate housing with the provision of supporting community and social infrastructure. The Guidelines acknowledge that community facilities should be located within, or close to,

neighbourhood centres and be well served by public transport.

Different levels of service provision are appropriate to settlements of different sizes, it is therefore important that the Council ensures that an appropriate range of community facilities are provided in all communities, taking account of the population profile and growth targets identified in the Core Strategy.

7.7.1 Community Hubs

In designing new facilities it is essential to ensure that they are adaptable over time to meet the changing needs of the population and to provide potential for maximising their dual usage during evenings/weekends/school holidays. When considering proposals for development, the Planning Authority may take into account benefits to the public in the form of community facilities. Where new social and community facilities are being retrofitted into established neighbourhoods, the issue of potential adverse impacts on residential amenity and increased pressures on limited on-street car parking spaces will be addressed in a sensitive manner. The Council will also support improvements to and/or redevelopment of existing community facilities throughout the County as appropriate. All such proposals should have regard to the provisions set out above and the guidance provided within Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives.

7.7.2 Social Infrastructure Assessments

As a result of the rapid population growth experienced in County Meath in recent decades, the provision of facilities which contribute to

community building is challenging. The Healthy Meath Strategy⁴ 2019-2021 seeks to ensure that all citizens have good physical and mental health. Availability of suitable facilities is a part of this overall strategy. It is essential that in those areas identified as priority areas for development in the Core Strategy sufficient and suitable community facilities are provided in tandem with new development, where possible.

Therefore, it is a requirement of the Council that planning applications for multiple developments (i.e. 50 residential units or greater) be accompanied by a Social Infrastructure Assessment (SIA) undertaken by the developer, to determine if facilities in the area are sufficient to provide for the needs of the future residents (of all age cohorts) and where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to either rectify the deficiency (through direct provision or development contributions) or suitably restrict or phase the development in accordance with the capacity of existing or planned services. The assessment should identify membership and non-membership facilities which allow access for all groups. Where facilities are deemed to be required, the type of facility shall be determined by the Planning Authority through the Development Management process.

Please refer to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives for further information.

It is the policy of the Council:

SOC POL 1

To promote and facilitate the delivery of the objectives and actions set out in the Meath Local Economic and Community

Plan 2016-2021. (or any subsequent replacement).

SOC POL 2

To support the provision and distribution of a range of community infrastructure facilities in accordance with the Settlement and Core Strategies to meet the needs of the County's population in conjunction with other statutory, voluntary, private sector and community groups.

SOC POL 3

To ensure that, where practicable, community, recreational and open space facilities are clustered, with the community facilities being located in local centres or combined with school facilities, as appropriate. Community facilities should be located close to or within walking distance of housing, accessible to all sectors of the community and facilitate multi-use functions through their design and layout.

SOC POL 4

To seek to ensure the efficient and timely delivery of community facilities commensurate with the needs of the resident population and to assist in the delivery of such facilities.

SOC POL 5

To require, as part of all new large residential and commercial developments,

⁴ Local Community & Development Committee and Meath Local Sports Partnership joint initiative.

and in existing developments, where appropriate, that provision is made for facilities including local/neighbourhood shops, childcare facilities, schools and recreational facilities, and to seek their provision concurrent with development.

SOC POL 6

To require that all new residential development applications of 50 units or more on zoned lands are 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). This should include details regarding the following essential facilities: Playgrounds, parks and other green spaces, education, childcare, health and others such as shops, banks, post offices, community meeting rooms/centres and recreational facilities. The assessment should identify membership and non-membership facilities which allow access for all groups. Where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to accompany the Planning application to address the deficiency. In certain cases however, residential development under these thresholds may, at the discretion of the Planning Authority, require the submission of a SIA. (Please refer to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards for further information).

SOC POL 7

To promote and encourage social inclusion through universal access to services and facilities and to encourage

the upgrade of community facilities.

SOC POL 8

To continue to provide care facilities for older people, such as own homes (designed to meet the needs of older people), sheltered housing, day-care facilities, nursing homes and specialised care units at appropriate locations throughout the County.

SOC POL 9

To provide and promote adaptability and flexibility in the design of homes and community facilities.

SOC POL 10

To require that all residential care facilities for the elderly comply with all relevant standards set out in the 'National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland' published by the Health Information and Quality Authority (February 2009) or the relevant standards for any subsequent national guidelines.

SOC POL 11

To support the implementation of the Meath County Age Friendly Strategy, 2017-2020 (or its replacement) in consultation with the relevant agencies and authorities.

SOC POL 12

To support the implementation of the

Meath Joint Policing Strategy, 2015-2020 (or its replacement) in consultation with the relevant agencies and authorities.

SOC POL 13

Ensure that all buildings, public and open spaces, recreational and amenity areas are accessible for people with disabilities, having regard to the Building Regulations, the objectives of 'Building for Everyone' (National Disability Authority) and 'Access for the Disabled' (No. 1 to 3)(National Rehabilitation Board).

SOC POL 14

To support the implementation of the Joint Migrant Integration Strategy, 2019-2022 (or its replacement) in consultation with the relevant agencies and authorities.

It is the objective of the Council:

SOC OBJ 1

To assist in the provision of community and resource centres and youth clubs/cafes and other facilities for younger people by the identification and reservation of suitably located sites, including sites within the landbanks of the Local Authorities and by assisting in the provision of finance, where possible.

SOC OBJ 2

To promote and assist in the provision of

lifetime adaptable housing units to meet the needs of all in society taking account of climate change.

SOC OBJ 3

To facilitate the development and improvement of new and existing residential and day care facilities throughout the County.

7.7.3 Education Facilities

The Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022 acknowledges that the level of educational attainment among the County's outbound commuters exceeds that of the Country as a whole and these skillsets are one of the principle advantages the County has in terms of attracting both indigenous employment and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Educational attainment outside of this group is relatively low when compared with the national average. Therefore, access to good quality educational facilities for all citizens of the County is a key requirement to encourage the economy of the County to continue to grow. Educational facilities have an important role to play in sustaining our town centres and in developing sustainable and balanced communities. These facilities function as important public buildings in the County. The Department of Education and Skills is responsible for the delivery of educational facilities and services. The Council works proactively with the Department of Education and Skills on an ongoing basis to identify educational needs and the spatial and land use implications of same as they arise. Under a nationally agreed Memorandum of

Understanding (MoU), the Council assists in identifying and promoting sites for new primary and post-primary schools in conjunction with the Department through regular meetings and communications.

There are 114 primary schools in the County (2016). The total number of students attending Meath Primary Schools in 2015-2016 was 26,320. There are 22 post primary schools in the County, catering for 14,443 pupils, (2016).

7.7.3.1 Additional Primary and Post Primary Educational Requirements

A 'Code of Practice on the Provision of Schools and the Planning System', prepared jointly by the DoEHLG and the Department of Education and Science in 2008, provides guidelines for the forecasting of future planning for schools nationally.

The Department of Education and Skills has identified that the following areas are likely to require additional school facilities/ reservation of sites over the plan period:

- A new primary school in Ashbourne, Navan, Dunboyne, Dunshaughlin and Ratoath.
- A new post primary school in Drogheda Environs, Ashbourne, Navan, Dunboyne, Enfield and Ratoath.
- A new third level (PLC) facility for Dunboyne.

In addition to the above locations, the Plan makes provision for future educational facilities through the identification and reservation of potential new sites/ sites to accommodate the potential future expansion /relocation of existing facilities. In the identification of sites,

consideration needs to be given both to the co-location of childcare provision and the potential use of school facilities by the wider community outside of school hours and during school holidays. Future school provision, within new growth areas specifically, will be planned and implemented in tandem with residential development. The age profile of the County is of particular relevance and it is likely that additional schools provision will be required over the plan period.

In addition to new school development, the Council will support the appropriate development and/or redevelopment of existing schools within the County that will enhance existing facilities, including sports facilities, on site. All planning applications received for school developments should have regard to any requirements set out by the Department of Education and Skills and standard planning criteria (Refer also to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards).

While the reservation of sites for educational use does not in itself guarantee the timely provision of necessary educational facilities, the Council will continue to liaise with the Department of Education and Skills, the Louth Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) and other stakeholders to assist, where possible, in the development of suitable educational facilities.

7.7.3.2 Third Level Education and Further Education

The Council recognises the important role of higher education in providing for the economic and social wellbeing of the County's population. Great effort has been made, on the part of the Council, and various other organisations within the County to develop third level initiatives.

The LMETB promote Adult Learning Services, Community Education, Back to Education Initiative, Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme and Adult Guidance. In addition, Meath Local Enterprise Office offers business information and advice, business skills training and mentoring support as well as other skills and training options to support businesses in the County.

The only third level college operating in the County at present is located in Dunboyne. The college is enjoying great success and as a result has outgrown its current premises. A site to accommodate the college is required. The development of further linkages between new and existing employers with the College of Further Education will add to the attractiveness of the area for investors due to the availability of potential future employees with the necessary skills locally.

It is the policy of the Council:

SOC POL 15

To facilitate the development of preschool, primary, post primary, third level, outreach, research, adult and further educational facilities to meet the educational needs of the citizens of the County.

SOC POL 16

To ensure the provision of preschool, primary and post primary education facilities in conjunction with the planning and development of residential areas, maximises opportunities for use of walking, cycling and use of public transport.

SOC POL 17

To ensure that adequate lands and services are zoned and reserved to cater for the establishment, improvement or expansion of all educational facilities in the County. The Council also supports the concept of multi-campus educational facilities.

SOC POL 18

To continue to support and promote existing schools serving communities in town and village centres.

SOC POL 19

To encourage, support and develop opportunities to open up schools to wider community usage in conjunction with the Department of Education and Skills and other stakeholders.

It is the objective of the Council:

SOC OBJ 4

To facilitate the Department of Education and Skills, LMETB, other statutory and non-statutory agencies in the necessary provision of preschool, primary, post primary and third level educational facilities throughout the County by reserving lands for such uses.

7.7.3.3 Childcare Facilities

The provision of childcare facilities is recognised as a key piece of social infrastructure required to enable people to participate in accessing employment, education and social networks. There continues to be a growth in demand for childcare services and the provision of good quality and affordable services close to local communities is supported by the Development Plan.

The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme provides early childhood care and education for children of pre-school age. All children are entitled to 2 full academic years or 76 weeks from September 2018 under this scheme. The recent addition of a second ECCE scheme year has increased demand for pre-school services. There are 5,864 ECCE registered children (free preschool places) in County (2017). Areas with the highest demand include Ashbourne, East Meath and Trim. Meath County Childcare Committee assists in the development and coordination of preschool services in the County. 89% of childcare facilities in the County are privately owned and 11% are community based services which are non-profit and run by voluntary management committees. Community based services have 526 children registered under the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme.

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government's produced Planning Guidelines on Childcare Facilities in 2001 which set out guidance on policies and objectives to be included in the Development Plan in respect of childcare provision. These guidelines identify appropriate locations for childcare facilities including in the vicinity of concentrations of work places, of schools, of neighbourhood, district and town centres and adjacent to public

transport corridors, park-and-ride facilities, pedestrian routes and dedicated cycle ways. The Guidelines advocate a more pro-active role by Planning Authorities in the promotion of increased childcare provision while at the same time protecting amenities. New childcare facilities, whether in existing or developing areas, should not create a nuisance for the existing and future residents. In particular, set down/pickup areas, parking places and play areas are key considerations when planning new or extending existing childcare facilities. The Council will continue to be proactive in promoting and sustaining childcare facilities in the County. Detailed requirements and standards with childcare development projects are set out in Chapter 11 Development Management Standards.

It is the policy of the Council:

SOC POL 20

To encourage, promote and facilitate the provision of quality affordable childcare facilities in accordance with national policy and relevant guidelines and in consultation with Meath County Childcare Committee.

SOC POL 21

To support the provision of childcare facilities of an appropriate type and scale at the following locations:

- Areas of concentrated employment and business parks;
- Neighbourhood centres;
- Large retail developments;
- Schools or major educational facilities;

- Adjacent to public transport nodes,
 - Villages and Rural Nodes, and;
 - Within new and existing residential developments.

SOC POL 22

To permit childcare facilities in existing residential areas provided that they do not have a significant negative impact on the character or amenities of an area, particularly with regard to car parking, traffic generation and noise disturbance.

SOC POL 23

To promote childcare facilities, of appropriate size and scale, in villages and rural nodes, and/or adjacent to community and educational facilities provided:

- the proposed development will not have a significant impact on the character or amenities of an area, particularly with regard to car parking, traffic generation and noise disturbance;
- the proposed development satisfies environmental standards;
- the proposed development addresses the needs of the community.

Where feasible facilities will generally be required to locate within community/ educational campuses, where purpose built childcare facilities are being provided.

7.7.4 Healthcare Facilities

The Planning Authority has a significant role in supporting suitable healthcare provision through ensuring that there are sufficient lands reserved in the Development Plan to accommodate the development of adequate healthcare facilities for the population of an area.

Healthcare and medical facilities are provided by a range of public, private and voluntary agencies. The Health Service Executive (HSE) is the primary organisation responsible for the delivery of health care and personal social services to the people of Meath. Our Lady's Hospital in Navan is an acute hospital for the north-east region whilst St. Joseph's Hospital in Trim is a district facility. The residents of the County also have access to hospitals in the surrounding counties – Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda, the Midland Regional Hospital in Mullingar, Cavan General Hospital, James Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown etc.

The HSE provides disability services and services for older people, which include daycare and residential facilities. Child Care services include child protection, fostering and long term care and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

The Department of Health and Children published 'The Primary Care Strategy' in 2001 which promotes a team-based approach to service provision, designed to make available a fully integrated primary care service.

Primary care centres provide a mix of the following services at each centre: Psychology; Occupational Therapy; Physiotherapy; Speech and Language Therapy; Public Health Nursing; Social Work; Primary Care Counselling; Podiatry; Dietetics. Some centres also provide community

Mental Health Services and Palliative Care. The centres also accommodate local G.P. Practices.

Primary Care centre locations in Meath (2018) are as follows: Kells, Trim, Summerhill, Dunshaughlin and Ashbourne. Primary Care Centres are under consideration for Navan and East Meath.

The ability of Primary Care Centres to provide local and integrated facilities, in line with the Government's Primary Care Strategy, is acknowledged and supported by the Council. The Plan seeks to locate these facilities, together with community support services, on suitably zoned lands in close proximity to new and existing residential areas to allow communities access to multi-disciplinary health care, mental health and wellbeing services in easily accessible locations throughout the County.

The Council will continue to work closely with the HSE to ensure that there is adequate land zoned to accommodate health care facilities when the requirement arises in accordance with best planning practice.

7.7.4.1 Regional Hospital

The Health Partnership Report published in 2008 identified Navan as the optimum location for the development of a Regional Hospital for the North East Region. In response, the Council engaged Planning and Environmental Consultants to examine potentially suitable sites throughout the town and to identify a suitable location for a Regional Hospital. This process identified 3 sites in the town as being potentially viable, including:

- (1) Nevinstown
- (2) Balreask Old & Limekilnhill (part)
- (3) Limekilnhill

The Navan Development Plan 2009 subsequently identified Nevinstown to provide for the proposed new Regional Hospital and ancillary healthcare uses. SOC OBJ 3 of that Plan states that it is an objective of Meath County Council *"To investigate and reserve in consultation with the Health Service Executive a suitable site for a Regional Hospital in Navan (possible suitable locations include Nevinstown, Limekilnhill and Balreask Old & Limekilnhill (part))"*. The recommendations of this report are acknowledged in the 2010 Regional Planning Guidelines. The County Development Plan 2013-2019 contains the following policy: *"To facilitate and support the Health Service Executive and the Department of Health in the provision of a new Regional Hospital in Navan"* and the following objective SOC OBJ 4: *'To investigate and reserve in consultation with the Health Service Executive Dublin North East Region and other statutory agencies and Navan Town Council a suitable site a for a Regional Hospital in Navan.'* The RSES also includes a policy to *'support development of a regional hospital to serve the north east of the country'*. The development of a regional hospital in Navan has the potential to have a very significant positive impact on the town and region's economy.

It is the policy of the Council:

SOC POL 24

To co-operate with the Health Service Executive and other statutory and voluntary agencies and the private sector in the provision of appropriate health care facilities covering the full spectrum of such care from hospitals to the provision of community based care facilities subject to proper planning considerations and the principles of sustainable development.

SOC POL 25

To encourage the integration of healthcare facilities within new and existing communities and to discourage proposals that would cause unnecessary isolation or other access difficulties, particularly for the disabled, older people and children.

SOC POL 26

To ensure that adequate lands and services are available for the improvement, establishment and expansion of health services.

SOC POL 27

To consider change of use applications from residential to health care facilities/ surgeries only where the privacy and amenity of adjacent occupiers can be preserved and the proposal does not have a detrimental effect on local amenity. The full conversion of semi-detached or terraced type dwellings will not normally be permitted.

SOC POL 28

To facilitate and support the Health Service Executive and the Department of Health in the provision of a new Regional Hospital in Navan.

SOC POL 29

To support and co-operate with promoters

or operators of public and private health care facilities by facilitating and encouraging the provision of improved health care facilities in appropriate locations.

SOC POL 30

To support the provision of 'one stop' primary care medical centres and GP practices at locations easily accessible to members of the wider community.

It is the objective of the Council:

SOC OBJ 5

To facilitate the Health Service Executive and the Department of Health in the provision of health centres and other health related facilities throughout the County through various initiatives including the reservation of lands for such uses.

SOC OBJ 6

To facilitate and support the Health Service Executive and the Department of Health in the provision of a Regional Hospital in Navan on a site identified at Nevinstown, or Balreask Old and Limekilnhill (part). The availability of adequate capacity in piped water services and roads infrastructure will be taken into account in the final site selection process as will environmental sensitivities including likely significant effects on European Sites (SACs and SPAs).

7.7.5 Healthy Communities

Sporting, leisure and recreational facilities are essential to promoting good health, social cohesion, a sense of community and enhancing quality of life and well being. 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 is a key issue for Development Plans.

Meath Local Sports Partnership (LSP)⁵ Strategic Plan 2013-2017 aims to increase participation in sports and physical activity throughout the County and to provide more quality sports and physical activity opportunities, participation and resources available to and enjoyed by all citizens.

“Healthy Ireland” is a Government initiative which seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of the citizens of Ireland. World Health Organisation priorities for a healthier world are set out in Health 2020. NPO 26 of the NPF seeks to support the objectives of public health policy including Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan, through integrating such policies, where appropriate and at the applicable scale, with planning policy.

The Healthy Meath Strategy⁶ 2019-2021 is currently being prepared. The vision of this strategy is for a Healthy County where everyone can enjoy a good standard of physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone’s responsibility. The Plan has two key objectives:

- To create the appropriate environmental conditions to enable citizens to make healthier lifestyle choices;

- To inform, support and encourage citizens to take responsibility for their own health by making healthier lifestyle choices.

7.7.6 Existing Sport and Leisure Infrastructure

Sport is an important contributor to the life of the citizens of Meath, ranging from a proud Gaelic football tradition (resulting in seven All-Ireland Senior Football Titles) to horse racing at Fairyhouse, Navan, Bellewstown and Laytown, to baseball and cricket in Ashbourne.

There are 10 equestrian centres and 18 golf courses within the County. There are also a number of walking routes such as the Boyne towpath, extensive beaches at Bettystown-Laytown and public swimming pools at Navan, Trim and Kells as well as private facilities in hotels.

Progress has also been made in developing greenways: along the disused Navan to Kingscourt rail line, along the Royal Canal from the Kildare border at McLoughlin Bridge to the Westmeath Border and along the Oldbridge road from Drogheda Ramparts to Oldbridge Estate. Refer to Chapter 5 Movement Strategy for more information.

The presence of beaches, watercourses, equestrian and related activities, along with golfing facilities and swimming pools etc., has a growing and an important role to play in the tourism economy.

Specific objectives are contained in Volume 2 of the Development Plan where the provision of sporting and leisure infrastructure will be directly linked to the development of certain areas, to address existing deficiencies and ensure balanced sustainable development.

⁵ Established in July 2002 under the direction of the Irish Sports Council to plan, lead and co-ordinate the development of sport and physical activity in Meath.

⁶ Local Community & Development Committee and Meath Local Sports Partnership joint initiative.

It is the policy of the Council:

SOC POL 31

To support the implementation of the Healthy Meath Strategy 2019-2021 in consultation with the relevant agencies and authorities.

SOC POL 32

To encourage and support local sports, community groups and other groups in the provision and development of outdoor and indoor sporting and community facilities.

SOC POL 33

To support local sports groups, community groups and other groups in the development of facilities through the reservation of suitable land and the provision of funding where available and appropriate.

SOC POL 34

To cater for the sporting and recreational needs of all sectors and ages of the community and promote the integration of those with special needs into the sporting and recreational environment.

SOC POL 35

To require the provision of alternative open space, leisure and sporting facilities provision where such existing facilities are being discontinued as part of development proposals.

SOC POL 36

To ensure that new leisure facilities, where possible, are located in proximity to public transportation routes and where they can best meet the needs of the community that the facilities are intended to serve.

SOC POL 37

To facilitate the development of children's play areas and playgrounds in proximity to existing and proposed neighbourhoods, where feasible.

It is an objective of the Council:

SOC OBJ 7

To implement the recommendations of current and proposed Meath County Council Play Policy in conjunction with all relevant agencies.

SOC OBJ 8

To support Meath Local Sports Partnership in the delivery of relevant strategies and plans.

SOC OBJ 9

To support the provision of multi-purpose sports halls, all-weather playing pitches and associated facilities in appropriate locations.

SOC OBJ 10

To investigate in conjunction with the OPW the feasibility of the provision of a playground at the Battle of the Boyne Site.

7.7.7 Open Space

Public open space is a critical element in the creation of a quality and distinctive urban environment, offering opportunities for both passive and active recreation, contributing to the quality of life of residents and visitors alike.

Accessible, useable, dedicated open spaces and recreational facilities to meet both passive and active recreational needs offer environmental and ecological benefits and improve building energy performance. There are significant health benefits for communities with access to green spaces and blue spaces (rivers, lakes and canals).

The RSES supports the preparation of open space and parks strategies by local authorities, and for enhanced cross boundary collaboration to provide for a hierarchy of open space provision including regional scale open space and recreational facilities.

Open space can be categorised as having a regional, county or local function. It is important to ensure that the County is well served by an adequate network of open spaces. The Key town of Navan has a regional park, Ashbourne and Dunboyne will also require the provision of regional scale parkland type facilities. Sites for regional parks in Dunboyne and Ashbourne have been identified in the written statement of these towns in Volume 2. The Regional Growth Centre of Drogheda will also require the provision of a regional park and lands have been

identified which can accommodate same in the Southern Environs. In respect of residential development, in all cases the development site area (which shall make provision for open space) cannot include lands zoned FI Open Space, G1 Community Infrastructure and H1 High Amenity.

Development Plans have tended in the past to emphasise detailed quantitative standards, but there is now an increasing focus on the quality of public open space, which ensures that the reasonable expectations of users are more likely to be fulfilled. The qualitative standards set out in 'the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas', 2009, relating to design, accessibility, variety, shared use, biodiversity, sustainable urban drainage systems and the provision of allotments and community gardens should be adhered to in all planning applications for new residential developments.

Private open space provision is a fundamental element of residential amenity, offering the resident an opportunity for safe and private recreation.

Public and private open space standards are set out in Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives. It is a requirement that all planning applications for residential development demonstrate compliance with same.

It is the policy of the Council:

SOC POL 38

To promote the development of a wide variety of high quality accessible open space areas, for both active and passive use, and formal and informal activities in accordance with the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy and the standards

set out in Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objective taking into account any environmental sensitivities including likely significant effects on European Sites (SACs and SPAs).

SOC POL 39

To protect the integrity of Natura 2000 sites during the identification of suitable sites for recreation, in particular in terms of their design and use.

SOC POL 40

To resist the loss of existing public open space, unless alternative recreational facilities are provided in a suitable location.

SOC POL 41

To maintain free from development, lands that are the subject of a deed of dedication identified in a grant of planning permission as open space, to ensure the availability of community and recreational facilities for the residents of the area.

It is an objective of the Council:

SOC OBJ 11

To carry out an audit of all public open space assets in the County over the life of the Development Plan.

SOC OBJ 12

To prioritise the delivery of town parks at regional scale in Drogheda Southern Environs, Dunboyne and Ashbourne.

SOC OBJ 13

In respect of residential development, in all cases the development site area cannot include lands zoned FI Open Space, G1 Community Infrastructure and H1 High Amenity.(i.e. the open space requirements shall be provided for within the development site area.)

SOC OBJ 14

To examine existing public open spaces and carry out improvements where necessary to increase their usefulness as recreational spaces.

SOC OBJ 15

To ensure public open space is accessible, and designed so that passive surveillance is provided.

SOC OBJ 16

To provide multifunctional open spaces at locations deemed appropriate providing for both passive and active uses.

SOC OBJ 17

To ensure permeability and connections

between public open spaces including connections between new and existing spaces, in consultation to include residents.

7.7.8 Libraries

The library service provided by the Council is playing a very important community, information, cultural and outreach facility role within the County. The public library service has for many years provided an important means of access to information and to (leisure) reading facilities and has played a major role in the advancement of the arts, education and local history throughout the County. Libraries have also become an important venue for cultural activities. This cultural role is recognised by the central role libraries occupy in the delivery of cultural projects such as the decade of centenaries and the Creative Ireland programme.

The Council manages and operates the County's public library service from its headquarters in Navan. In addition there are 12 branches throughout the County. (Louth County Council delivers a mobile service to East Meath in partnership with Meath County Council.)

Over half a million items were issued across the County in 2018. Free membership and the abolition of fines in 2019 will ensure that the library service is available to all. Over €500,000 has been invested in ICT in libraries across the county in 2017 and 2018. This has enabled the introduction of RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) self-service and the development of a wide range of new digital services at each location. These services include new initiatives like the 'The Magic Table /Tovertafel' which is

specifically designed for people with dementia and autism.

Laytown/Bettystown/Mornington/Donacarne is the third largest settlement in the County, addressing the deficiencies in library facilities in this area is a key priority. The Development Plan for the library service in Meath 2005-2009 sets out a number of measures to be implemented. It provides for new libraries in Ballivor, Laytown/Bettystown and Kells. Major upgrades were completed at Athboy (2018), Slane (2019) and Kells (2019). A major upgrade is planned for Nobber (2019) and minor works are planned for Dunshaughlin (2019) and Oldcastle (2020). Major works are planned for Navan (design scheduled to commence in 2019). Trim Library is the second busiest library in the County and it is proposed to combine Trim Library and the adjoining church to create a larger library with an Arts/Theatre space on the extended site. The 'My Open Library' initiative went live at Trim in February 2019. This allows members of the library to use the services out of hours seven days a week (8am – 10pm). It is proposed to review uptake at Trim with a view to extending the service to other branches in line with national policy and funding schedules.

The Council intends to commence a review of the 2005-2009 Plan for the library service in the near future to coincide with the review of the national strategy for the library service - *'Our Public Libraries 2022 - Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities.'*

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

SOC POL 40

To continue to expand and improve the library service to meet the needs of the

community, in line with the objectives and priorities of the Library Development Plan 2005-2009 (or as otherwise amended) and subject to the availability of finance.

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

SOC OBJ 18

To enhance library facilities in Navan, and to retain and develop its function as the library headquarters for the County.

SOC OBJ 19

To investigate and if feasible to provide a new library in the Laytown/Bettystown area and in Kells.

SOC OBJ 20

To investigate and if feasible to provide a library facility in Ballivor. To explore the restoration and renovation of St. Kenneth's Church to accommodate such a use.

SOC OBJ 21

To provide and improve existing library facilities and services and to encourage an integrated approach to the delivery of library, arts and other related services.

7.7.9 Burial Grounds

Local Authorities are responsible for ensuring that there are adequate burial facilities,

including the reservation and acquisition of lands for such facilities, where necessary. In 2011, the Council completed a survey/needs analysis of burial grounds and identified 231 burial grounds in the County.

Changes in society have resulted in the need to provide multi-denominational graveyards. New sites are developed as burial gardens, where the site is aesthetically pleasing through use of careful landscaping and use of sustainable products as well as providing a number of burial options for customers and a full range of services such as car parking, toilet facilities, etc. It is also recognised that burial gardens have a potential amenity value and there are options to create facilities such as a loop walk through or around sites.

A multi denominational burial garden was opened in Derrockstown, Dunshaughlin in May 2016. The ethos of Derrockstown burial garden as 'a place for respect, reflection and remembrance' will be reflected in future developments which will also be developed in a garden style and will offer a number of options for burials and cremated remains including green burials, traditional burials, columbarium walls, burial of ashes, etc. It is proposed to develop future sites in a sustainable, climate action friendly manner using natural products and low carbon construction and it is a goal to make the sites self sufficient in energy needs. It is recognised that burial gardens also have an amenity benefit and any surplus land purchased for burial gardens will be used for tree planting and the creation of a bio-diversity areas, this is supported by the Climate Action Strategy for the County.

The Council is currently searching for geologically suitable sites for burial grounds in Dunboyne, Trim and Stamullen, and their environs.

There are no proposals currently for a crematorium in Meath, however, it is likely to become a requirement in the near future given the population growth and lack of burial ground space. The Council may also have to consider, in the context of the scarcity of environmentally suitable land and the restricted availability of funding, possible regional based solutions to the provision of burial space at some time in the future.

It is the policy of the Council:

SOC POL 43

To facilitate and support the development of multi-denominational burial grounds, taking cognisance of the needs of multi-faith and non-religious communities and evolving trends in end of life management.

SOC POL 44

To facilitate the provision of new burial grounds, facilities and the extension of existing cemeteries, as appropriate, to cater for the needs of the County.

SOC POL 45

To encourage local community groups to develop, manage and maintain burial facilities.

SOC POL 46

To protect the cultural heritage of historical burial grounds within the County and to encourage their management and

maintenance in accordance with best conservation practice. (Please also refer to Chapter 8 Cultural and Natural Heritage)

It is the objective of the Council:

SOC OBJ 22

To facilitate the development of new or extended burial grounds and crematoria by reservation of land at suitable locations and provision of local authority burial grounds subject to appropriate safeguards with regard to ground and surface water, environmental, noise and traffic impacts.

7.7.10 Places of Worship

As the population of the County becomes more diverse there has been an increase in the number of faith communities in the County. This has given rise to demand for worship spaces. Community centres may provide temporary solutions, as communities become more established and/or numbers increase, a dedicated place of worship may be required. The Council will encourage appropriate, easily accessible locations which comply with the Council's standards with regard to design, vehicular movement/parking and landscaping etc.

Please refer also to Chapter 11 (Section 11.9.4) Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives.

It is the policy of the Council:

SOC POL 47

To encourage and facilitate the development of places of worship in appropriate locations in urban centres and proximate to residential communities.

7.7.11 Fire Stations

Fire fighting and other rescue services are vital public safety services provided by the Council. There are seven fire stations throughout the County: Navan (the headquarters of the network), Trim, Kells, Oldcastle, Nobber, Dunshaughlin and Ashbourne.

The role and functions of the fire service are intertwined with other core services of the Council such as planning, housing, water services and roads. It is important, therefore, for the benefit of the community, that there are effective working relationships and co-operation between the fire service and the other local authority services on a continuous basis.

The Council adopted a 'Fire Service Operations Plan, 2015-2019' and this Plan sets out a number of recommendations in relation to the fire service. Capital funding for the development of the Fire Service and the purchase of capital equipment is provided by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. Dunshaughlin, Oldcastle and Nobber fire stations have been approved for capital funding for extensions and upgrade works. These works are expected to be completed during the life of this Plan. Navan Fire Station has sought funding for provision of an office building.

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

SOC POL 48

To ensure communities are adequately serviced by a modern and effective Fire Service.

SOC POL 49

To facilitate the accommodation of fire service facilities in locations that allow ease of access and safe functioning with respect to the road network.

SOC POL 50

To facilitate the implementation of the 'Fire Service Operations Plan 2015-2019', or as otherwise amended.

It is the objective of the Council:

SOC OBJ 23

To support the upgrade and extension of fire stations as appropriate, including Dunshaughlin, Oldcastle, Nobber and Navan, to cater for the needs of the County.

SOC OBJ 24

To examine the feasibility of providing a new fire station in the Laytown/Bettystown area, to ensure that this growing community is adequately serviced.

7.7.12 Arts and Cultural Facilities

Arts and cultural facilities not only contribute to the artistic, social and general quality of life of communities, they are also significant contributors to the economy of the County by attracting visitors, investment and job creation. Arts and cultural facilities are wide ranging and include arts centres, museums, theatres, galleries, community venues, music venues and studio and workspace for artists. Libraries can also serve as arts and cultural outlets.

The arts sector in Meath is a very vibrant one, which encompasses a broad range of people, places and activities. There is a considerable pool of artistic talent and enterprise in the County. The Council, through its Arts Office, seeks to further develop and promote the cultural life of the County and to increase accessibility to arts and culture facilities by audiences, participants and practitioners. The County Arts Development Plan 2019-2024 identifies four Strategic Priorities with a specific set of goals and actions to be achieved during the life of the Plan.

- Strategic Priority 1 – To nurture and support Artists and Creators,
- Strategic Priority 2 – To enhance our local cultural and creative infrastructure,
- Strategic Priority 3- To provide children and young people access to high quality participatory arts experiences, and
- Strategic Priority 4-To promote inclusivity and diversity through the arts.

The County Development Plan takes cognisance of the four Strategic Priorities and the relevant goals and actions. The Solstice Arts Centre in Navan is Meath's only multi-disciplinary arts centre. Through its programme, Solstice aims

to inspire, entertain, enthrall, challenge and connect. The centre provides a hub for cultural and arts activity. As well as presenting theatre, music, dance, comedy and visual art, Solstice facilitates workshops and lectures to cater for all interests.

The Council is currently investigating the potential development of the County Library and Solstice Arts Centre into a Cultural Quarter. If developed the Solstice Arts Centre and County Library would function as a destination multi-use space. Furthermore, the Council secured Urban Regeneration funding to prepare a Master Plan on adjacent lands for the former Meath County Council headquarters site. Funding was also secured for the preparation of a conservation plan for the restoration of the Former St Patrick's Classical School for use as a County Archive, genealogy research centre and performance and study space. The former St Patrick's Classical School has been described as one of the most unusual pieces of historic architecture in the Country. The building is a detached seven-bay two-storey former school, c. 1840 with elliptical plan, inclined buttresses, classical niches, eaves course of paired timber brackets and tripartite sash windows which was converted to a furniture factory c. 1975. The building has been disused for some time and its regeneration and reuse as the home of the County Archive will make a significant contribution to the Cultural Quarter at this location.

The Council is also exploring possibilities and planning for the development of further cultural facilities/hubs across the County including:

- Trim Theatre Project - plans to develop Trim library with the adjoining church to create a community theatre space while expanding Trim Library.

- Kells Creative Placemaking Project which includes –Kells Tourism & Cultural Hub at the Courthouse Kells; Kells Printworks; the Convent Chapel Cinema and Convent Artists’ Studios.
- Dunshaughlin Courthouse multi-purpose community arts space.
- Slane Cottages development – plans to explore the possibility of developing a writer’s retreat using the existing cottages.

The County Arts Development Plan 2019 – 2024 provides for the continued development of an arts service that is inclusive, accessible and sustainable for the County’s communities. In doing so, the Arts Plan focuses on the creation of a sustainable environment and provision of appropriate facilities for the development, creation, making, production, performance and exhibition of work. The planned development of a number of Creative/Cultural hubs in the County combined with the support and enhancement of existing facilities will provide a focus for local, professional, amateur and community arts initiatives and the creative and economic benefits generated as a result. It will also provide a stable base for high quality artistic endeavour and space for dialogue re same.

The proposed ‘Hubs’ will also support the implementation of the Meath Culture & Creativity Strategy 2018-2022 and the national Creative Ireland Programme as they will align with the operating principles of collaboration and communication, community empowerment and internationalisation.

7.7.12.1 Public Art

Public Art can assist in developing a sense of place and provides an identity and character to a community that is distinctive and unique. The

Council will continue to identify and implement new Per Cent for Art Schemes attaching to Capital projects, as appropriate, and will continue to broaden the scope of commissions to include a variety of arts disciplines.

The Council will also continue to implement the Private Developer Public Art Scheme through the planning process and in consultation with the Arts Office, please refer to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives for further details. (Sections 11.7.12 and 11.8.2)

Policies

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

SOC POL 51

To continue to recognise the importance of the Arts in areas of personal development, community development, economic development and tourism and to endeavour to create opportunities in each of these areas.

SOC POL 52

To continue to enhance the range and quality of arts infrastructural provision in the County and to support the ongoing development of cultural infrastructure throughout the County in particular those parts of the County where such provision has been identified as an enabler for growth in the creative industries sector.

SOC POL 53

To support the development, provision and sustainability of arts and cultural

infrastructure e.g. festivals, at appropriate locations throughout the County and, where appropriate, in association with libraries.

SOC POL 54

To promote the provision of public art, including temporary art and sculpture, through such mechanisms, as appropriate.

SOC POL 55

To encourage and support the creation and display of works of art in public areas, including appropriate locations within the streetscape, provided no unacceptable environmental, amenity, traffic or other problems are created.

SOC POL 56

To implement the County Arts Development Plan 2019-2024 and in doing so to recognise the economic value and contribution of arts and cultural facilities to the County.

Objective

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

SOC OBJ 25

To explore and promote measures to enhance the Arts and Cultural offering with particular economic value in conjunction with the Arts Office.

SOC OBJ 26

To support and seek to secure additional funding for the restoration of the Former St Patrick's Classical School for use as a County Archive, genealogy research centre and performance and study space.

SOC OBJ 27

To support and encourage the development of Creative Hubs throughout the County in particular the Kells Creative Placemaking Project; Trim Community Theatre & Library; Dunshaughlin Courthouse Community Arts space and to seek and secure additional funding for same.

SOC OBJ 28

To continue to explore the opportunities to provide a writers retreat in Slane.

SOC OBJ 29

To incorporate works of public art into the overall scheme of major new infrastructural, employment and residential developments in the County in order to enhance the amenities of the local environment. (Please refer also to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives.)

SOC OBJ 30

Seek to build on the success and support the clustering of the film and audio visual

sector in the Dublin and Wicklow areas and to support training of film workers and crew around the Region, as well as exploiting opportunities for the industry outside of these hubs with particular reference to the recently permitted Film Studio Development in Ashbourne.

CHAPTER 8

**Cultural and Natural
Heritage Strategy**

8.1 Introduction

The County's wealth of built heritage makes it exceptional in Ireland. It includes the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne, the seat of the High Kings of Ireland at Tara, the passage tombs of Loughcrew, the largest Anglo-Norman castle in Europe at Trim, the historic towns of Navan, Trim and Kells, great country houses, demesne landscapes and a significant industrial heritage of canals and mills.

The County's natural heritage includes scenic river valleys, rolling farmland, a network of mature hedgerows and diverse coastal habitats.

The identity of the County is linked to its heritage, and is central to how we see ourselves as individuals, communities and as a County. Our unique heritage is an intrinsic part of the character and attractiveness of the County and is a catalyst in attracting tourism and investment.

Where natural and cultural heritage features are relevant to any development proposal, applicants are required to contact the Planning Department, who will facilitate pre-application discussions at the earliest opportunity.

8.2 Vision

To identify, protect, conserve and manage the cultural and natural heritage of the County and to encourage its sensitive integration into the sustainable development of the County for the benefit of present and future generations. The Plan seeks to achieve a balance between the foregoing and economic prosperity and social integration.

8.3 Cultural Heritage

Cultural Heritage¹ refers to monuments, buildings, groups of buildings, and sites which are the combined works of nature and man. Within this great variety of building types and uses are structures of significance and distinctive character that are deemed worthy of protection.

8.4 Statutory Context

The State has signed and ratified a number of International and European Conventions and EU Directives and in so doing agreed to abide by the principles contained therein. These Conventions and Directives have guided the formulation of national legislation and national and regional policy to protect the built and natural heritage.

8.4.1 Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended

Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, sets out a list of mandatory objectives to be included in a development plan. A number of these relate to cultural heritage, including - the protection of archaeological heritage, structures and areas of special interest, the preservation of the character of the landscape, views and prospects.

8.4.2 The National Monuments Acts 1930 – 2004

These Acts provide for the protection of the archaeological heritage.

¹ World Heritage Convention, 1972

8.4.3 The European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage, 1992 - the Valletta Convention (ETS No. 143)

The Convention provides the basic framework for policy on the protection of archaeological heritage as a source of the European collective memory. The State undertakes to seek to reconcile and combine the respective requirements of archaeology and development plans by ensuring that archaeologists participate in planning policies, development schemes, development plans, environmental impact assessments and recommendations regarding the retention of elements of the archaeological heritage in-situ.

8.4.4 The Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, 1985 - the Granada Convention (ETS No. 121)

This Convention was ratified by Ireland in 1997 and recognises that architectural heritage constitutes an irreplaceable expression of the richness and diversity of Europe's cultural heritage which fosters the economic, social and cultural development of states and regions.

8.4.5 European Landscape Convention, 2000 – the Florence Convention (ETS No. 176)

This Convention defines landscape as '...an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural

and/or human factors' and applies to both rural and urban landscapes. The Convention requires landscape to be integrated into planning policies and promotes interaction between local and central authorities, and trans-frontier cooperation to protect landscapes.

8.4.6 Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, 1998 - the Aarhus Convention

The Aarhus Convention lays down a set of basic roles to promote citizens involvement in environmental matters and improve enforcement of environmental Law; its provisions are broken down into three Pillars: Access to information, Public Participation in environmental decision making and Access to Justice. Same has given rise to the European Directive 2003/4/EC on Public Participation, both of which have been transposed into Irish Law. Ireland ratified the Convention on 20th June 2012.

8.5 Policy Context

8.5.1 Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1999); Policy and Guidance on Archaeological Excavation (1999)

This Framework and these principles which stipulate the basic principles for the protection of archaeological heritage are based on a presumption of avoiding development impacts

on archaeological heritage with preservation in-situ being the first option followed by preservation by record where the archaeological heritage is affected or proposed to be affected by the development.

8.5.2 Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015

The Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015 and beyond recognises the place of architecture in society as an expression of cultural, aesthetic and social values both past and present. Its recommendations include the implementation of 45 actions by a number of government departments over a period of time.

8.5.3 The Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011

These Guidelines are issued under Section 28 and Section 52 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. Under Section 52(1), the Minister is obliged to issue guidelines to planning authorities concerning development objectives, a) for protecting structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, and b) for preserving the character of architectural conservation areas. Guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Act require planning authorities to have regard to them in the performance of their functions.

8.5.4 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031

The RSES acknowledges that the region's historic environment provides a unique sense of place

and makes a positive contribution to quality of life. The RSES highlights the importance of incorporating best practice in heritage management into land use planning through the protection of historic urban fabric, the sensitive reuse of historic properties and the enhancement of places of special cultural or natural significance and the provision of high quality public realm and recreational spaces. It is a regional policy objective to - promote historic towns in the Region in the practice of heritage-led generation, to promote sensitive and adaptive re-use of historic building stock, industrial features and protected structures; support the designation of UNESCO candidate sites in the Region

8.6 Archaeological Heritage

Archaeology is the study of human societies through the investigation and analysis of the material evidence left behind. It is most useful for periods and civilisations that existed prior to written records. The archaeological heritage of an area includes monuments, sites, and objects whether situated on land or under water. In this respect, the County has a significant archaeological heritage, and provides a valuable cultural, educational and tourism resource.

Copies of the Record of Monuments and Places for County Meath are available at www.archaeology.ie.

Details of statutory objectives, international and national legislation are contained in Appendix no. 1 and 2. A list of National Monuments and Registered Historic Monuments are contained in Appendix no. 9.

New sites are continually being discovered

through research and development including delivery of infrastructure projects and it is advisable to check the National Monument Archaeological database on www.archaeology.ie when considering development on any site.

Archaeological structures may, in some situations, also be considered as architectural heritage and therefore may appear on both the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and the Record of Protected Structures (RPS).

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 1

To protect archaeological sites, monuments, underwater archaeology and archaeological objects in their setting, which are listed on the Record of Monuments and Places for Meath.

HER POL 2

To protect all sites and features of archaeological interest discovered subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monument and Places, in situ (or at a minimum preservation by record) having regard to the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

HER POL 3

To require, as part of the development management process, archaeological impact assessments, geophysical survey, test excavations or monitoring as

appropriate, for development in the vicinity of monuments or in areas of archaeological potential., Where there are upstanding remains, a visual impact assessment may be required.

HER POL 4

To require, as part of the development management process, archaeological impact assessments, geophysical survey, test excavations or monitoring as appropriate, where development proposals involve ground clearance of more than half a hectare or for linear developments over one kilometre in length; or developments in proximity to areas with a density of known archaeological monuments and history of discovery as identified by a licensed archaeologist.

HER POL 5

To seek guidance from the National Museum of Ireland where an unrecorded archaeological object is discovered, or the National Monuments Service in the case of an unrecorded archaeological site.

It is the objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 1

To implement in partnership with the County Meath Heritage Forum, relevant stakeholders and the community the

County Meath Heritage Plan and any revisions thereof.

HER OBJ 2

To ensure that development in the vicinity of a Recorded Monument or Zone of Archaeological Potential is sited and designed in a sensitive manner with a view to minimal detraction from the monument or its setting.

HER OBJ 3

To seek to protect important archaeological landscapes from inappropriate development.

HER OBJ 4

To encourage the management and maintenance of the County's archaeological heritage, including historic burial grounds², in accordance with best conservation practice that considers the impact of climate change.

HER OBJ 5

To promote awareness of, and encourage the provision of access to, the archaeological resources of the county.

HER OBJ 6

To work in partnership with key stakeholders to promote County Meath as a centre for cultural heritage education

and learning through activities such as community excavation and field/summer schools.

8.6.1 UNESCO World Heritage Site - Brú na Bóinne

The World Heritage Site of the *Archaeological Ensemble of the Bend of the Boyne* is commonly known as Brú na Bóinne. It refers to the area within the bend of the River Boyne around Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth, and is one of the world's most important archaeological complexes. Brú na Bóinne contains many outstanding archaeological features, including the largest assemblage of megalithic art in Europe, large and varied grouping of monuments, and evidence of continuous settlement and activity in the area for some 7,000 years. The international significance of Brú na Bóinne has gradually been revealed through an ongoing process of discovery and research which began 300 years ago. In December 1993 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) inscribed Brú na Bóinne as a World Heritage Site. This inscription recognises the universal importance of this landscape to the whole of humanity and requires the State to protect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the area of the World Heritage Site to the highest international standards.

One of the best known features of Brú na Bóinne is the mid-winter solstice phenomenon, when the sun, rising over the ridge of Red Mountain, shines through the roof box above the entrance to the tomb at Newgrange to light the chamber within.

Brú na Bóinne is one of the foremost and popular heritage site visitor attractions in the Country

² Heritage Council (2011). Guidance for the Care, Conservation and Recording of Historic Graveyards

and as such, is a very important Local, Regional and National tourism asset with 261,340 visitors recorded in 2018.

8.6.2 Sustaining the Outstanding Universal Value

The first management plan for the site was published in 2002 by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. The management plan was included in the 2013-2019 County Development Plan. Under the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (July 2013), every site contained on the World Heritage list must have a management plan which explains how the Outstanding Universal Value is to be maintained. The replacement for this 2002 management plan was sent to UNESCO in January 2017 by the Department of Heritage, Culture and the Gaeltacht. The Management Plan is not a statutory planning document.

Planning Guidance, additional information on UNESCO World Heritage and the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for Brú na Bóinne and Brú and Bóinne World Heritage Site Management Plan are contained in Appendix 8 of the County Development Plan.

8.6.3 Statement of Policy

Meath County Council is committed to the protection and conservation of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne. The Council acknowledges the need for additional bed spaces and other tourist facilities to enable the local community to benefit from the area's World Heritage Site status. The refurbishment of existing building stock will be supported and encouraged in this regard. The World Heritage

site is a key component of Ireland's Ancient East and its potential to generate additional tourist activity in the wider Boyne Valley region as a generator of local employment is acknowledged. The Council welcomes the support of key national stakeholders in developing appropriate policies to ensure the area benefits from its unique International heritage standing.

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 6

To protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne in accordance with the relevant guidelines and national legislation, so that its integrity, authenticity and significance are not adversely affected by cumulative inappropriate change and development.

HER POL 7

To encourage the retention, conservation, and appropriate re-use of traditional buildings within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne in preference to either their replacement, or the construction of new buildings on green field sites.

HER POL 8

To ensure that development within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne shall be subject to the Development Assessment Criteria set out in Appendix no. 8 and the Development Management Guidelines in Chapter 11.

HER POL 9

To consider individual housing within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne, as shown on Map No 8.1, only for those involved locally in full time agriculture and who do not own land outside of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne and subject to compliance with all other relevant provisions contained in this Development Plan.

HER POL 10

To ensure that residential extensions within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne are in character with the original buildings.

HER POL 11

To support the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and all stakeholders in the implementation of the Brú na Bóinne Management Plan, 2017.

It is the objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 7

To work in partnership with the community and all other relevant stakeholders to promote, understand, conserve and sustainably manage the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne.

HER OBJ 8

To encourage and facilitate pre-application discussions, in conjunction with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, regarding the siting and design of developments affecting the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne and the scope of any necessary impact assessments.

HER OBJ 9

To refer all planning applications within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne to the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for comment. These comments will be considered in the assessment of all such planning applications.

HER OBJ 10

To actively support and encourage the re-use of vacant and derelict dwellings within the Core and Buffer Zone of the World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne by providing assistance and professional advice to owners seeking to re-develop such sites.

HER OBJ 11

To protect the ridgelines which frame views within and from the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne from inappropriate or visually intrusive development.

HER OBJ 12

To prepare and implement a Business Plan for the World Heritage Site in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, subject to funding.

8.6.4 World Heritage Tentative List

The protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage is of importance for present and future generations and to this end the State is committed to the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and promotion of the World Heritage Site in accordance with Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention.

A Tentative List is an inventory of those properties which a country intends to consider for nomination to the World Heritage List. The current Tentative List was approved by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and submitted to UNESCO in March 2010. The nomination of any property from the Tentative List for inscription on the World Heritage List will only take place after consultation with local communities and other relevant stakeholders. Two sites in the County have been included on the Tentative List as part of larger assemblies of sites:

- The Tara Complex as part of The Royal Sites of Ireland (Cashel, Dún Ailinne, Hill of Uisneach, Rathcroghan Complex and Tara Complex)
Kells, as part of the Early Medieval Monastic Sites (Clonmacnoise, Durrow, Glendalough, Inis Cealtra, Kells and Monasterboice)

In January 2019, the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht invited applications for Ireland's Tentative List of properties for potential future nomination to the World Heritage List 2020-2030.

It is the policy of the Council:

HER OBJ 12

To recognise and respect potential World Heritage Sites in Meath on the UNESCO Tentative List – Ireland.

It is the objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 13

To support the State in the nomination process of Tara and Kells to World Heritage status as part of an assemblage of Royal and Monastic Sites in co-operation with the relevant Local Authorities.

8.6.5 Walled Towns

Navan, Trim, Kells and Athboy are medieval walled towns. Of these, only Trim has substantial lengths of town wall remaining upstanding. While the others have some fragmentary upstanding remains, parts of the walls have been shown to survive below ground. Town defences include walls, gates, bastions, banks, ditches, outworks and other features. Each walled town is considered as a single recorded monument and the line of the town walls and defences are classed as National Monuments under the National Policy on Town Defences 2008.

It is the policy of the Council:

HER OBJ 13

To protect and preserve in situ all surviving elements of medieval town defences.

It is the objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 14

To retain the surviving medieval street pattern, building lines and burgage plot widths in historic walled towns.

8.7 Architectural Heritage

The architectural heritage of Meath contributes to its unique sense of place. The Council wishes to ensure that those buildings, streetscapes and features which are of merit are protected and managed so that they retain their character and special interest.

8.7.1 Record of Protected Structures

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (Part II, Section 10) places an obligation on all Local Authorities to include in their Development Plan objectives for the protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. These buildings and structures are compiled on a register known as

the Record of Protected Structures (RPS).

The RPS may be varied by a Section 55 process separately to a review of the Plan and an up-to-date RPS, including any additions, deletions or amendments can be viewed on the Council's website or checked at the public counter of the Council's Planning Office. Developers and persons proposing to purchase historic buildings are advised to check the updated Record of Protected Structures.

A Protected Structure, unless otherwise stated in the RPS, includes:

- the interior of the structure;
- the land lying within its curtilage;
- any other structures within the curtilage, and their interiors, and;
- all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of any of these structures.

The term 'curtilage' is generally taken to mean those lands immediately associated with the structure, and in the case of smaller properties usually means all land within the boundaries. In the case of larger properties, the curtilage must be determined on a case by case basis.

A review of the RPS was undertaken in preparation for this Plan. Additions, deletions and amendments are proposed and may be viewed in Volume 2, and on the Meath County Council Map Portal. Following the abolition of the town councils³ of Navan, Trim and Kells, the RPS for those towns has been incorporated in the County RPS.

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, places an onus on owners and occupiers of Protected Structures to ensure that the structure, or any element of the structure which contributes to its special interest, is

³ Local Government Reform Act 2014

not endangered either through neglect, or by inappropriate works. Owners and occupiers are advised to consult the Planning Department if they are considering works to or affecting Protected Structures.

Section 5 of the Planning and Development Act and supporting regulations set out those works which constitute exempted development and therefore do not normally require planning permission. However, in the case of a Protected Structure, such works can only be carried out without planning permission if it is determined that the works would not affect the character of the structure or any element of the structure that contributes to its special interest. An owner or occupier may seek a declaration from the Council as to the types of works, which would or would not, materially affect the character of the structure and would or would not require planning permission.

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 14

To protect and conserve the architectural heritage of the County and seeks to prevent the demolition or inappropriate alteration of Protected Structures.

HER POL 15

To encourage the conservation of Protected Structures, and where appropriate, the adaptive re-use of existing buildings and sites in a manner compatible with their character and significance. In certain cases, land use zoning restrictions may be relaxed in order to secure the conservation of the protected structure.

HER POL 16

To protect the setting of protected structures and to refuse permission for development within the curtilage or adjacent to a protected structure which would adversely impact on the character and special interest of the structure, where appropriate.

HER POL 17

To require that all planning applications relating to Protected Structures contain the appropriate accompanying documentation in accordance with the *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)* or any variation thereof, to enable the proper assessment of the proposed works.

HER POL 18

To require that in the event of permission being granted for development within the curtilage of a protected structure, any works necessary for the survival of the structure and its re-use should be prioritised in the first phase of development.

It is the objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 15

To review and update the Record of Protected Structures on an on-going basis

and to make additions and deletions as appropriate.

HER OBJ 16

To identify and retain good examples of historic street furniture, e.g. cast-iron post boxes, water pumps, light fixtures and signage, as appropriate.

HER OBJ 17

To promote best conservation practice and encourage the use of appropriately qualified professional advisors, tradesmen and craftsmen, with recognised conservation expertise, for works to protected structures or historic buildings in an Architectural Conservation Area.

HER OBJ 18

To provide detailed guidance notes and continue to develop the Council's advisory/ educational role with regard to heritage matters and to promote awareness, understanding and appreciation of the architectural heritage of the County.

8.7.2 Architectural Conservation Areas

An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.⁴ They may also include

areas which contribute to the appreciation of Protected Structures.

An ACA may consist for example, of a terrace of houses, a street, town centre or a cluster of structures associated with a specific building such as a mill or country house. Although the individual buildings may not be of special merit, their importance is in their context and interrelationship and the contribution each makes to the character of the area. Unless a structure is also included on the Record of Protected Structures, the protected status afforded from inclusion in an ACA only applies to the exteriors and streetscape.

Piecemeal alterations on individual non protected structures can have a significant cumulative effect on a streetscape. Any works which would have a material effect on the special character of an ACA require planning permission.

The following areas have been designated as ACAs:

- Ardbraccan Demesne
- Athboy
- Dunboyne
- Dunsany Castle Demesne
- Headfort Demesne
- Julianstown
- Kells Historic Core Kells – Headfort Place
- Kilmessan
- Laytown – Netterville and Victoria Terrace
- Longwood
- Moynalty
- Navan Historic Core
- Oldbridge Demesne
- Oldcastle
- Slane
- Slane Castle Demesne
- Slane Mill Complex
- Somerville Demesne

⁴ Section 81, Planning and Development, 2000 (as amended)

- Stackallen Demesne
- Summerhill
- Trim Historic Core
- Trim Porch Fields

The boundaries of these areas are defined on Map 8.3 -8.3.23 in Volume 2 and on the Meath County Council Map Portal. Character statements have been prepared for the ACA's to guide further redevelopment proposals. These are contained in Appendix no. 7. It is intended that character statements for Ardraccon Demesne, Dunsany Castle Demesne, Oldbridge Demesne, Slane Castle Demesne and Stackallen Demesne will be prepared during the life of the Plan.

It is the Policy of the Council:

HER POL 19

To protect the character of Architectural Conservation Areas in Meath.

HER POL 20

To require that all development proposals within or contiguous to an ACA be sympathetic to the character of the area, that the design is appropriate in terms of height, scale, plot density, layout, materials and finishes and are appropriately sited and designed with regard to the advice given in the Statements of Character for each area, where available.

It is the objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 19

To identify places of special character, with a view to their designation as

Architectural Conservation Areas and to modify existing ACAs, where necessary.

HER OBJ 20

To prepare and review, where necessary, detailed character statements and planning guidance for each ACA.

HER OBJ 21

To avoid the demolition of structures and the removal of features and street furniture which contribute to the character of an ACA. The Council will require that any planning application for demolition or alteration within an ACA be accompanied by a measured and photographic survey, condition report and architectural heritage assessment.

8.7.3 Historic Building Stock and Vernacular Architecture

Historic buildings form the backdrop to most of the towns, villages and rural areas in the County. Although some may have used architects in their design, most are in the vernacular tradition – the homes and workplaces built by local people using local materials. Generally these buildings are not so special as to be designated Protected Structures, however, small differences in materials, layout and forms contribute to local distinctiveness and the character of the area.

Further policies relating to traditional and vernacular rural houses are contained in Chapter 9 Rural Development strategy.

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 21

To encourage the retention, sympathetic maintenance and sustainable re-use of historic buildings, including vernacular dwellings or farm buildings and the retention of historic streetscape character, fabric, detail and features.

HER POL 22

Seek the retention of surviving historic plot sizes and street patterns in the villages and towns of Meath and incorporate ancient boundaries or layouts, such as burgage plots and townland boundaries, into re-developments.

HER POL 23

To actively promote the retention and restoration of thatched dwellings as a key component of the built heritage of the County.

It is the objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 22

To ensure that conversions or extensions of traditional buildings or the provision of new adjoining buildings, are sensitively designed and do not detract from the character of the historic building.

HER OBJ 23

To update the survey of surviving thatched structures in the County and to promote available grant schemes to assist owners with their retention and repair.

HER OBJ 24

To carry out a survey of Land Commission dwellings over the life of the Development Plan, to acknowledge their contribution to the building stock of the County, as appropriate.

8.7.4 Industrial Heritage

Industrial heritage consists primarily of structures associated with manufacturing, transportation, communications, public utilities and materials extraction. Examples include canals, railway structures, mills, warehouses, lighthouses, lime kilns and milestones. A desktop survey of the industrial heritage of the County was carried out in 2008⁵.

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 24

To encourage appropriate change of use and reuse of industrial heritage structures provided such a change does not seriously impact on the intrinsic character of the structure and that all works are carried out in accordance with best conservation practice, subject to compliance with normal planning criteria.

⁵ <https://www.meath.ie/council/council-services/heritage-architectural-conservation/heritage/heritage-projects-and-grants/projects/meath-industrial-heritage-survey>

HER POL 25

To protect and enhance the built and natural heritage of the Royal Canal and Boyne Navigation and associated structures and to ensure, in as far as practically possible, that development which may impact on these structures and their setting be sensitively designed with regard to their character and setting. Where likely significant effects on European Sites are identified, alternative locations and/ designs will be developed to ensure that flood defence structures will not adversely affect the integrity of European Sites, either alone or in combination with any other plans or projects. Considering the general location provided for these upgrades and the ecological information and assessment required to be carried out to inform their design, it is reasonable to assume that at the detailed design stage any potential for a project element to impact on the European Site could, and will, be resolved through the exploration of alternative locations or designs. If, despite the implementation of mitigation measures, there remains a risk that the proposals will adversely affect the integrity of the European Sites, the project will not be progressed unless an alternative solution can be implemented which avoids/ reduces the impact to a level that the integrity of the European Site(s) is(are) unaffected.

It is the objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 25

To require an architectural / archaeological

assessment, as appropriate, which references the Meath Industrial Heritage Survey and other relevant sources, for all proposed developments on industrial heritage structures or sites.

HER OBJ 26

To carry out Phase 2 of the Industrial Heritage Survey which will comprise a field survey and assessment of surviving structures and site and consider if appropriate proposing them for addition to the Record of Protected Structure.

8.7.5 Designed Landscapes, Gardens and Demesnes

Historic designed landscapes consist of private gardens, public parks and the gardens and landscapes associated with country house demesnes. In the County, the designed landscapes are largely found in demesne or estate lands and frequently form the setting for protected structures.

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) carried out a desktop survey of Historic Gardens and Demesnes in Ireland, which commenced in 2003 and identified approximately 300 such sites in the County. This survey can be seen on their website www.buildingofireland.ie.

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 26

To encourage the protection and

enhancement of heritage gardens and demesne landscapes, and to support, in consultation with the owners, the provision of public access to these sites as appropriate.

It is the objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 27

To discourage development that would adversely affect the character, the principal components of, or the setting of historic parks, gardens and demesnes of heritage significance.

HER OBJ 28

To require that proposals for development in designated landscapes and demesnes include an appraisal of the landscape, designed views and vistas, including a tree survey, where relevant, in order to inform site appropriate design proposals.

8.8 Natural Heritage

8.8.1 Introduction

The County's natural heritage and biodiversity is of local, national and international importance. It includes geology and forms a central component of the landscape of the County. Protecting and enhancing our biodiversity and landscapes is vital to the health, well-being and quality of life of our communities and assists societal adaptation to the challenges of climate change.

8.8.2 Statutory Context

8.8.2.1 EU Birds and Habitats Directives

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as "The Habitats Directive", provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as the Natura 2000 network. The Natura 2000 network is made up of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/ECC).

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA). This requirement is implemented in the Republic of Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477/2011) as amended and the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The Government published *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities* in December 2009 (revised in February 2010).

8.8.2.2 Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended

Development Plans must include mandatory objectives for the conservation of the natural heritage and for the conservation of European sites and any other sites which may be prescribed.

8.8.2.3 Wildlife Act 1976, as amended

The Wildlife Act 1976, as amended is the principal national legislation providing for the protection of wildlife and the control of some activities which may adversely affect wildlife.

8.8.2.4 Flora (Protection) Order, 2015

Sets out the current list of plant species protected by Section 21 of the Wildlife Act, 1976, as amended.

8.8.3 Policy Context

8.8.3.1 Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)

Ireland is a signatory to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Cancun Declaration (CBD, 2016), which focuses on the need for governments at the national, sub-national and local levels to mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for human well-being. All parties to the Convention are required to prepare national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

8.8.3.2 National Biodiversity Plan(s)

Ireland's first National Biodiversity Plan was published in 2002. The second National Biodiversity Plan – *Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016* was published in November 2011. The Plan was developed in line with EU and International Biodiversity strategies and policies. It recognised that locally-led action is crucial in protecting biodiversity and ecosystem services and sets out the measures Ireland should take to ensure its conservation. The third National Biodiversity

Action Plan 2017-2021 was published by the Department Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in October 2017.

8.8.3.3 Local Biodiversity Action Plan(s)

The Council adopted its first Biodiversity Action Plan in April 2010 in accordance with the National Biodiversity Plan. The second *County Meath Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2015-2020* was adopted in April 2015. The Plan provides a framework for the conservation of biodiversity and natural heritage at a local level.

8.9 Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth – all plants and animals (including humans), fungi, algae and micro-organisms, the habitat where they live and their genetic diversity. Biodiversity is important because all of life depends on biodiversity for survival and humans in particular rely on it for food, clean air and water, clothing and building materials, as well as for medicines and places in which to unwind and reconnect with nature. Our biodiversity underpins important economic sectors such as agriculture and tourism and provides many other benefits or ecosystem services free of charge which can be grouped into four main categories:

- **Provisioning services** (production of food and water, etc.)
- **Regulating services** (e.g. the control of climate and disease)
- **Supporting services** (e.g. nutrient cycling and crop pollination)
- **Cultural services** (such as spiritual and recreational benefits)

The protection and wise use of the county's

natural resources is vital to achieving sustainable development. The economic value of biodiversity to Ireland has been calculated as at least €2.6 billion per annum (IEN, 2012).

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 27

To protect, conserve and enhance the County's biodiversity.

HER POL 28

To integrate in the development management process the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and landscape features wherever possible, by minimising adverse impacts on existing habitats (whether designated or not) and by including mitigation and/or compensation measures, as appropriate.

HER POL 29

To raise public awareness and understanding of the County's natural heritage and biodiversity.

HER POL 30

To promote increased public participation in biodiversity conservation by supporting and encouraging community-led initiatives.

HER POL 31

To ensure that the ecological impact of all development proposals on habitats

and species are appropriately assessed by suitably qualified professional(s) in accordance with best practice guidelines – e.g. the preparation of an Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA), Screening Statement for Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA), Natura Impact Statement (NIS), species surveys etc. (as appropriate).

It is the objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 29

To implement, in partnership with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, relevant stakeholders and the community, the objectives and actions of *Ireland's National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017 - 2021* which relate to the remit and functions of Meath County Council.

HER OBJ 30

To implement, in partnership with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, relevant stakeholders and the community, the objectives and actions of the *County Meath Biodiversity Plan 2015-2020* and any revisions thereof.

HER OBJ 31

To actively support the implementation of the *All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020*.

8.9.1 Protecting Biodiversity in Meath – Sites Designated for Nature Conservation

There are a number of international and nationally important sites designated for nature conservation in the County.

Natura 2000 Sites The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) provide for the conservation and protection of core breeding and resting sites for rare and threatened species, and rare habitat types in a European context considered to be most in need of conservation. Such sites form part of an EU network of ecologically important and protected sites known as the Natura 2000 network and comprise:

- **Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)** – these sites are selected for the conservation and protection of plant and animal species (other than birds) and habitats listed in Annex I and Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) respectively.
- **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)** – these sites are selected for the conservation and protection of birds and their habitats designated under the EU Birds Directive

2009 (2009/147/EC) (first adopted in 1979) and transposed into Irish law by the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations (SI 291 of 1985).

The main aim of the Habitats Directive, which was adopted in 1992, is to maintain or restore favourable conservation status for habitats and species that are considered rare, threatened or in danger of disappearance in the EU. The Habitats Directive was transposed into Irish law through the European Union (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997, which have been amended twice in 1998 and 2005. The 1997 Regulations and their amendments were subsequently revised and consolidated in the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011.

There are 13 Natura 2000 sites within the County. The National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht identify, evaluate and propose sites for designation. The boundaries of protected areas may change and/or new sites may be proposed for designation during the lifetime of this Plan. Up-to-date information on boundaries, and details, of designated sites is available on the National Parks and Wildlife Service website (www.npws.ie).

Table 8.1 Special Areas of Conservation in County Meath

Site Name	Site Code
Mount Hevey Bog	002342

Table 8.2 Candidate Special Areas of Conservation in County Meath

Site Name	Site Code
Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally)	000006
Rye Water Valley/Cartron	001398

White Lough, Ben Loughs and Lough Doo	001810
Boyne Coast and Estuary	001957
Lough Bane and Lough Glass	002120
River Boyne and River Blackwater	002299
Moneybeg and Clareisland Bogs	002340
Girley (Drewstown) Bog	002203

Table 8.3 Special Protection Areas in County Meath

Site Name	Site Code
Lough Sheelin	004065
Boyne Estuary	004080
River Nanny Estuary and Shore	004158
River Boyne and River Blackwater	004232

Planning Authorities are required to ensure that an Appropriate Assessment (AA Screening and AA, where required) of the implications of proposals on (Natura 2000) sites is undertaken. This assessment is required for all planning applications to determine if the proposal is likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site through a screening process. Screening for Appropriate Assessment applies to all development proposals, either within or outside a Natura 2000 site. If there is a likelihood of significant effects, or uncertainty around same, AA must be carried out to determine if the proposal will adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site. (Please refer to Tables 8.1, 8.2, 8.3 and Map 8.3).

8.9.2 Natural Heritage Areas

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) are designated

under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and encompass nationally-important semi-natural and natural habitats, landforms and geomorphological features.

8.9.3 Statutory Nature Reserve

In January 2019 the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht published notice of making Statutory Instrument (S.I. No. 602 of 2018) under section 16 of the Wildlife Act established the first Nature Reserve in County Meath at Newcastle Lough. The reason for recognising the land as nature reserve is the presence of lake, reed bed, wet grassland and woodland habitats and an associated diversity of flora and fauna. The objective for which the land is to be used or managed as a nature reserve is to maintain and enhance the diversity of the habitats and species on the land.

Table 8.4 Natural Heritage Areas in County Meath

Site Name	Site Code
Jamestown Bog	001324
Girley Bog	001580
Molerick Bog	001582

Table 8.5 Proposed Natural Heritage Areas in County Meath

Site Name	Site Code
Ballyhoe Lough	001594
Ballynabarny Fen	001573
Balrath Woods	001579
Boyne Coast and Estuary	001957
Boyne River Islands	001862
Boyne Woods	001592
Breaky Loughs	001558
Corstown Loughs	000552
Crewbane Marsh	000553
Cromwell's Bush Fen	001576
Dowth Wetland	001861
Doolystown Bog	001577
Duleek Commons	001578
Kilconny Bog (Cloghbally)	000006
Laytown Dunes / Nanny Estuary	000554
Lough Naneagh	001814
Lough Sheelin	000987
Lough Shesk	000556
Mentrim Lough	001587
Mount Hevey Bog	001584
Rathmoylan Esker	000557

Rossnaree Riverbank	001589
Royal Canal	002103
Rye Water Valley / Carton	001398
Slane Riverbank	001591
Thomastown Bog	001593
Trim Wetlands	001357
White Lough, Ben Loughs and Lough Doo	001810

Table 8.6 Natural Heritage Areas in County Meath

Site Name	Site Code
Jamestown Bog	001324
Girley Bog	001580
Molerick Bog	001582

Table 8.7 Statutory Nature Reserves in County Meath

Site Name	Site Code
Newcastle Lough ⁶	NA

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 32

To permit development on or adjacent to designated Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, or those proposed to be designated over the period of the Plan, only where an appropriate level of assessment carried out to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, in consultation with National Parks and Wildlife, can clearly demonstrate that it will have no adverse effect on the integrity of the site.

HER POL 33

To have regard to the views and guidance of the National Parks and Wildlife Service in respect of proposed development where there is a possibility that such development may have an impact on a designated European or National site or a site proposed for such designation.

HER POL 34

To undertake appropriate surveys and collect data to provide an evidence-

⁶ Nature Reserve (Newcastle Lough)

base to assist the Council in meeting its obligations under Article 6 of the Habitats Directives (92/43/EEC) as transposed into Irish Law, subject to available resources.

It is an objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 32

To ensure an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directives (92/43/EEC) and in accordance with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009* and relevant EPA and European Commission guidance documents, is carried out in respect of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary for the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site(s), either individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

HER OBJ 33

To protect and conserve the conservation value of candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection 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 and to permit development in or affecting same only in accordance

with the provisions of those Directives as transposed into Irish Law.

8.9.4 Protecting Biodiversity in Meath - Non- Designated Sites

There are many sites throughout the County that host a range of plant and animal species or their habitats (including Annex I Habitats, Annex I Birds, Annex II and IV species, Flora (Protection) Orders etc.), which are not designated for nature conservation but nonetheless their ecological value is of high importance in the county.

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 35

To ensure, where appropriate, the protection and conservation of areas, sites, species and ecological/networks of biodiversity value outside designated sites and to require an appropriate level of ecological assessment by suitably qualified professional(s) to accompany development proposals likely to impact on such areas or species.

8.9.5 Protected Species

Certain plant, animal and bird species are protected by law. This includes plant species listed in the Flora Protection Order, 1999 (or other such Orders) and animals and birds listed in the Wildlife Act, 1976 and subsequent statutory instruments, those listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), and those listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive. Proposals for

developments, where appropriate, will require an assessment of the presence of bats and/or other protected species and ensure that suitable avoidance and/or mitigation measures are put in place accordingly.

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 36

To consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and take account of their views and any licensing requirements, when undertaking, approving or authorising development which is likely to affect plant, animal or bird species protected by law.

It is the objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 33

To ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory avoidance or mitigation, on plant, animal or bird species protected by law.

8.9.6 Woodlands, Hedgerows and Trees

Although the County is one of the least wooded counties, its woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees contribute positively to biodiversity and landscape character. (Please refer to Chapter 9, Forestry Map 8.7 and Chapter 9, Tree Preservation, in this regard).

Woodlands tend to be small and highly fragmented for the most part and are more frequent near rivers, particularly along the

lower stretches of the River Boyne. The most abundant native woodland habitat type in the County is Oak-Ash-Hazel woodland (WN2) reflecting the limestone derived soils. A large proportion of the County's woodlands are parklands associated with historic demesnes. Hedgerows are perhaps the most characteristic feature of the County's landscape and provide an important habitat for many species and act as a wildlife corridor in a landscape dominated by large tracts of intensive agriculture. Under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 the cutting of hedges (and uncultivated vegetation) during the bird-nesting season (March 1st to September 1st) is prohibited, except in certain legally defined circumstances.

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 37

To encourage the retention of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatments in rural areas and prevent loss and fragmentation, where practically possible. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, mitigation by provision of the same type of boundary will be required.

HER POL 38

To promote and encourage planting of native hedgerow species in new developments and as part of the Council's own landscaping works.

HER POL 39

To recognise the archaeological importance

of townland boundaries including hedgerows and promote their protection and retention.

HER POL 40

To protect and encourage the effective management of native and semi-natural woodlands, groups of trees and individual trees and to encourage the retention of mature trees and the use of tree surgery rather than felling, where possible, when undertaking, approving or authorising development.

HER POL 41

To protect trees the subject of Tree Preservation Orders (see Map 9.3), Champion and Heritage Trees identified on the Tree Register of Ireland and Heritage Tree Database (see Map 9.3.1) when undertaking, approving, or authorising development.

HER POL 42

To promote the preservation of individual trees or groups of trees as identified on the Heritage Maps in Volume 2 and to manage these trees in line with arboricultural best practice.

It is an objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 35

To promote awareness, understanding

and best practice in the management of the County's woodland, tree and hedgerow resource.

HER OBJ 36

To continue to work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to develop and enhance Balrath Wood and to explore opportunities to develop additional sites under the Neighbour Wood Scheme.

HER OBJ 37

To review the Meath Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Survey (2011), over the life of the Development Plan, as appropriate.

8.10 Invasive Species

Invasive non-native plant and animal species are a major threat to biodiversity (www.invasivespeciesireland.com) and prohibitions are in place in relation to the introduction or dispersal of certain invasive species as set out in the *Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Habitats Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477/2011))* and as set out in EU Regulations 1143/2014 on the Prevention and Management of the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Alien Species.

Invasive alien species can negatively impact on native species, transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems causing serious problems to the environment and the economy. They may in certain cases pose a threat to human safety. There is potential for the spread of invasive species during excavation and construction

works and for such species to be introduced into the environment via spreading from private gardens, boat users, horticulture etc. e.g. Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam.

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 43

To promote best practice in the control of invasive species in the carrying out its functions in association with relevant authorities including TII and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

HER POL 44

To require all development proposals to address the presence or absence of invasive alien species on proposed development sites and (if necessary) require applicants to prepare and submit an *Invasive Species Management Plan* where such a species exists to comply with the provisions of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015*.

8.11 Peatlands

The County represents the eastern limit of raised bogs in Ireland and the Council recognises the potential for utilisation of protected areas for tourist, amenity, educational and research purposes. The Council will liaise with the various government and non-government organisations involved in an effort to secure the conservation of the peatland areas.

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 45

To ensure that peatland areas which are designated (or proposed for designation) as NHAs, SACs or SPAs are conserved for their ecological, climate regulation, archaeological, cultural and educational significance.

It is an objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 38

To work in partnership with relevant stakeholders on a suitable peatland site(s) to demonstrate best practice in sustainable peatland conservation, management and restoration techniques and to promote their heritage and educational value subject to Ecological Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening, as appropriate.

8.12 Geological Heritage

The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) are currently drawing up a list of nationally important geological sites. As part of this process the GSI undertook an audit of *The Geological Heritage of Meath* in 2007, which identified 28 sites of county geological importance (Table 6.5). These sites will be designated in due course, as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), because of their geological interest from a national perspective. In the interim, the Council, through the Plan, will protect and will maintain the geological heritage value of these sites. Any development proposals

within or likely to have an impact on County Geological Sites may be referred to the GSI to

seek their advice.

Table 8.5 County Geological Sites⁷

1. Gibbstown Castle	15. Boyne Valley
2. St. Keeran's Well	16. Galtrim Moraine
3. Bellewstown	17. Mullaghmore
4. Grangegeeth	18. Murrens
5. Barley Hill Quarry	19. Rathkenny
6. Cregg	20. Rathmolyon Esker
7. Poulmore Scarp	21. Trim Esker
8. Laytown to Gormanston	22. Altmush Stream
9. Benhead	23. Bray Hill Quarry
10. Blackwater Valley	24. Duleek Quarry
11. Kilbride Quarry	25. Riverbank at Nobber
12. Painestown Quarry	26. Rockwood Cliffs
13. Carricleck Quarry	27. Dunshaughlin (site)
14. Boyne River, Trim	28. St. Gorman's Spring

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 46

To maintain the geological and geomorphological heritage values of County Geological Sites listed in Table 8.5 and, through consultation with the Geological Survey of Ireland, protect them from inappropriate development.

8.13 Inland Waterways

The County contains significant stretches of both operational and derelict waterways including stretches of the Royal Canal and Boyne

Navigation Canal. Both the navigable and non-navigable waterways are an important amenity and wildlife habitat. All development proposals shall be subject to Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) and screening for Appropriate Assessment (as appropriate).

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 47

To protect the ecological, recreational, educational, amenity and flood alleviation potential of navigational and non-navigational waterways within the County, towpaths and adjacent wetlands.

It is an objective of the Council:

⁷ Clarke, A., Parkes, M. and Gately, S. (2007). The Geological Heritage of County Meath. Geological Survey of Ireland and Meath County Council. Report available at www.gsi.ie

HER OBJ 39

To work in partnership with Waterways Ireland and relevant stakeholders to encourage best practice biodiversity management of canal and towpath habitats.

8.14 Wetlands

Wetlands range from ponds to rivers, reed beds to bogs and fens and can also include areas influenced by the marine – from coastal and estuarine salt marshes, dune slacks and saline wet meadows and lagoons. They support a variety of habitats and species, function in the protection of water quality and/or flood control, are important carbon stores contributing to climate resilience and provide open space and recreational opportunities. The *County Meath Wetland and Coastal Habitats Survey, 2010* provides baseline ecological data. Any proposals for land reclamation in coastal areas shall be subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment and to an assessment of any likely impacts on wetlands, coastal habitats, estuarine marsh lands and on coastal processes (including erosion, deposition, accretion and flooding particularly in light of climate change).

HER POL 48

To manage, enhance and protect the wetlands of the County having regard to the '*County Meath Wetland Survey 2010*' and ensure that there is an appropriate level of assessment in relation to proposals which would involve draining, reclaiming or infilling of wetland habitats.

8.15 Coastal Zone

The coastal zone of the County contains important resources that provide economic, recreational, aesthetic and conservation benefits. The coastline of the County is classified as a soft coast and stretches between the Boyne Estuary in the north and the River Delvin in the south. The coastline is home to a variety of natural habitats and there are several species of flora and fauna, reflected in the cSAC, pNHA and SPA designations that cover much of the area (please refer to Map 8.5).

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 49

To protect the character, visual, recreational, ecological and amenity value of the coast and provisions for public access, in assessing proposals for development.

HER POL 50

To ensure that the County's natural coastal defences, such as beaches, sand dunes, coastal wetlands and estuaries are not compromised by inappropriate works or development.

It is an objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 40

To maintain the beaches along the coast to a high standard and develop their recreational potential as a seaside amenity, subject to appropriate environmental

assessments and in co-operation with the relevant agencies, in order to bring them to a Blue Flag standard.

HER OBJ 41

To undertake conservation works in accordance with best practice on the coastal dune systems subject to ecological impact assessment and Appropriate Assessment, as appropriate.

HER OBJ 42

To implement, in partnership, with all relevant stakeholders the *Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington Beach Management Plan*.

HER OBJ 43

To maintain and enhance our natural coastal defences to increase resilience to climate change.

HER OBJ 44

To investigate how the County's natural coastal defences, can be enhanced to increase climate resilience of our coastal communities.

8.16 Public Rights of Way

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended requires that development plans include an objective for *'the preservation of*

public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility, which public rights of way shall be identified both by marking them on at least one of the maps forming part of the development plan and by indicating their location on a list appended to the development plan'.

Appendix 12 provides a list and mapping of such public rights of ways, identified to date, in accordance with this provision. It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list and that the omission of a right of way from this list shall not be taken as an indication that such a right of way is not a public right of way.

It is a policy of the Council:

HER POL 51

To preserve and protect for the common good, existing public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility as identified in Appendix 12l and Map 8.61-8.6.24.

It is an objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 45

To seek to identify and protect over the lifetime of the Plan further existing rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility (accompanied by mapping showing public rights of way).

HER OBJ 46

To seek to negotiate access to lands using permissive access agreements, where appropriate and feasible, in order to provide public access to lands for public amenity purposes.

8.17 Landscape

8.17.1 Statutory Context

The definition of 'landscape' as defined by the European Landscape Convention has been included in the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The Act also specifies that development plans shall contain particular objectives relating to landscape, including objectives in accordance with *'relevant policies or objectives ... relating to providing a framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes having regard to the European Landscape Convention'*.

8.17.2 Policy Context

8.17.2.1 The European Landscape Convention and National Landscape Strategy

The European Landscape Convention (ELC), ratified by Ireland in 2002 and which came into effect on 1st March 2004, states that landscape means *'...an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'*, and this definition has been incorporated into the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The Convention requires landscape to be integrated into planning policies and

promotes interaction between local and central authorities and trans frontier co-operation to protect landscapes. The Convention recognises the cultural, environmental and economic value of landscape and how it contributes to our quality of life and sense of place. The implementation of the recently published *National Landscape Strategy 2015-2025 (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht)* will ensure compliance with the *European Landscape Convention* in Ireland.

It is the objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 46

To support the aims and objectives of the European Landscape Convention by implementing the relevant objectives and actions of the National Landscape Strategy 2015-2025.

8.17.3 Landscape Character Assessment

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a process which describes, maps and classifies landscapes. Landscape character is defined as *'a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse'*⁸. Defining landscape character enables an understanding to be formed of the inherent value and importance of individual landscape elements and the processes that may alter landscape character in the future. The cultural and ecological aspects of the landscape cannot be subtracted from its physical and visual characteristics so all of these elements are considered.

⁸ Swanwick, C. (2002). Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland

Draft Guidelines for Landscape Character Assessment were published by the DoEHLG in 2000 and a Landscape Character Assessment for the County was carried out in 2007. A key objective of *The National Landscape Strategy 2015-2025* is to develop a National Landscape Character Assessment and to publish statutory guidelines on local Landscape Character Assessments, following best international practices and incorporating Historic Landscape Characterisation for Planning Authorities. The key objectives of the Landscape Character Assessment are -

1. To improve the understanding of the County's landscape in terms of its inherent and unique character and to recognise what elements should be preserved, conserved or enhanced.
2. To predict the broad pattern of future changes and devise policies and objectives as guidance to planners and other parties which will ensure that change is complimentary to landscape character. Sensitivity and capacity of the landscape should be given due consideration in all aspects of decision-making,
3. To assist in the achievement of sustainable development. This underlying principle of all current planning practice and legislation will be adhered to by promoting a unified approach to landscape planning and management which links policies and recommendations for landscape character to existing planning policies.

The Landscape Character Assessment forms Appendix 5 to the Plan. It provides guidance for a detailed understanding of the landscapes of the County, and sets out guidance and recommendations to assist in the development

of related planning policies, development of strategies and development management within the County.

8.17.4 Landscape Character Types and Areas

Landscape Character Types are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character and are generic in nature in that they may occur in different localities throughout the County. Nonetheless, where they do occur, they commonly share similar combinations of geology, topography, land cover and historical land use, e.g. Hills and Upland Areas.

Landscape Character Areas are units of the landscape that are geographically specific and have their own character and sense of place.

Each has its own distinctive character, based upon patterns of geology, landform, landuse, cultural, historical and ecological features e.g. the Boyne Valley.

The Landscape Character Assessment 2007 divides the county into 4 landscape character types (LCTs). These are:

- Hills and Uplands Areas;
- Lowland Areas;
- River Corridors and Estuaries;
- Coastal Areas.

These LCTs are sub-divided into 20 geographically specific landscape character areas.

8.17.5 Landscape Character Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the Landscape Character Areas is defined as its overall resilience to sustain its character in the face of change and

its ability to recover from loss or damage to its components. Sensitivity is evaluated using criteria ranging from 'High' to 'Low' and is based on the interaction of individual components such as landform, amount of evident historical features (time depth) and distribution of viewers. A highly sensitive landscape is likely to be vulnerable, fragile and susceptible to change whereas a landscape with low sensitivity is likely to be more robust and/ or tolerant of change. A Matrix of Landscape Character which indicates the Value, Importance and Sensitivity of Landscape Character Areas is included in the Meath Landscape Character Assessment 2007 which forms Appendix 5 of this Plan.

8.17.6 Landscape Capacity

The potential capacity of each LCA is based on indicative types of development that are likely to occur within the study area. Capacity is the ability that the landscape has to absorb specific types of development. It is only possible to define actual capacity on a case-by-case basis because it will vary according to the type and form of development, its location in relation to the landscape character area in question, and its visibility from it.

It is a policy of the Council:

HER POL 52

To protect and enhance the quality, character, and distinctiveness of the landscapes of the County in accordance with national policy and guidelines and the recommendations of the Meath Landscape Character Assessment (2007) in Appendix 5, to ensure that new development meets high standards of siting and design.

HER POL 53

To discourage proposals necessitating the removal of extensive amount of trees, hedgerows and historic walls or other distinctive boundary treatments.

It is an objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 48

To ensure that the management of development will have regard to the value of the landscape, its character, importance, sensitivity and capacity to absorb change as outlined in Appendix 5 *Meath Landscape Character Assessment* and its recommendations.

HER OBJ 49

To require landscape and visual impact assessments prepared by suitably qualified professionals be submitted with planning applications for development which may have significant impact on landscape character areas of medium or high sensitivity.

HER OBJ 50

To review and update (if required), in the context of a regional approach to landscape assessment, the County Landscape Character Assessment following publication of statutory guidelines for Planning Authorities on local Landscape Character Assessments, as outlined in the *National Landscape Strategy 2015-2025*.

8.17.7 Historic Landscape Characterisation

Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) is concerned with identifying and detailing the contribution of the past to the present day landscape and broadens the understanding of landscape character. HLC is an important contribution to landscape management because it considers the historical development of the landscape and the relationship of buildings and monuments to landscape patterns. The Council has completed a pilot project on Historic Landscape Characterisation of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne with the School of Archaeology in UCD in accordance with the Heritage Council guidance on *Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) in Ireland: Policy and Best Practice Guidance (2010)*.

8.17.8 Landscape Conservation Areas

Section 204 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended enables a Planning Authority to designate a Landscape Conservation Area, within its functional area, in order to preserve it. The Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 had an objective to explore the designation of Landscape Conservation Area(s), in respect of their core areas for (a) Tara Skryne area (s) and (b) Loughcrew and Slieve na Calliagh Hills.

In March 2009, the Council in partnership with then named Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Heritage Council commenced the process of the designation of a Landscape Conservation Area for the Tara/Skryne landscape (as a national pilot project). A draft Landscape Conservation Area was published in May 2010. However, there

is no statutory timeframe for adoption of a Landscape Conservation Area.⁹

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 54

To protect the archaeological heritage, rural character, setting and amenity of the Tara landscape and Loughcrew and Slieve na Calliagh Hills.

It is the objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 51

To support the designation, of a Landscape Conservation Area, pursuant to Section 204 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, for the Tara Skryne Landscape, in conjunction with the relevant Government Departments and other stakeholders.

HER OBJ 52

To explore, over the life of the Plan, the designation of a Landscape Conservation Area, pursuant to Section 204 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in respect of Loughcrew and Slieve na Calliagh Hills.

HER OBJ 53

To work in partnership with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, OPW, local communities and all relevant stakeholders to complete and

⁹ Project information is available at www.taralandscape.ie

implement the *Conservation Management Plan for the State Owned Lands at Hill of Tara*.

HER OBJ 54

To work in partnership with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, OPW, local community and all relevant stakeholders to address visitor management issues and augment the visitor experience at the Hill of Tara.

8.18 Views and Prospects

The landscape of the County has many vantage points which offer attractive views from hilltops and upland areas, along river valleys and the coast. Many of these views are associated with heritage and tourism sites and provide vantage points over high quality landscapes. These scenic views are of an amenity and tourism value and contribute to our quality of life. It is not envisaged that the designation of a protected view would prohibit all development within the view, rather that any development proposed within the view should be designed and located so as not to obstruct the view or be unduly intrusive in the landscape as seen from these vantage points.

It is an objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 55

To preserve the views and prospects listed in Appendix 10, in Volume 2 and on Map 8.4 and to protect these views from

development which would interfere unduly with the character and visual amenity of the landscape.

8.19 Green Infrastructure

The term Green Infrastructure¹⁰ (GI) can be broadly defined as '*Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned and managed network featuring areas with high quality biodiversity (uplands, wetlands, peatlands, rivers and coast), farmed and wooded lands and other green spaces that conserve ecosystem values which provide essential services to society*'. The environmental and heritage resources of the County are vital resources for the County and can be described as the County's 'Green Infrastructure'.

Green Infrastructure can include parks, open spaces, rivers, farmland, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens which surround and intersperse our towns and villages. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of economic, environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities including:

- Attracting businesses and inward investment by creating an attractive environment;
- More places for people to access nature, outdoor recreation and for social interaction;
- Local food production - in allotments, gardens and through agriculture;
- Encouraging physical activity and improved health and well-being by providing quality green spaces for walking and cycling and

¹⁰ Comhar (2010) Creating Green Infrastructure for Ireland: Natural Capital for Human Wellbeing. Comhar - Sustainable Development Council.

other physical activity;

- Creating a sense of place and local distinctiveness;
- Space for nature and wildlife to flourish;
- Climate change adaptation - for example flood alleviation and cooling urban heat islands,
- Environmental education.

The European Union's Biodiversity Strategy, 2011 seeks to halt biodiversity loss in Europe by 2020. This strategy is built around six mutually supportive targets which address the main drivers of biodiversity loss. Target 2 aims to ensure that 'by 2020, ecosystems and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing Green Infrastructure and restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems'. In 2013 the EU published *Building a Green Infrastructure for Europe and Green Infrastructure: Enhancing Europe's Natural Capital* to provide a framework and strategy in order to promote and facilitate Green Infrastructure projects. The EU GI Strategy is made up of the four key elements:

- Promoting GI in main EU policy areas;
- Supporting EU-level GI projects;
- Improving access to finance for GI projects;
- Improving information and promoting innovation

Nationally, there are a number of organisations responsible for developing GI guidance and GI actions in Ireland, namely the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, The Heritage Council, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Comhar - Sustainable Development Council are a number of the key state stakeholders in providing information on GI in Ireland as well implementing the delivery of GI actions. Comhar - The Sustainable Development Council

published *'Creating Green Infrastructure for Ireland: Enhancing Natural Capital for Human Wellbeing'* (August 2010) and this document is a key tool in GI as it sets out how a network of green spaces can be developed to benefit natural heritage and biodiversity as well as the greater economy and society.

The Council acknowledges that Green Infrastructure planning involves a holistic approach and should be provided as an integral part of sustainable development, alongside other infrastructure such as utilities and transport networks, if we are to get the maximum benefit from our natural assets.

It is through the conservation of ecological infrastructure such as hedgerows and riparian corridors that we can develop a 'network of sites' to strengthen and enhance our green infrastructure. These allow for the migration and the exchange of species between conservation areas. To this end, and with a view to improving the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network, the Council will encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. In addition, the Council will identify sites of local biodiversity value through the ongoing implementation of the County Heritage Plan 2015-2020 and County Biodiversity Plan 2015-2020. The Council will also encourage the management of features of the landscape which can help us adapt to a changing climate.

8.19.1 Green Infrastructure Strategy for County Meath

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy supports further development of a Green Infrastructure policies and the coordination of mapping of strategic Green Infrastructure in the Region. The principles of a Green Infrastructure

approach to land use planning has been embedded as a cross cutting theme in the policies and objectives of this Plan.

The Council has commenced the preparation of a Green Infrastructure Strategy, in accordance with international best practice and emerging national guidance. The network will operate at all spatial scales from urban areas to the wider countryside and to the regional landscape, providing connections between these scales.

The strategy addresses the four main themes identified, namely:

- Biodiversity and natural heritage;
- Landscape, recreation and amenity;
- Water resources,
- Built heritage and culture

It is the policy of the Council:

HER POL 55

To recognise the economic, social, environmental and physical value of Green Infrastructure.

HER POL 56

To require that all Land Use Plans protect, manage and provide where possible green infrastructure in an integrated and coherent manner.

It is the objective of the Council:

HER OBJ 56

To develop and support the implementation of a Regional and

County Green Infrastructure approach by working in partnership with the Eastern Midland Regional Authority and other key stakeholders to identify, protect, enhance and manage existing green infrastructure within the County and to provide additional Green Infrastructure, where possible.

HER OBJ 57

To identify and map green infrastructure assets and sites of local biodiversity value over the lifetime of the Plan.

HER OBJ 58

To encourage, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

HER OBJ 59

- (a)** To actively promote the conservation and protection of areas designated as NHA (including proposed sites) and to only consider proposals for development within or affecting an NHA where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposed development will not have significant adverse effect on the NHA or pNHA;
- (b)** To identify and afford appropriate protection to any new, proposed or modified NHAs identified during the lifetime of this Plan.

CHAPTER 9

Rural Development Strategy

9.1 Introduction

Rural Meath is home to a diverse range of land uses including agriculture and equine industries, centres of local food production, recreational and tourist activities, established villages and rural housing. These combine to provide both residents and visitors with a quality environment to live, work and enjoy.

This Chapter sets out the policies required for the sustainable development of rural Meath, in a manner that is consistent with the guidance, strategies and policies at National and Regional level.

This Chapter is based on the following important principles:

- The specific land use requirements of agricultural activity will be accommodated as a first priority.
- A focus on supporting vibrant rural communities centred on a network of rural nodes is a cross cutting theme of this Plan.
- Rural Meath is an important national and international tourism and heritage asset and its environmental assets will be protected.
- Encouragement and support for restoration and refurbishment of the existing built fabric in rural areas.
- Large numbers of dispersed 'urban generated houses' in rural areas have had a detrimental effect on landscape and open countryside. This pattern of development does not support the long term viability of rural areas, individual villages and rural nodes.
- The current level of rural housing development in the County is unsustainable.
- The requirement to transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society, necessitates consideration of the spatial pattern of development focusing on elimination of unnecessary trips.
- The imperative to reverse the unsustainable levels of out-bound commuting from the County which have been identified as the highest in the Country in the last intercensal period.

9.1.1 Land Use Zoning

All areas outside the development boundaries of all settlements listed in Volume 2 and the rural nodes listed in this chapter, have a Rural Area (RA) land use zoning objective. This objective seeks to protect and promote in a balanced way, the development of agriculture, forestry and sustainable rural-related enterprise, community facilities, biodiversity, the rural landscape, and the built and cultural heritage.

The rural nodes have a land use zoning objective Rural Node (RN) which seeks to provide for small scale infill residential development, small scale employment opportunities, community facilities and supporting services serving local needs while maintaining the rural nature of the node.

For the purposes of rural housing assessment in the Rural Area (RA Zone) and the Rural Node (RN Zone) a rural pressure areas map has been prepared. This map identifies two rural housing category areas- Rural Category 1- Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Rural Category 2- Strong Rural Areas.

Please refer to Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives, for more information on uses permitted in Rural Areas and Rural Nodes.

9.2 Statutory Context

Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended provides the statutory context.

Sustainable Rural Housing, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2005

The Circular letter PL2/2017, issued by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government in May 2017, advised local authorities that the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines are currently being revised to ensure the rural housing policies and objectives contained in local authority Development Plans comply with Article 43 of the EU Treaty on the freedom of movement of citizens. This Plan will be varied, if necessary, to ensure compliance with any revised Guidelines, when finalised.

9.3 Policy Context

Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework (NPF), 2017, (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government).

The National Planning Framework acknowledges that *“rural areas have a major role to play in Ireland 2040 and encourages Local Authorities to ensure that connectivity gaps are addressed and that planning and investment policies support job creation in the rural economy”*.

Improved coordination of existing investment programmes dealing with social inclusion, rural development and town and village renewal are sought, as is planning for the future growth and development of rural areas.

In terms of rural housing, the National Planning Framework (NPF) distinguishes between commuter areas and other rural regions throughout the Country.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) recognises the *“significant pressures from urban generated pressures in commuter areas and highlights how commuter-generated housing in rural areas accessible to cities and towns, has affected the character and cohesion of some locations. It seeks to manage the growth of areas that are under strong urban influence to avoid over-development, while sustaining vibrant rural communities.”*

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031 (RSES)

The RSES recognises the major contribution that the rural areas make towards regional and national development in economic, social and environmental terms. The RSES aims to strengthen the fabric of rural Ireland, supporting rural towns and communities as well as the open countryside, improving connectivity, and supporting job creation, particularly in a more diverse range of sectors.

The RSES supports the consolidation of the town and village network, to ensure that development proceeds sustainably and at an appropriate scale, level and pace in line with the Core Strategies of the County Development Plans.

The RSES requires that planning for rural areas must provide a balance between managing demand in the most accessible rural areas in proximity to Dublin and larger towns, whilst supporting the sustainable growth of rural economies and rural communities. It requires that the Core Strategies for County Development Plans identify areas under strong urban influence in the hinterlands of settlements and set the appropriate rural housing policy response to avoid ribbon and over spill development from urban areas, support revitalised towns and villages, achieve sustainable compact growth targets and protect

the rural resource for rural communities.

It also highlights the fundamental importance of planning the distribution of activity (for example where people live and work) in a manner which reduces the need to travel and achieves a move towards a low carbon society having regard to the impact which transport has on carbon emissions.

RSO 3 seeks to support rural communities and states as follows: *“Support sustainable rural development by managing urban generated growth in areas under strong urban influence and by encouraging sustainable growth in areas which have experienced decline or stagnation”*

RSO 9 seeks to support the transition to low carbon and clean energy as follows: *“Pursue climate mitigation in line with global and national targets and harness the potential for a more distributed renewables focused energy system to support the transition to a low carbon economy by 2050”*

There are a number of applicable Regional Policy Objectives and these are as follows:

RPO 6.4:

“Local Authorities shall identify measures in LECPs for regeneration in small towns and villages cores.”

RPO 6.5:

“Local Authorities shall explore projects in LECPs for the enhancement of the competitiveness of their rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services, including ICT-based industries and those addressing climate change and sustainability. Cross-boundary and inter-regional partnerships are encouraged and they will be supported.”

RPO 6.6:

“Support Local Authorities to explore mechanisms for the emergence of a diversified sectoral mix in rural areas. This includes the identification of appropriate locations to drive regeneration of these rural towns and villages for example by the provision of serviced sites for housing and co-working/incubator space near Institutes of Technology to facilitate technological spill overs through greater connections and linkages.”

RPO 6.7:

“Support Local Authorities to develop sustainable and economically efficient rural economies through initiatives to enhance sectors such as agricultural and food, forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bio-economy and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage.”

RPO 4.77

“In Development Plan policy Local Authorities shall prioritise the regeneration of rural towns and villages through identification of significant regeneration projects for rural villages and rural areas which could harness untapped assets with community and wider private and public sector support and investment including the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund”.

RPO 4.78

“Development plans should support the development of a “New Homes in Small Towns and villages” initiative which would augment the delivery of actions by Local Authorities, Irish Water, communities and other stakeholders in the provision of services and serviced sites to create “build your own home” opportunities within the

existing footprint of rural settlements to provide new homes to meet housing demand.”

RPO 4.79

‘Local authorities shall identify and provide policies that recognise the contribution that small towns, villages and rural areas contribute to social and economic wellbeing. As part of this policy provision that seeks to support and protect existing rural economies such as valuable agricultural lands to ensure sustainable food supply, to protect the value and character of open countryside and to support the diversification of rural economies to create additional jobs and maximise opportunities in emerging sectors, such as agri-business, renewable energy, tourism and forestry enterprise is supported.’

RPO 4.80

‘Local Authorities shall manage urban generated growth in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence (i.e the commuter catchment of Dublin, large towns and centres of employment) and Stronger Rural Areas by ensuring that in these areas the provision of single houses in the open countryside is based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area, and compliance with statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.’

RPO 4.81

‘In rural areas outside the rural areas under Strong Urban Influence Local Authorities shall encourage sustainable growth in areas that have experienced decline or stagnation, facilitate the provision of single houses in the countryside based on siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.’

RPO 4.82

“Local Authorities shall ensure that economic development that is urban in nature should be in the first instance located in urban areas.

RPO 4.83

“Support the consolidation of the town and village network to ensure that development proceeds sustainably and at an appropriate scale, level and pace in line with the Core Strategies of the County Development Plans.”

RPO 4.84:

‘Support the rural economy and initiatives in relation to diversification, agri business, rural tourism and renewable energy so as to sustain the employment opportunities in rural areas. In keeping with the NPF, the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly will support the longer term strategic planning for industrial peatland areas. This may include support, where appropriate, for a Transition Team in place and preparation of a comprehensive after use framework plan for the peatlands and related infrastructure, which addresses environmental, economic and social issues, including employment and replacement enterprise reflecting the current transition from employment based around peat extraction.’

Realising our Rural Potential: Action Plan for Rural Development 2017, (Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs)

This Government strategy is aimed at delivering real change for people living and working in rural Ireland. The objective of the Action Plan for Rural Development is to “unlock the potential of rural Ireland through a framework of supports, at national and local level, which will ensure that people who live in rural areas

have increased opportunities for employment locally, and access to public services and social networks”.

A number of key initiatives proposed as part of the Strategy include the Town and Village Renewal Scheme and the Delivery of the 2014-2020 EU LEADER Programme. The Action Plan for Rural Ireland builds on the commitments contained in the Charter for Rural Ireland (referenced below) and sets out a clear roadmap for its implementation.

Charter for Rural Ireland, 2016, (formerly the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government)

This Charter contains a number of commitments which help to establish the foundations for the rejuvenation of the rural economy and rural society as a whole. The Charter is “a statement of Government commitment to support Rural Ireland’s regeneration and to underpin the future sustainable development of Ireland’s rural communities.”

Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine)

This programme is based on the EU framework for rural development and the objective of the programme is to foster the development of rural areas through innovation, locally based, bottom up development strategies. In the County the Local Community Development Committees (LCDC) and Leader are the programme implementation bodies.

Rural Economic Development Policy Statement and Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ)

The Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) was established in 2012

following the severe impact of the economic downturn on rural areas. The REDZ (Rural Economic Development Zone) initiative was a recommendation contained within the CEDRA and is intended to complement the Town and Village Renewal Scheme and cater for projects between the towns and surrounding hinterland that maximise local assets in areas such as tourism, culture, heritage and other areas that support rural economic activity.

Funding was allocated for 18 pilot initiatives across the country¹. Under the REDZ Scheme the Council/Meath Enterprise was successful in its application in 2015 and 2016 to develop a Digital Hub at the Kells Enterprise Centre in two phases. This Hub is marketed to new start up companies to function as incubation space and as a location for training programmes in digital innovation, Phase 1 is now complete. The Kells Electoral Area was designated as a Redz Zone (refer to chapter 4 Economy and Employment Strategy).

9.4 Rural Development Strategy Vision

‘To support agriculture and horticulture as the pre-dominant land uses in rural areas and to encourage the continued sustainable development and economic viability of rural communities and rural areas by supporting a network of rural villages and nodes without compromising the physical, environmental, natural and heritage resources of the County.’

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

¹ <https://www.chg.gov.ie/rural/rural-development/rural-economic-development-zone-redz/>

RUR POL 1

To support the continued vitality and viability of rural areas by promoting sustainable social and economic development.

Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

RUR OBJ 1

To recognise the strategic roles the County will play, in a Regional and National context, in terms of recreation, heritage conservation, protection of natural resources, safe-guarding food production, rural employment creation, and to ensure compatibility between this Plan and Regional and National strategies.

RUR OBJ 2

To identify and protect rural resources, such as locally and regionally important aquifers and water sources, from development which would prejudice their sustainable future usage.

RUR OBJ 3

To identify and protect, known or potential aggregate resources, where feasible, from development which would prejudice their sustainable future usage.

RUR OBJ 4

To support the vitality and future viability of rural communities by ensuring a functional relationship between housing in rural nodes and rural villages and the rural areas in which they are located.

RUR OBJ 5

To protect and enhance the visual amenity of rural areas through sensitive design of domestic and agricultural buildings.

RUR OBJ 6

To prioritise the regeneration of rural towns and villages through identification of significant regeneration projects for rural villages and rural areas which could harness untapped assets with community and wider private and public sector support and investment including the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.

RUR OBJ 7

To explore mechanisms for the emergence of a diversified sectoral mix in rural areas. This includes the identification of appropriate locations to drive regeneration of rural towns and villages for example by the provision of serviced sites for housing and co-working/incubator space.

RUR OBJ 8

To identify and provide policies that recognise the contribution that small towns, villages, nodes and rural areas contribute to social and economic wellbeing. As part of this policy provision that seeks to support and protect existing rural economies such as valuable agricultural lands to ensure sustainable food supply, to protect the value and character of open countryside and to support the diversification of rural economies to create additional jobs and maximise opportunities in emerging sectors, such as agri-business, renewable energy, tourism and forestry enterprise.

RUR OBJ 9

To develop sustainable and economically efficient rural economies through initiatives to enhance sectors such as agricultural and food, forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bio-economy and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage.

RUR OBJ 10

To ensure that economic development that is urban in nature should be in the first instance located in urban areas.

RUR OBJ 11

To support the consolidation of the town, village and node network to ensure that development proceeds sustainably and at an appropriate scale, level and rate in line with the Core Strategy.

RUR OBJ 12

To ensure that plans and projects associated with rural development will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment Screening and to ensure that those plans or projects which could, either individually or in-combination with other plans and projects, have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site (or sites) undergo a full Appropriate Assessment.

RUR OBJ 13

To support the development of a "New Homes in Small Towns and villages" initiative which would augment the delivery of actions by Local Authorities, Irish Water, communities and other stakeholders in the provision of services and serviced sites to create "build your own home" opportunities within the existing footprint of rural settlements to provide new homes to meet housing demand.

9.5 Rural Settlement Strategy

9.5.1 Local Context

The Council recognises the long tradition of people living in rural areas of the County and promotes sustainable rural settlement as the key component of delivering viable rural communities.

In recent years, Meath has experienced significant pressure to accommodate rural housing which has resulted in the open rural character of many areas being eroded by piecemeal housing development. This level of residential development threatens the initiation and future viability agricultural enterprises, agricultural related/processing enterprises, quarrying and extractive industries and newly emerging technological industries on appropriately zoned lands.

It is also clear that the capacity of the environment and the road network to accommodate further new residential development is reaching its limit in many areas of the County. There is a concern that if rural housing continues to be permitted at the current levels, that irreversible damage will be done to the rural environment including water quality and landscape character. The opportunities for farm families to continue to live/work within their own communities is likely to be compromised.

Therefore, there is a necessity to carefully manage future rural housing development in County Meath. The provision of more sustainable housing options for rural communities will be facilitated by the Plan through building up the capacity of rural villages and rural nodes to accommodate the future

house needs of rural dwellers not engaged in agriculture or rural economic enterprises, which will sustain their futures.

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

RUR POL 2

(i) To manage residential development in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence by ensuring that in these areas the provision of single houses in the open countryside facilitates farm families to continue to live and/or work within their own communities.

(ii) To manage residential development in Strong Rural Areas by ensuring that in these areas the provision of single houses in the open countryside facilitates farm families and those with demonstrable intrinsic links to the rural area to continue to live and/ or work within their own communities.

RUR POL 3

In Areas under Strong Urban Influence and Strong Rural Areas the provision of more sustainable housing options for rural communities will be facilitated by the Plan through building up the capacity of rural villages and rural nodes to accommodate the future house needs of rural dwellers not engaged in agriculture or rural economic enterprises, which will sustain their futures.

9.5.2 Rural Area Categories in County Meath

Based on analysis of population densities, population change, commuting patterns², it is clear that there are 2 distinct rural categories in Co. Meath. These are as follows:

- **Rural Housing Category 1: Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence**
- **Rural Housing Category 2: Strong Rural Areas**

(Please refer to Map 9.1 - Rural Development Pressure Map which sets out the extent of Category 1 and Category 2).

Rural Housing Category 1: Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence

This area is characterised by a rapidly rising rural population, a significant proportion of which are commuting outside of the County for work. The County's outbound commuting rates³ are the highest in the Country and it is a key tenet of the Council's Economic Strategy to address this issue with the creation of 'live work' communities in suitable locations within the County.

Rural Housing Category 1 spans a large geographic area of the County, comprising the commuter-belt and peri-urban⁴ areas. Continued high levels of single rural houses in these locations would inhibit the growth of the County's urban areas, cause further deterioration of rural amenities, contribute to the continuing decline of rural villages and nodes and create significant sustainability challenges.

Rural Housing Category 2: Strong Rural Areas

The level of individual housing development activity in these areas tends to be lower than

that within Rural Housing Category 1.

Rural Housing Category 2 is primarily located to the north west of the County and includes rural areas outside Oldcastle, Kilmainhamwood, Crossakiel, Nobber, Carnaross and Moynalty. In these areas, the focus of urban generated housing should be in the network of settlements to support the development of services and infrastructure and to take pressure off development in the open countryside.

9.5.3 Rural Housing Policy

This section sets out the policies for rural housing in the two distinct categories referred to above (i.e. Rural Housing Category 1 and Rural Housing Category 2, (refer to map no. 9.1X)).

All rural housing proposals will be assessed having regard to, inter alia, the protection of key economic, environmental, natural and heritage assets, such as the road network, water quality, important landscapes, habitats, biodiversity and likely future impacts of climate change.

Applications for rural dwellings will be considered, having regard to the requirements set out in Tables 9.1a) and 9.1b) Schedule of Local Need and where it is demonstrated that the development would not prejudice the environment and the rural character of the area.

Please note that the requirements pertaining to rural dwellings in the UNESCO World Heritage Site Brú na Bóinne are set out in Chapter 8 Cultural and Natural Heritage and Appendix 8.

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

² Data provided by AIRO (All Island Research Observatory)

³ POWSCAR Data Census 2016

⁴ Peri Urban areas are parts of the open countryside that have been subjected to very high levels of urban generated adjustment.

RUR POL 4

To recognise and promote the value of agricultural land to ensure sustainable food supply and the landscape value of the rural area.

RUR POL 5

All applications for rural dwellings in the case of Applicant 1 and Applicant 2 in the Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence (Rural Housing Category 1) shall include detailed documentary evidence of compliance with the rural housing policy as set out in RUR POL 14 as follows:

- Set out clearly your relationship to the land owner i.e mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, guardian;
- Completed Local Housing Needs Assessment Form;
- Land Registry Certificate and land holding maps of all land holdings in family ownership in County Meath;
- Documentary evidence of date of acquisition/purchase of land holding;
- Details of all places of residence of the applicant over the previous 10 years (7 years if engaged in farming activity on the lands);
- Documentary evidence of Intrinsic Links to the area which shall include, where applicable, : Copy of applicant entry on Electoral Register, Evidence of attendance at Local School confirmed in writing by the School, Evidence of Membership of local community/

sports groups; letter from a Financial Institution confirming address, Utility bills confirming address.

The Planning Authority may seek additional information to that set out above if considered necessary.

RUR POL 6

All applications for rural dwellings in the case of Applicant 1 and Applicant 2 in the Rural Area located in Strong Rural Areas (Rural Housing Category 2) shall include detailed documentary evidence of compliance with the rural housing policy as set out in RUR POL 14 as follows:

- Set out clearly your relationship to the land owner i.e mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, guardian, (if applicable);
- Completed Local Housing Needs Assessment Form;
- Land Registry Certificate and land holding maps of all land holdings in family ownership in County Meath, (if applicable);
- Documentary evidence of date of acquisition/purchase of family land holding;
- Where the applicant is not the owner, a letter confirming details of the relationship between the applicant and the landowner signed by both parties is required;
- Land Registry Certificate and land holding maps of all land holdings in

the landowner's ownership in County Meath, if applicable;

- Details of all places of residence of the applicant over the previous 10 years (5 years if engaged in farming on the lands);
- Documentary evidence of the applicants Intrinsic Links to the area which shall include, where applicable, : Copy of applicant entry on Electoral Register, Evidence of attendance at Local School confirmed in writing by the School, Evidence of Membership of local community/sports groups; letter from a Financial Institution confirming address, Utility bills confirming address.

The Planning Authority may seek additional information to that set out above if considered necessary.

RUR POL 7

All Applications for rural dwellings based on established rural businesses shall include detailed documentary evidence of compliance with the rural housing policy as set out in RUR POL 14 as follows:

- Documentary evidence that the rural business is planning compliant, has been established and operating for a minimum of 5 years;
- Details of principal occupation and documentary evidence that principal income is derived from the business;
- Completed Local Housing Needs Assessment Form

- Land Registry Certificate and land holding maps of all land holdings in family ownership in County Meath;
- Documentary evidence of date of acquisition/purchase of family land holding;
- Details of all places of residence of the applicant over the previous 10 years;
- Documentary evidence of the applicants Intrinsic Links to the area which shall include, where applicable, : Copy of applicant entry on Electoral Register, Evidence of attendance at Local School confirmed in writing by the School, Evidence of Membership of local community/sports groups; letter from a Financial Institution confirming address, Utility bills confirming address.

The Planning Authority may seek additional information to that set out above if considered necessary.

RUR POL 8

To require all applicants in areas Under Strong Urban Influence who are seeking to build their home on their family land holding for their own full time occupation shall be required to demonstrate that they have not been previously granted permission for a one off rural dwelling in Meath and have not sold this dwelling or site to an unrelated third party.

RUR POL 9

To require all applicants in Strong Rural

Areas who are seeking to build their home on their family land holding for their own full time occupation shall be required to demonstrate that they have not been previously granted permission for a one off rural dwelling in Meath and have not sold this dwelling or site to an unrelated third party in the last 10 years.

RUR POL 10

To restrict residential development on a landholding, where there is a history of development through the speculative sale or development of sites, notwithstanding the applicant's compliance with the local need criteria.

RUR POL 11

To recognise that exceptional health circumstances, certified by relevant documents, from a registered specialist medical practitioner and a disability, may require a person to live in a particular environment. Housing in such circumstances should be facilitated close to existing services and facilities in Rural Nodes within 12 km radius of their existing dwelling. All planning permissions for such housing shall be subject to a seven year occupancy clause. In all cases the Planning Authority reserves the right to request such additional certification considered necessary to establish the bona fides of the applicant's unambiguous compliance with the requirements of this policy.

RUR POL 12

To recognise that unavoidable exceptional financial circumstances, certified by relevant documents including in all such cases a letter from the relevant financial institution confirming the requirement to sell an existing rural home, may occur. Housing in such circumstances facilitated close to existing services and facilities in Rural Nodes within 12 km radius of their existing dwelling. All planning permissions for such housing shall be subject to a seven year occupancy clause. In all cases the Planning Authority reserves the right to request such additional certification considered necessary to establish the bona fides of the applicant's unambiguous compliance with the requirements of this policy.

RUR POL 13

To recognise that in limited exceptional circumstances unacceptable housing scenarios certified by relevant documentation, may occur. This policy is applicable to persons who have grown up and spent substantial periods of their lives (10 years) living in the rural area of Meath as members of the rural community. Housing in such circumstances shall be facilitated close to existing services and facilities in Rural Nodes within 12 km radius of their existing dwelling. All planning permissions for such housing shall be subject to a seven year occupancy clause. In all cases the Planning Authority reserves the right to request such additional certification considered

necessary to establish the bona fides of the applicant’s unambiguous compliance with the requirements of this policy.

RUR POL 14

In order to satisfy the rural housing policy for a rural dwelling in Co. Meath in all areas, an applicant shall:

(A) Meet one of the following categories of applicant:

Category 1. A member of a farming family who is actively engaged in farming the family landholding.

OR

Category 2. A member of a farm family who wishes to reside on the family landholding.⁵

AND

(B) Meet one of the local need criteria set out in Table 9.1 (a) and 9.1 (b) Schedule of Local Need.

Table 9.1 (a) Schedule of Local Need

Category of Applicant 1	
<p>A member of a farming family who is actively engaged in farming the family landholding. The applicant must demonstrate a genuine local need to reside in the area through direct and active involvement in the running of the family farm. The farm must be in the ownership of the applicant’s immediate family⁶ for a minimum of ten years preceding the date of the application for planning permission.</p>	
Local Need Criteria	
Rural Housing Category 1: Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence	Rural Housing Category 2: Strong Rural Areas
<p>(i) Persons engaged full time in agriculture (including commercial bloodstock/horticulture), wishing to build their home in the rural area on the family landholding and who can demonstrate by way of documentary evidence that they have been engaged in farming at that location for a continuous period of over 7 years, prior to making the application. The family farm shall be in all cases in excess of 25 acres and in its entirety within the family’s exclusive ownership for a minimum of 10 years.</p>	<p>(i) Persons engaged full time in agriculture (including commercial bloodstock/horticulture), wishing to build their home in the rural area on the family landholding and who can demonstrate by way of documentary evidence that they have been engaged in farming at that location for a continuous period of over 5 years, prior to making the application. The family farm shall be in all cases in excess of 25 acres and in its entirety within the family’s exclusive ownership for a minimum of 10 years.</p>

⁵ In Rural Housing Category 2: Strong Rural Areas, where no land is available in the family ownership, a site within a 5km radius of the original family home may be considered.

⁶ Immediate family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister or guardian.

Table 9.1 b) Schedule of Local Need

Category of Applicant 2	
A member of a farm family who wishes to reside on the family landholding. <i>The applicant must demonstrate a genuine local need to reside on the family lands by reason of immediate family ties.⁷</i>	
Local Need Criteria	
Rural Housing Category 1: Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence	Rural Housing Category 2: Strong Rural Areas
(i) Persons who have grown up and spent substantial periods of their lives (10 years) living in the rural area of Meath as members of the rural community and who seek to build their first home in the rural area on their original family landholding which shall be in all cases in excess of 25 acres and in its entirety within the family's exclusive ownership for a minimum of 10 years.	(i) Persons who have grown up and spent substantial periods of their lives (10 years) living in the rural area of Meath as members of the rural community and who seek to build their first home in the rural area on their family landholding and who currently live in the area. Where no land is available in the family ownership, a site within a 5km radius of the original family home may be considered.
(ii) Emigrants returning to build a dwelling on the family farm, who have grown up and spent substantial periods of their lives (10 years) on their original family landholding which shall be in all cases in excess of 25 acres and in its entirety within the family's exclusive ownership for a minimum of 10 years.	(ii) Emigrants returning to build a dwelling who have grown up and spent substantial periods of their lives (10 years) living in the rural area of Meath, as members of the rural community who have left the area but now wish to return to reside near to, or to care for immediate family members, returning to build on the family landholding or on a site within a 5km radius of the original family home.
(iii) Persons who can satisfy the Planning Authority by way of documentary evidence that their rural business is planning compliant, has been established and operating for a minimum of 5 years.	(iii) Persons who can satisfy the Planning Authority by way of documentary evidence that their rural business is planning compliant, has been established and operating for a minimum of 5 years.

* Where an applicant has resided in a rural area in excess of the previous 15 consecutive years, in a dwelling attached to their business, such as farmer, and the business inclusive of the dwelling house is being sold for retirement or other circumstances, such applications will be considered on their individual merits in both rural areas, where the applicant satisfied the local housing need criteria.

** The needs of persons with exceptional health circumstances in both rural areas are also recognised (subject to submitting the necessary supporting medical documentation certified from a registered specialist medical practitioner). However, the preferred location is Rural Nodes. Please refer to RUR POL 11 in this regard.

⁷ Immediate family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister or guardian.

9.5.4 Rural Nodes

The housing needs of those members of the rural community who are not part of the agricultural/horticulture community as set out at section 9.3 will be facilitated in the extensive network of rural nodes.

The majority of rural nodes, (see Table 9.2) comprise largely of unserved rural areas with limited social and community infrastructure. Rural nodes are designated for limited development at a sustainable scale for immediate local need through the development of clusters. It is anticipated that each rural node can cater for a small population increase from their current population base over the period of the Plan.

Consideration of planning applications for development within the nodes will have regard to the role and form of the node within the wider rural area with particular care being taken that these settlements do not compete with designated villages in the services they provide or the role and function they play within the rural area.

Detailed siting and design guidance including best practice examples and layouts in terms of the development of the rural nodes will be provided in the Meath Rural House Design Guide when reviewed.

The Council will support infill development on appropriate sites in rural nodes which make the most sustainable use of serviced land and existing public infrastructure. The Council will also promote the clachan tradition of clustering houses together in the modern context. Cluster Housing Schemes in rural nodes should be developed in a sustainable way respecting the unique aspects of the village and the site itself, whilst also responding to current economic and

social needs.

Residential use of the upper floors of commercial properties is positively encouraged and can make a positive contribution to the regeneration of rural nodes. Where external alterations are proposed to facilitate the conversion of existing premises to residential use these will only be permitted where they are in keeping with the host building and the character of the surrounding rural area in terms of design, scale and use of materials.

Ashbourne MD - Rural Nodes

Ardcath

Bellewstown

Clonalvy

Curragha

Cushinstown

Edoxtown

Lismullin

Oberstown

Kells MD - Rural Nodes

Ballinacree

Ballinlough

Castletown

Cortown

Dromone

Drumbarragh

Fordstown

Kilallon

Kilbeg

Kilberry

Kilskeer
Meath Hill
Newcastle
Oristown
Rathkenny
Rathmore
Teervurcher
Wilkinstown

Laytown-Bettystown MD - Rural Nodes

Yellow Furze
Grangegeeth
Lobinstown
Monknewtown
Newtown

Navan MD - Rural Nodes

Bective
Bohermeen
Boyerstown
Robinstown

Ratoath MD - Rural Nodes

Batterstown
Culmullin
Drumree
Dunsany
Kilcloon
Kiltale
Moynalvy

Ratoath MD - Rural Nodes

Ballinabrackey
Castlejordan
Coole
Dunderry
Kilbride
Killyon
Hill of Down
Rathcore

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

RUR POL 15

To ensure that the provision of housing in all rural nodes shall be reserved for persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community. In all cases applicants shall certify to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that they have been a rural resident for a minimum of 5 years. The node shall be within 12 km of their current place of residence.

Detailed documentary evidence shall be submitted to support the foregoing applications as follows:

- Completed Local Housing Needs Assessment Form;
- Details of all places of residence of the applicant over the previous 5 years;
- Documentary evidence of the applicants Intrinsic Links to the area which shall include, where applicable:

Copy of applicant entry on Electoral Register, Evidence of attendance at Local School confirmed in writing by the School, Evidence of Membership of local community/sports groups; letter from a Financial Institution confirming address, Utility bills confirming address.

- Health/ Financial/Unacceptable accommodation circumstances (Refer to RUR Pol 11- 13.)

The Planning Authority may seek additional information to that set out above if considered necessary.

Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

RUR OBJ 14

To support rural nodes located across the County in offering attractive housing options to meet the needs of the established rural communities and to support existing local community facilities such as schools, post offices, recreational facilities and childcare facilities etc.

RUR OBJ 15

To seek to ensure that new residential development in rural nodes is in accordance with 'the Meath Rural Design Guide' and is of a design and layout compatible with the character of its setting including the requirement to provide footpaths where appropriate.

RUR OBJ 16

To promote the development of central brownfield sites in rural nodes, if existing, as appropriate. Suburban type developments or multiple housing developments will not be permitted.

RUR OBJ 17

All development in rural nodes should take cognisance of the prevailing scale, pattern of development and services availability.

RUR OBJ 18

To promote the development of local craft/artisan facilities in Rural Nodes, of a design and layout reflective of its rural setting.

RUR OBJ 19

To promote the provision of childcare facilities within rural nodes to meet local demand and encourage the location of such facilities near schools where possible.

RUR OBJ 20

To encourage the provision of local small scale convenience shops, exclusive of service stations, at an appropriate scale in rural nodes where there is a clear deficiency in retail provision, subject to the protection of residential amenity and the rural character of the area.

RUR OBJ 21

To require the provision of high quality, durable, appropriately designed, secure boundary treatments in rural nodes reflective of the rural environment in all developments.

RUR OBJ 22

To promote the retention of field boundaries and mature trees and hedgerows to protect the rural character of the area.

RUR OBJ 23

To ensure that proposals for infill development take account of the character of the area and where possible retain existing features such as building line, height, railings, hedgerows, trees, gateways etc.

RUR OBJ 24

To require that infill proposals accord with the relevant Development Management Standards contained in this Plan and should contribute positively to the renewal of these areas and to the established character and amenities of the area.

RUR OBJ 25

To promote residential use above shops and other business premises subject to compliance with the relevant Development

Management Standards contained in this Plan.

RUR OBJ 26

To promote the clachan tradition of clustering houses together in rural nodes while respecting the unique aspects of the node and the site itself. An overall indicative scheme layout shall be provided as part of the first planning application on the subject landholding.

RUR OBJ 27

To require the provision of footpaths and public lighting as part of residential development in rural nodes, as appropriate.

RUR OBJ 28

To require a minimum site area of 0.2 hectares (0.5 acres) for each residential unit in rural nodes where serviced by an individual waste water treatment plant.

9.5.5 Occupancy Conditions

The Council is required to attach occupancy conditions in accordance with the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines and Circular SP 5/08 issued by the then Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

It is the policy of the Council:

RUR POL 16

To attach an occupancy condition to all rural dwellings, including those located in Rural Nodes, in Rural Area RA and Rural Node RN zones pursuant to Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, restricting the use of the dwelling to the applicant, as a place of permanent residence. The period of occupancy will be limited to a period of **7 years** from the date of first occupation.

9.5.6 Development Assessment Criteria

Meath County Council has produced a Rural Housing Design Guide which provides guidance on good siting and design principles to rural dwellings in the countryside and rural nodes. It is the intention of the Council that rural dwellings constructed in Rural Area and Rural Node Zones will be of an excellent standard, will compliment the character of the landscape, and will contribute in a positive manner to the built heritage of the County.

The Council will take into account the following matters in assessing individual proposals for dwellings in Rural Areas and Rural Nodes:

- The suitability of the site in terms of access, wastewater disposal and house location relative to other policies and objectives of this Plan; The siting and design of new buildings to ensure that they integrate harmoniously with their surroundings and thereby protect the amenity and character of the landscape of the County.

- Local circumstances such as the degree to which the surrounding area has been developed and is trending towards becoming overdeveloped;
- In the rural area, the degree of existing development on the original landholding from which the site is taken including the extent to which previously permitted rural housing has been retained in family occupancy. Where there is a history of individual residential development on the landholding through the speculative sale of sites, permission may be refused;
- The extent of ribbon development as defined in Appendix 4 of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines.

Please refer to Appendix 13 'The Meath Rural House Design Guide' 2009 for further guidance on siting and design of rural buildings.

RUR OBJ 29

To require that all planning applications for rural dwellings in Rural Area RA and Rural Node RN zones shall be accompanied by sufficient information prepared by a competent person as follows:

- Certification that wastewater proposals are compliant with relevant National Standards;
- Certification that access arrangements is compliant with relevant National Standards;
- Certification that all lands necessary to achieve access arrangements in accordance with relevant National Standards are within the application red

line boundary and sight distance splays are correctly illustrated in accordance with relevant National Standards;

Existing trees and hedgerows are retained where possible;

Landscaping scheme with a detailed schedule of planting, any tree which fails shall be replaced.

9.6 Agriculture

The County's rich pasturelands support a wide variety of farming types. Agriculture has traditionally been the most important contributor to the rural economy of the County. While it may now provide less employment, it still remains important as a significant source of income and employment in rural areas. Furthermore, it is recognised that the agriculture sector plays an important role in environmental management and landscape protection and can play a central role in maintaining and enhancing the quality of the rural countryside.

EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is being reviewed and will inform the future output and production activities of the sector. In order to meet this challenge farms will need to become more viable entities which are, adaptable to change and which will be subject to more environmentally sustainable practices.

9.6.1 Employment in Agriculture

The agri-food sector continues to play an integral part in Ireland's economy and is our largest indigenous industry, contributing

173,400 direct jobs and generating 10.4% of merchandise exports in 2016.⁸

The Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 (LECP), indicates that the number of people working in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (AFF) in the County has reduced significantly. In 1991 there were 5,823 working in the industry, this figure has been steadily reducing, in 2011 there were 3,748 employed in this sector and this has fallen to 2,862 in 2016.

To sustain rural communities in the changing economic climate, farm diversification and new employment opportunities will therefore be required. The government has acknowledged the specific issues posed by Brexit to the rural economy and is seeking to support vulnerable businesses in their response to the changing economic climate through initiatives such as the Brexit fund⁹ and the implementation of Food Wise 2025¹⁰.

In recent years there has been significant growth in the demand for fresh local produce. Developments in horticulture and in value added food and agricultural enterprises are sectors with opportunities for growth. Specialist beef production and intensive dairying are the most common types of farming in the County.

The County is the country's second most important centre for the bloodstock industry, after County Kildare. The equine industry is a significant contributor to the rural economy of the County and has the potential to attract and generate further investment and provide both direct and indirect employment. Therefore in recognition of the equine industry, the Council will support the growth and development in the sector. According to the 'Directory of the Turf' there were 51 stud farms in Meath in 2017. Fairyhouse, Navan and Bellewstown are the three racehorses in the County.

⁸ <http://npf.ie/wp-content/uploads/Project-Ireland-2040-NPF.pdf#page=78>

⁹ See Chapter 4 Economy & Employment for further details

¹⁰ Food Wise 2025 sets out a strategic plan for the development of the agri-food (including seafood) sector over for the period up to 2025 and is the successor to the Food Harvest 2020 strategy <https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/foodindustrydevelopmenttrademarkets/agri-foodandtheeconomy/foodwise2025/report/FoodWise2025.pdf>

Racing takes place annually at the beach in Laytown. Tattersalls Bloodstock Auctioneers is a highly prominent equine enterprise in Ratoath. Fairyhouse Racecourse and Tattersalls Bloodstock Auctioneers have the potential to create a significant equine hub in the County.

Agriculture will continue to be an important component of the economy. The agricultural sector must adapt to the challenges posed by modernisation, restructuring, market development and the increasing importance of environmental issues. An economically efficient agricultural and food sector, together with forestry, sensitive exploitation of natural resources and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, are essential components for the development of the rural economy.

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

RUR POL 17

To maintain a vibrant and healthy agricultural sector based on the principles of sustainable development whilst at the same time finding alternative employment in or close to rural areas to sustain rural communities.

RUR POL 18

To encourage and facilitate agricultural diversification into agri-businesses such as organic foods, rural tourism and small to medium sized enterprises subject to the retention of the holding for primarily agricultural use and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

RUR POL 19

To protect the economic and social benefits of local country markets devoted to the sale of local agricultural and craft produce and to support their role as visitor attractions.

RUR POL 20

To work with the Department of Agriculture, Teagasc and all other stakeholders to support the agricultural and agri-business sector, as appropriate, to continue participation in what is likely to be a more challenging export market post Brexit.

RUR POL 21

To work with the the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly and other relevant stakeholders in identifying areas of high value agricultural land in the County to address the need for sustainable food supplies. The consideration of future climate scenarios and water availability for agricultural purposes shall form part of this assessment.

RUR POL 22

To promote and support the County's horse racing facilities which promotes the viability and attraction of these facilities to patrons, enhancing the tourism offer available.

RUR POL 23

To promote and support the continued development of the equine industry in the County, including training, breeding, racing and other equine related activities.

RUR POL 24

To promote the diversification of activities that relate to the equine industry in the County such as horse riding schools, horse/pony trekking tours and equestrian centres.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

RUR OBJ 30

To facilitate the development of agriculture while ensuring that natural waters, wildlife habitats and conservation areas are protected from pollution.

RUR OBJ 31

To facilitate the development of agriculture while ensuring that natural waters, wildlife habitats and conservation areas are protected from pollution.

9.6.2 Agricultural Development

9.6.2.1 Agricultural Buildings and Structures

The provision of well located structures and facilities necessary for good and environmentally sound agricultural practice shall be supported by the Council.

The Planning Authority will apply the following considerations when assessing applications for agricultural development:

- Safe access – adequate sightlines from the points of access onto public roads;
- Visual impact – new buildings should be located within or adjoining existing farmyard complexes where possible. Structures not forming part of a farm complex should be integrated into the landscape by means of appropriate siting, external colouring and screening.
- Environmental Protection-an effective means of farm waste management
- Is the building/structure necessary for the efficient use of the agricultural holding?

It is the policy of the Council:

RUR POL 25

To facilitate the development of environmentally sustainable agricultural activities, whereby watercourses, wildlife habitats, areas of ecological importance and other environmental assets are protected from the threat of pollution, and where development does not impinge on the visual amenity of the countryside. Developments shall not be detrimental to

archaeological and heritage features of importance.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

RUR OBJ 32

To require the provision of buildings to a design, materials specification and appearance and at locations which would be compatible with the protection of rural amenities. Particular attention will be paid to developments in sensitive landscapes as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment (Refer to Appendix 5)

RUR OBJ 33

To require an effective means of farm waste management to ensure nutrient balancing between application of farm wastes to land and its balanced uptake by agricultural use of land.

RUR OBJ 34

To permit development on established agricultural or forestry holdings where it is demonstrated that;

- a)** It is necessary for the efficient use of the agricultural holding or enterprise (by way of documentary evidence)
- b)** The appearance, character and scale are appropriate to its location,
- c)** The proposal visually integrates

into the local landscape and additional landscaping is provided where necessary,

- d)** The proposal will not have an adverse impact on the natural or built heritage,
- e)** The proposal will not result in a pollution threat to sources of potable water, water courses, aquifers or ground water,
- f)** Proper provision for disposal of liquid and solid waste is provided.
- g)** The proposal will not result in a traffic hazard.

Where a new building is proposed applicants must also provide the following information:

- i)** Outline why there is no suitable existing building on the holding that cannot be used
- j)** Design, scale and materials which are sympathetic to the locality and adjacent buildings.
- k)** The proposal is located within or adjacent to existing farm buildings, unless it has been clearly demonstrated that the building must be located elsewhere for essential operational or other reasons.
- l)** Ensure that the proposal will not seriously impact on the visual amenity of the area of the natural surrounding environment and that the finishes and colours used blend into the surroundings.
- m)** Where possible, the development is grouped with existing buildings in order to reduce their overall impact in the interests of amenity

RUR OBJ 35

In case of new farm enterprises (and in addition to compliance with RUR OBJ 32 above) a clear evidence base shall be provided which outlines a justification for the proposal and demonstrates how it forms part of a comprehensive business plan supported by Teagasc (Food Development Agency).

RUR OBJ 36

To encourage proposals for farm shops where it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- a)** the products to be sold are primarily produce grown on the farm holding;
- b)** the scale and scope of the retailing proposed will not harm the viability or retail facilities in any nearby town or village;
- c)** and the proposed shop is operated by the owner of the farm and is ancillary to the main use of the property for agricultural activities

Refer to Chapter 11 Development Standards and Land Use zoning objectives for further details.

9.6.2.2 Intensive Agriculture

The requirements of the preceding section will be applied to intensive agri-business proposals in the pig and poultry sectors. While the Council recognises the role of this sector to contribute towards national economic targets and the economic well being of the County in general, it is vital that the environmental qualities of the County are recognised in such proposals and

protected accordingly. The scale and intensity of such activities within a limited area and the appropriateness of the activity in relation to the quantum of waste generated and its effect on the area is an important consideration in assessing development proposals for intensive agriculture. This applies in particular where the management of nutrients would be located in areas identified as major aquifers and which would be vulnerable to contamination of groundwater.

9.6.2.3 Alternative Agri-Enterprise

The Council will support proposals for agri-tourism developments such as farmhouse guest accommodation, equestrian centres, outdoor pursuit centres and other similar activities including small-scale craft activities where normal development criteria in relation to satisfactory access, appropriate location and design and waste management are observed¹¹.

9.6.2.4 Allotments

Allotments are becoming increasingly popular and play an important function in serving communities. Private landowners have a role in providing this resource and service which promotes sustainable living. Allotments shall be located such that they do not have an adverse impact on the safety and capacity of the surrounding road network, and shall be designed and sited to have a minimal impact on the surrounding landscape.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

RUR POL 26

To support the development of

¹¹ Detailed policies on economic development in rural areas are included in Chapter 4 Economy & Employment.

appropriately located allotments, in areas which have good access to and are proximate to built-up and residential areas.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

RUR OBJ 37

Facilitate the development of allotments of an appropriate scale and in accordance with current guidelines, which meet the following criteria:

- (i) The lands are situated within or immediately adjacent to the edge of towns/villages or are easily accessible to the residents of a particular town or village; and
- (ii) Adequate water supply and adequate parking facilities can be provided.

9.7 Forestry

Forests and woodlands play an important role in terms of supporting rural employment and rural diversity, climate change management and carbon sequestration, biodiversity and as a source of renewable/alternative energy sources. Forests and woodlands also have a significant recreational and amenity value. Meath has one of the lowest ratios of planted area in the State. In 2017, c. 13,326 ha of the County was in forest cover which accounts for only 5.7% of the County¹² and a marginal increase from 5.3% in 2012. The Department of Agriculture, Food and

the Marine (DoAFM) published a forest policy in 2014, 'Forests, Products and People - Ireland's Forest Policy - A Renewed Vision' which sets out Government policy in relation to this sector of the rural economy.

The introduction of large scale forestry areas, particularly conifers can have negative impacts on an area if they are not in harmony with the surrounding environment. Forestry activities must be appropriate in terms of nature and scale to the surrounding area, so they are not visually obtrusive or cause damage to important habitats or the ecology of the area. To facilitate guidance on areas which contain opportunities for the creation of new woodland and areas which might be sensitive to new forestry proposals, the Landscape Characterisation Assessment of the County should be consulted. (Appendix 5 refers).

The Plan aims is to support the sustainable growth of forestry as an economic activity whilst affording maximum protection to the rural environment and landscape. This Plan acknowledges the tourism and amenity potential of Coillte Forested lands particularly at Halfcarton, Oldcastle. It will therefore be an objective of this Plan to support the development of a tourism type development at this location subject to obtaining all relevant consents.

At all times, the recommendations of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht guidelines on forestry and fisheries, archaeology and landscape, will be adhered to. In addition, the Council will encourage the provision of public access to new forests through walking and bridle paths, recreational areas and other similar facilities.

Policies

It is a policy of the Council:

¹² National Forest Inventory, Forest Service (2017)

RUR POL 27

To encourage the development of forestry to a scale and in a manner which maximises its contribution to the economic and social well being of the County on a sustainable basis and which is compatible with the protection of the environment including the avoidance of likely significant effects on European Sites (SACs and SPAs).

RUR POL 28

To encourage sustainable forestry development, which is planted, managed and harvested in accordance with the Forest Service Guidelines for Landscape, Forest Harvesting and Environmental, Archaeology, Biodiversity and Water Quality.

RUR POL 29

To promote forestry development of appropriate scale and character whilst ensuring that the development does not have a negative visual impact on the countryside or cause pollution or degradation to wildlife habitats, natural waters or areas of ecological importance.

RUR POL 30

To encourage the provision of public access in conjunction with relevant stakeholders to new forests through walking and bridle paths, recreational areas and other similar facilities.

RUR POL 31

To promote the avoidance of deforestation or commercial afforestation within Natura 2000 sites unless directly relating to the management of the site for its qualifying interests.

RUR POL 32

To seek to promote the tourism and amenity potential while retaining adequate tree cover in the general area surrounding Halfcarton forest , Oldcastle.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

RUR OBJ 38

To co-operate with the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to encourage and promote the preparation and implementation of an Indicative Forest Strategy for the County.

RUR OBJ 39

To support the development of a sustainable and sympathetic forestry type tourism development within Halfcarton forest, Oldcastle.

9.8 Tree and Hedgerow Preservation

Throughout the County, series of trees or groupings of trees have been identified as being of particular importance or value to the area. As a means of protecting these areas of planting, Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) have been made for a number of sites (Map 9.2 Tree Preservation Orders).

Notwithstanding the existence of TPOs, it is recognised that in some instances tree felling will be unavoidable over the life of the Plan. Where felling of trees is unavoidable, new planting will be required and the planting of native species will be encouraged. The Council will consult with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine advisors regarding its recommendations on Tree Felling Licence applications.

Please refer to Chapter 8 Cultural and Natural Heritage strategy for further details.

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

RUR POL 33

To consider the preservation of any tree, trees or groups of trees or woodland of special amenity or environmental value by use of Tree Preservation Orders.

RUR POL 34

To require the submission of landscape plans, where appropriate, to accompany planning applications for rural

development prepared by competent professionals and to promote the use of native trees for boundary treatment and shelter belts.

RUR POL 35

To retain and protect significant stands of existing trees/ hedgerows/woodlands, and seek increased planting of native trees, where appropriate, in new developments.

RUR POL 36

To consider the development of woodland/forestry and amenity tourism type development which is sustainable and sympathetic to the area with retention of tree cover and taking into account the sensitivities of the local environment.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

RUR OBJ 40

To consider the use of TPOs for the preservation of any tree, trees or group of trees or woodland of special amenity or environmental value. Additions should be explored having regard to any relevant surveys and the policies and objectives elsewhere in the Plan.

9.9 Extractive Industry and Building Materials Production

The Council acknowledges the need for extractive industries in terms of supply of aggregate materials for the construction sector, delivering transport infrastructure projects, and for the export market. However, the potential for conflict in the operation of these industries with wider environmental issues needs careful consideration. By their nature, aggregates can only be worked where they occur. The cost of haulage affects economic competitiveness in this sector. This inevitably leads to conflicts and environmental concerns. Extractive industries by their nature can give rise to detrimental environmental and residential amenity effects including traffic generation, vibration, dust, noise, water pollution, visual intrusion and loss of ground water supplies. The impact on the road network of the County is significant.

In assessment of planning applications related to the extractive industry, including related buildings and restoration/rehabilitation of existing pits, the Council will have regard to the policies/objectives for the specific landscape character of the area. (Appendix 5 Landscape Character Assessment refers.)

The County contains a variety of raw materials critical to the construction industry in the form of sand, gravel, stone reserves including high purity limestones and shale used in cement and magnesia manufacture and base metal deposits. The potential of these resources to underpin construction output and provide employment and economic growth in the local and regional economy is recognised as is the need to exploit such resources in an environmentally sound and

sustainable manner.

The wide distribution of resources is recognised and known deposits and sites were mapped by The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) in 2004 and updated in 2014. The GSI Aggregate Potential Mapping illustrates potential crushed rock and sand and gravel deposits and assesses the interactions between the development of these resources and certain land uses such as bore holes and events such as landslides. Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Quarries and Ancillary Activities were published by the former Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) in 2004.

The Council has undertaken an examination of quarries within its administrative area in accordance with section 261A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended to determine whether development was carried out which would have required Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Appropriate Assessment (AA) having regard to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive and the Habitats Directive. At present there are 29 active quarries in Co. Meath, 19 of which were registered under Section 261A and 10 of which are operating with planning permission.

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

RUR POL 37

To facilitate adequate supplies of aggregate resources to meet the future growth needs of the County and the wider region while addressing key environmental, traffic and social impacts and details of rehabilitation.

RUR POL 38

To ensure that projects associated with the extractive industry carry out screening for Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the E.C. Habitats Directive, and comply with all relevant Environmental Legislation as required.

RUR POL 39

To facilitate the exploitation of the County's natural resources and to exercise appropriate control over the types of development, including rural housing, 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.

RUR POL 40

To support the extractive industry where it would not compromise the environmental quality of the County and where detailed rehabilitation proposals are provided.

RUR POL 41

To seek to ensure that the extraction of minerals and aggregates minimises the detracting from the visual quality of the landscape and does not adversely affect the environment or adjoining existing land uses.

RUR POL 42

To ensure that the extractive industry and associated development minimises adverse impacts on the road network in the area and that the full cost of road improvements, including during operations and at time of closure, which are necessary to facilitate those industries are borne by the industry itself.

RUR POL 43

To ensure that all existing workings are rehabilitated to suitable land uses and that all future extraction activities allow for the rehabilitation of pits and proper land use management. The biodiversity value of the site should be considered in the first instance when preparing restoration plans. Where land filling is proposed, inert material is the preferred method. Each planning application shall be considered on a case by case basis and where relevant will be dealt with under the relevant regional Waste Management Plan.

RUR POL 44

To ensure that development for aggregates / mineral extraction, processing and associated processes does not significantly impact in the following areas:

- 1) Existing and proposed Special Areas of Conservation
- 2) Special Protection Areas

- 3) Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas;
- 4) Other areas of importance for the conservation of flora and fauna;
- 5) Areas of significant archaeological potential;
- 6) In the vicinity of a recorded monument, and;
- 7) Sensitive Landscapes
- 8) World Heritage Sites
- 9) Tentative World Heritage Sites

Objectives

It is the objective of the Council to:

RUR OBJ 41

To ensure that all quarrying activities and projects associated with the extractive industry comply with all relevant Planning and Environmental Legislation.

RUR OBJ 42

To ensure that the extractive industry and associated development minimises adverse impacts on the road network in the area and that the full cost of road improvements, including during operations and at time of closure, which are necessary to facilitate those industries are borne by the industry itself.

9.10 The Meath Gaeltachts/Gaeltachtaí na Midhe

Rathcairn and Bhaile Gibb are two Gaeltachts in the County which constitute an important part of the Country's linguistic, social and cultural tradition. The Land Commission acquired lands in the 1930's which facilitated the establishment of the Meath Gaeltachts. Circa 122 families (767 persons) from congested districts in Galway, Mayo, Donegal, Kerry and Cork were settled in five townlands in County Meath between 1935 and 1940. It is essential that policies which protect the Irish language and which encourage and support sustainable employment in these areas are implemented.

The areas have a combined population of 1,857 persons in Census 2016, representing an increase of 10.6% from the 2006 Census. The Council in performance of its duties pursuant to the Official Languages Act 2003 has drafted its own plan towards providing:

- A clear policy towards bi-lingual signage;
- Attending the needs of the public and providing services in Irish;
- Attend the needs of the Gaeltacht completely in Irish, and;
- Assign persons with Irish to provide services through Irish, as required

The Language Scheme/Plan is monitored to ensure that its provisions are clearly met in an efficient and effective manner and in accordance with the Official Languages Act 2003.

9.10.1 Regional Policy

The RSES acknowledges that: *"These Gaeltacht*

districts are endowed with a unique linguistic and cultural heritage and demonstrate significant capacity and capability in terms of its highly developed forms of social capital and community resilience. These dynamic social and communal features represent at once an important socioeconomic and sociolinguistic differentiator and also act as a key regional development asset which can contribute to efforts in achieving balanced regional development objectives."

RPO 9.27 states: *"Support the implementation of language plans for the Region's Gaeltachts and the identification of Gaeltacht Service Towns and Irish Language Networks in the Region, and to promote the development of the Gaeltacht in Meath in a manner that protects and enhances the distinctive linguistic and cultural heritage, whilst meeting the needs and aspirations of both residents and visitors alike."*

9.10.2 Development in the Gaeltachts

There is a requirement on Planning Authorities to include objectives in the Development Plan for:

"The protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht including the promotion of Irish as the community language, where there is a Gaeltacht area in the area of the development plan¹³."

It has been a long standing objective of successive Governments to maintain Irish as the first language of the community and of the home in the Gaeltachts and the Council fully supports this objective. The Council is committed to the protection and enhancement of the Gaeltachts in the County in order to prevent the depreciation of its unique linguistic and cultural setting from influxes of non-Irish

speakers. A Language Plan will be prepared for the Limistéir Pleanála Teanga (Language Planning District) for Ráth Chairn and Baile Ghib in accordance with the Gaeltacht Act 2012.

It is important for the achievement of the overall objective of protection and enhancement of the linguistic and cultural heritage of these areas that the linguistic impact of future residential development, in the case of the following:

- multi residential,
- rural dwellings in the open countryside and
- rural dwellings in the rural node of Oristown is assessed as part of the planning process.

This accords with National and Regional planning guidance.

The normal requirements for planning applications for rural dwellings within the defined rural areas of the Gaeltachts are applicable (please refer to Section 9.5). In order to ensure the development of sustainable communities, lands have been identified in Rathcairn and Bhaile Gibb to accommodate employment uses. There are existing Údarás funded projects in both Baile Ghib and Rathcairn and it is an objective of this Plan in conjunction with Údarás na Gaeltachta and Gaeltacht na Mí Economic forum to continue to support economic development in the Gaeltacht areas of the County.

Please refer to Chapter 4 Economy and Employment Strategy and Volume 2 Written statements for Rathcairn and Baile Ghib.

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

¹³ Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended.

RUR POL 45

To ensure the continued survival and development of Gaeltachts in Meath as areas distinct in the linguistic and cultural life of the County, whilst seeking to realise their economic and development potential in a balanced and sustainable manner over the lifetime of the Plan.

RUR POL 46

Support the implementation of language plans for the Gaeltachts and the identification of Gaeltacht Service Towns and Irish Language Networks in the Region, and to promote the development of the Gaeltacht in Meath in a manner that protects and enhances the distinctive linguistic and cultural heritage, whilst meeting the needs and aspirations of both residents and visitors alike.

RUR POL 47

To ensure that all new development in the Gaeltachts has a positive impact upon the use of Irish in the area and the cultural heritage of the area, whilst seeking to realise the area's economic and development potential in a balanced and sustainable manner over the lifetime of the Plan.

RUR POL 48

To require all applications for rural houses within the Gaeltachts to comply with the

'Meath Rural Design Guide', or any such replacement document.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

RUR OBJ 43

To require that a "Linguistic Impact Study" be carried out by a competent person(s) accompany planning applications in all cases for the following residential developments:

- multi residential,
- rural dwellings in the rural node of Oristown and
- rural dwellings in the open countryside before any application for housing is considered within the Gaeltacht Area.

Such a study, by reference to the linguistic background of intended occupants, shall clearly establish that a given proposal will have a positive impact upon the promotion and use of Irish as the language of the community and further sustain the character of the Gaeltacht. The study shall be accompanied by sufficient supporting information which demonstrates how the proposal protects and enhances the distinctive linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht.

Part of the linguistic assessment shall comprise of an interview of the intended occupier of a dwelling.

The interview shall be facilitated by the Local Authority

RUR OBJ 44

To promote the provision of signage in Irish in the Gaeltachts regarding: 1) Entry and exit points explanatory details of the cultural significance of the areas to visitors; 2) the provision of all commercial signage in Irish, and; 3) in association with the relevant professional and vocational groups, that auctioneers and other temporary signs are in Irish.

9.10.1 Development Assessment Criteria

To assist in assessing the impact of new multi residential development upon the use of Irish in the Gaeltachts, all planning applications for residential development, both single and multiple house developments, will be referred to the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Údarás na Gaeltachta Management for comment.

9.11 Multi-Experience Attractions

Rural tourism can play a strong role in stimulating rural economies. This Plan acknowledges this regional amenity and tourism role of the County while recognising the importance of ensuring tourist development does not have a negative impact on the overall character of the area. Policies and guidance in relation to tourist accommodation, hotels, holiday homes, caravan and camping sites, tourist signage, festivals and walking and cycle routes is set down in Chapter 4 Economy and Employment Strategy.

9.12 Vernacular Rural Buildings (Refurbishment and Re-Use)

A key component of the rural landscape of the County is the legacy of traditional dwellings and buildings, many of which have been neglected in preference for new dwellings, or because traditional buildings have become unsuitable as farming practices have changed. In the majority of cases in recent times, most vernacular 'Parnellite' cottages are being replaced with larger contemporary and in particular suburban style dwellings that in many instances are out of keeping with the rural character of the area. In addition, thatched cottages, which were once commonplace throughout the County, have been and continue to be in decline, and every effort will be made by the Council to encourage and facilitate the survival of the remaining examples.

The Council consider that vernacular rural dwellings and vernacular structures are an important element of our built heritage. Accordingly, it is the Council's policy to seek to retain and preserve vernacular dwellings and structures whilst promoting their sympathetic renovation and continued use rather than replacement. There will be a presumption against the demolition of vernacular dwellings and structures where restoration or adaptation is a feasible option. Furthermore, permission for demolition will only be considered where it is demonstrated that a vernacular dwelling is not reasonably capable of being made structurally sound or otherwise improved.

Detailed policy in relation to refurbishment and reuse of existing vacant structures within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne

are contained within Chapter 8 Cultural and Natural Heritage.

It is the policy of the Council:

RUR POL 49

To promote the viable re-use of vernacular dwellings without losing their character and to support applications for the sensitive restoration of disused vernacular or traditional dwellings.

RUR POL 50

To encourage and facilitate the appropriate refurbishment of existing vernacular housing stock in rural areas and in certain limited cases the replacement of existing vernacular dwellings subject to development assessment criteria outlined below.

RUR POL 51

To oppose the demolition and replacement of traditional or vernacular rural houses in order to protect the varied types of housing stock in rural areas of the County and to preserve the rural built heritage.

RUR POL 52

To only permit the replacement of a vernacular dwelling/structure where it is clearly demonstrated by way of a suitably qualified structural engineer's report that the dwelling/structure is not reasonably

capable of being made structurally sound or otherwise improved, where the roof, all external structural walls and internal walls are substantially intact and where the building was last used as an authorised habitable dwelling.

RUR POL 53

To consider the limited conversion of outhouses and other structures attached to large country houses or other heritage structures where acceptable conservation practice is observed in line with the other policies and objectives of this Plan and where acceptable site suitability has been established in terms of access, car parking, open space, wastewater disposal and maintaining the setting and amenities of the main structure.

RUR POL 54

To respect the sensitive restoration and conversion to residential use of disused vernacular or traditional dwellings or traditional farm buildings, including those which are Protected Structures, such proposals shall not be subject to the Rural Housing Policy (i.e. local need) that applies to new dwellings.

RUR POL 55

To actively promote the retention and restoration of thatched dwellings as a key component of the built heritage of the County.

It is an objective of the Council:

RUR OBJ 45

To update the survey of surviving thatched structures in the County and to promote available grant schemes to assist owners with their retention and repair.

RUR OBJ 46

To carry out a survey of Land Commission dwellings over the life of the Development Plan, to acknowledge their contribution to the building stock of the County, as appropriate.

9.13 Replacement Dwellings

In recent years, the Council has grown concerned with regard to the tendency to replace established rural dwellings and structures, rather than upgrading or modernising older buildings. Planning permission will be considered for a new replacement dwelling only in instances where a dwelling is not considered by the Council to be vernacular or where it does not provide a positive/important contribution to the local character or heritage of the surrounding area. Furthermore, planning permission will be considered for a replacement dwelling in cases where an existing habitable dwelling has been destroyed recently by fire or by accidental occurrence.

Accordingly, it is the Council's policy to seek to retain vernacular dwellings and structures and promote their sympathetic renovation and

continued use rather than replacement. For this reason there will be a presumption against the demolition of vernacular dwellings and structures where restoration or adaptation is a feasible option.

9.13.1 Development Assessment Criteria

The Council shall assess applications for refurbishment and/or replacement of existing housing stock in rural areas, having regard to the criteria outlined hereunder:

- That in the case of refurbishment and extension proposals, that the scale and architectural treatment of proposed works are both subservient and sympathetic to the character of the original structure and do not detract from the setting of the surrounding area including adjoining or nearby development;
- That in the case of replacement dwellings, the design is appropriate to the site in terms of size and scale and does not detract from the setting of the surrounding area including adjoining or nearby development;
- That the overall size of the replacement dwelling does not result in a significant negative visual impact to the character, landscape and heritage of the rural area and shall have regard to local distinctiveness.
- That in the case of replacement dwellings, to require that the original structure was last used as an authorised habitable dwelling and that the roof, and all internal and external walls and windows are substantially intact;

- That replacement dwellings are provided at locations where there is safe access to the public road and acceptable wastewater disposal arrangements can be put in place and where specific development objectives or other policies of the Council are not compromised; and,
- That the design of replacement dwellings in rural areas shall have regard to the design, finish and character of the existing building and comply with the 'Meath Rural Design Guide', or any such replacement document.

In the assessment of whether a house which it is proposed to replaced is habitable or not, the Council will rely on the definition contained in Section 2 (Interpretation) of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended.

A "Habitable House" means a house which

- (a) is used as a dwelling;
- (b) is not in use but when last used was used, disregarding any unauthorised use, as a dwelling and is not derelict, or;
- (c) was provided for use as a dwelling but has not been occupied.

In the interests of clarity, the provisions of RUR POL 14 (i.e. Rural Generated Housing Need) and RUR POL 16 (Occupancy clause) will not apply in the case of refurbishment and/or replacement of existing housing stock.

9.14 Extensions in the Rural Area and Rural Node Zones

The need for people to extend and renovate their dwellings is recognised and acknowledged.

Extensions will be considered favourably where they do not have a negative impact on adjoining properties or on the character of the surrounding rural area. The design of extensions in rural areas shall have regard to the design, finish and character of the existing building and comply with the 'Meath Rural House Design Guide' 2009, or any such replacement document.

It is an objective of the Council:

RUR OBJ 47

That all applications for residential extensions in rural areas shall comply with the following criteria:

- Be consistent with Section 5.5 of the 'Meath Rural House Design Guide' 2009 or any such replacement document.
- High quality design which respects, harmonises and integrates with the existing dwelling in terms of height, scale, materials used, finishes, window proportions, etc;
- Ensure that the quantity and quality of private open space that would remain to serve the house is sufficient;
- Flat roof extensions, in a contemporary design context, will be considered on their individual merits;
- Impact on amenities of adjacent residents, in terms of light and privacy. Care should be taken to ensure that the extension does not overshadow windows, yards or gardens or have windows in the flank walls which would reduce a neighbour's privacy;
- Extensions which break the existing

front building line will not normally be acceptable. A porch extension which does not significantly break the front building line will normally be permitted;

- Proposed side extensions shall retain side access to the rear of the property, where required for utility access, refuse collection etc.
- Ability to provide adequate car parking within the curtilage of the dwelling house;
- In all cases where diversion or construction over existing sewerage and/or water mains is required, the consent of Irish Water will be required as part of the application;
- Extensions are subordinate to the and/or water mains is required, the consent of Irish Water will be required as part of the application;
- Extensions are subordinate to the existing dwelling with a presumption against the size of any extension exceeding 100% of the floor area of the existing dwelling.

9.15 Family Flat Extensions in the Rural Area and Rural Node Zones

Family flats (often known as granny flats) are a way of providing additional accommodation with a level of independence for an undefined temporary period of time. Family flats allow for semi-independent accommodation for an

immediate family member (dependent on the main occupants of the dwelling). Applications for family flats will be considered favourably subject to criteria set out in the relevant policy set out below.

It is the policy of the Council:

RUR POL 56

The creation of a custom-built 'family flat' to be occupied by a member of the occupant family with a housing need is generally acceptable subject to site suitability and compliance with RUR OBJ 47.

It is an objective of the Council

RUR OBJ 48

All applications for family flat development shall comply with the following criteria:

- The flat shall form an integral part of the structure of the main house with provision for direct internal access to the remainder of the house. i.e. not detached;
- The flat shall be modest in size and shall not have more than one bedroom (2 bedrooms in exceptional circumstances).
- The unit shall not exceed a gross floor area of 50 square metres. The flat shall not have a separate access provided to the front elevation of the dwelling;
- There shall be no permanent subdivision of the garden/private amenity space;

- The flat shall remain in the same ownership as that of the existing dwelling on site. In this regard, the flat shall not be let, sold or otherwise transferred, other than as part of the overall property;
- The design proposed shall enable the flat to easily fully revert to being part of the original house when no longer occupied by the family member(s);
- If the site is not connected to public mains, the existing wastewater treatment system on site must be capable for any additional loading from the flat, and if not proposals should be submitted to accommodate the additional loading.

apply. This provision applies to all categories of development, including individual houses in rural areas, regardless of the housing circumstances of the applicant’.

Under Part 4, Article 28 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 - 2019, notification of planning applications which involve a new access or material widening of an access to an existing or planned national road, or where the development might give rise to a significant increase in the volume of traffic using a national road, must be sent to the National Roads Authority. The Authority may make submissions or observations on such planning applications in accordance with Article 29 of the Regulations. National policy in relation to access to national routes has been outlined previously in Chapter 5 Movement Strategy.

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

9.16 Restricting Access to Certain Categories of Roads

9.16.1 National Primary and National Secondary Routes

National policy in relation to development involving access to national roads and development along such roads is set out in the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines published by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government in January 2012. The Guidelines state, ‘The policy of the planning authority will be to avoid the creation of any additional access point from new development or the generation of increased traffic from existing accesses to national roads to which speed limits greater than 60kmh

RUR POL 57

To develop and maximise the opportunities of the county’s national primary and secondary roads as key strategic infrastructure vital to the county’s continued economic development and to protect this strategically important infrastructure from unplanned ribbon development or random one-off housing development.

RUR POL 58

To ensure that future development affecting national primary or secondary roads, shall be assessed in accordance with the guidance given in the document

'Spatial Planning and National Roads - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (or any replacement document).

9.16.2 Regional and County Roads (Refer to Map no. 9.2)

It is vitally important that new housing in rural areas, that is located along non national routes, is located in such a manner as to avoid endangering public safety by way of a traffic hazard. There are a number of regionally and locally important functions of certain regional and county road routes that act as particularly important transport links traversing the County.

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

RUR POL 59

To ensure that all development accessing off the county's road network is at a location and carried out in a manner which would not endanger public safety by way of a traffic hazard.

RUR POL 60

To identify and protect those non-national roads of regional or local importance from unnecessary and excessive individual access/egress points, which would prejudice the carrying capacity and ultimately the function of the road.

RUR POL 61

To restrict new accesses for one-off dwellings where the 80km per hour speed limit currently applies in order to safeguard the specific functions and to avoid the premature obsolescence of identified regional and important county link roads (see Map No. 9.2) through the creation of excessive levels of individual entrances and to secure the investment in non-national roads.

9.16.3 Development Assessment Criteria

Exceptions to the above policies relating to regional and protected county roads will be considered on their merits in the following circumstances:

- For those who have a location specific rural housing need on family owned lands (in compliance with Section 9.5.3 Rural Housing Policy above) and cannot provide access onto any other non identified regional or county road and therefore need to access one of the regional or county roads identified on Map No. 9.2. In this circumstance, the applicant will be encouraged to maximise the potential of an existing entrance. The onus shall be on the applicant to demonstrate that they have no other access or suitable sites within their landholding, and;
- Where an existing dwelling with a vehicular entrance that is not considered to constitute a traffic hazard is to be demolished and replaced with a new dwelling.

New development proposals onto certain regionally and locally important county road type routes that act as particularly important transport links that traverse Co. Meath shall be assessed having regard to:

- Avoiding unnecessary new accesses, for example where access could be provided off a nearby county road.
- Ensuring that necessary new entrances are located in such a manner as to provide effective visibility for both users of the entrance and users of the public roads so that opportunities for conflicting movements are avoided.
- Avoiding the premature obsolescence of regional roads in particular, through creating excessive levels of individual entrances.

9.17 Roadside Boundaries

Roadside boundaries, whether hedgerows, sod and stone bank, stone wall or other boundaries, provide important features that are elements of both the landscape and ecology of rural areas. The retention of such boundary treatments assists in absorbing new rural housing into its surroundings and should generally be encouraged.

Occasionally, the removal of substantial lengths of roadside boundaries is proposed as part of an element of improving visibility at the junction of a new entrance onto a road. Where an alternative site is available and otherwise suitable, applicants and Planning Authorities should consider a location that avoids the necessity for widespread boundary removal.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

RUR POL 62

To avoid the removal of existing roadside boundaries where they are more than 3 m from the road edge (edge of carriageway), except to the extent that this is needed for a new entrance, and where required for traffic safety reasons. (Please refer to policies contained in Section 8.9.7 Woodlands, Hedgerows and Trees in this regard).

9.18 Roads Served by Unmanned Railway Crossings

Under the National Development Plan, a rail investment and safety programme has yielded substantial route renewal and service upgrades that will deliver, over time, more frequent and faster rail passenger services over the rail network. In some areas, laneways accessed via unmanned level crossings that were originally designed to provide access to agricultural lands are the subject of significant residential development. In certain circumstances, the provision of substantial additional development that is completely dependent for access using unmanned and unprotected level crossings may increase the risk of a safety incident unacceptably or to the degree that alternative crossing arrangements are necessary. The provision of such arrangements needs to be carefully considered given the likely costs involved and the availability of resources.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

RUR POL 63

To refer proposals for new housing development requiring access via unmanned and unprotected level crossings to Iarnród Éireann and to carefully consider the subsequent views of Iarnród Éireann such that due and proper consideration has been made for the safety of road users and rail safety.

9.19 Technical Requirements

9.19.1 One Off Houses: Sight Distances and Stopping Sight Distances

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

RUR POL 64

To ensure that the required standards for sight distances and stopping sight distances are in compliance with current road geometry standards as outlined in the NRA document Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) specifically Section TD 41-42/09 when assessing individual planning applications for individual houses in the countryside.

CHAPTER 10

Climate Change Strategy

10.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the approach to climate change adaptation and greenhouse gas mitigation, as required by the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. This Act highlights the need to reduce the overall quantity of greenhouse gas emissions and to develop an adaptation strategy to manage anticipated future climate risks.

The chapter firstly defines climate change and the known associated risks, which are expected to impact Ireland in both the short and long term, before outlining the statutory context in which climate change is managed from an International, National, Regional and Local perspective.

The chapter examines how mitigation and adaptation strategies have been integrated into the main body of the County Development Plan. This is to ensure that the climate change strategy has been developed collaboratively and is fully integrated and consistent with the Policies and Objectives of the County Development Plan as climate change is one of the cross-cutting themes of the Plan.

A Citizens Assembly in 2018 debated the challenges of climate change and produced a set of recommendations. The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Climate Action issued a comprehensive set of recommendations in 2018. The Committee report was unanimously endorsed by Dáil Éireann in 2019. These recommendations form part of the Climate Action Plan 2019 which is Ireland's response to tackling climate breakdown.

The urgency of the need to address climate issues was highlighted in May 2019 when Dáil Éireann declared a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency. Ireland became only the second

country in the world to pass such a declaration.

10.2 What is climate change?

Climate change refers to a long term, large scale change in global or regional climate patterns. In recent years, global temperatures have been rising. The ever increasing rate of carbon dioxide combustion, and the emission of other greenhouse gases such as methane and nitrous oxide since the industrial revolution, has resulted in the 'greenhouse affect'. Many activities generate these gases; the production of electricity, industrial activity, transportation and agriculture are just a few of the examples contributing high quantities of these emissions. These gases build up in the Earth's atmosphere, and trap a constantly increasing amount of the sun's energy, creating an overall shift in global atmospheric patterns.

As a result, Ireland and Meath's climate is changing and the scientific consensus implies that this is only going to accelerate in the coming years.

Incremental changes in climate are already evident these include:

- increases in average temperatures,
- wetter winters,
- more intense rainfall,
- more flooding,
- increase in summer droughts,
- rising sea levels.
- damage to existing ecosystems and biodiversity.

There may also be some positive impacts, such as fewer very cold days.

Although the type and magnitude of impacts are uncertain, immediate action is required to prepare for and manage these impacts.

10.3 Statutory Context

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) also sets out provisions for climate change within Section 10 (2) (n). This includes requirements to:

- (i) reduce energy demand in response to the likelihood of increases in energy and other costs due to long-term decline in non-renewable resources,
- (ii) reduce anthropogenic (manmade) greenhouse gas emissions, and
- (iii) address the necessity of adaptation to climate change; in particular, having regard to location, layout and design of new development.

10.4 Policy Context

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1992)

A range of international climate change agreements and frameworks have been approved that provide information on climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptations. The work of the UNFCCC provides countries with detailed technical information, including current and future climate change projections, which enables them to determine practical adaptation actions to improve their long term resilience.

Linked to the work of the UNFCCC – The Kyoto Protocol was adopted in Kyoto, Japan, on 11 December 1997 and took effect from 16th February 2005. It sets binding targets for 37

industrialised countries and the European Community for reducing emissions. Additionally, ‘The Paris Agreement’ was agreed on 12 December 2015. All 196 members under the umbrella of the UNFCCC agreed to hold the increase in global temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to keep the more stringent target of below 1.5 degrees in sight. The European Union and its Member States provide funding and support to climate change adaptation in countries within the UNFCCC.

European Union Adaptation Strategy (2013)

The European Union published its Adaptation Strategy in April 2013 with the overall aim of increasing climate resilience across Europe. Through increased coordination and providing a more consolidated approach, the Adaptation Strategy will enhance the preparedness and effectiveness of all governance levels to respond to the impacts of climate change

The Strategy is focused on three key objectives:

- Promoting action by Member States
- ‘Climate-proofing’ action at EU level
- Better informed decision making

The primary adaptation initiatives promoted by the Strategy are achieved through the provision of mitigation and adaptation requirements within EU sector policies and funding mechanisms. The initiatives run across a range of areas including:

- infrastructure and buildings
- marine and inland water issues
- forestry
- agriculture and
- social cohesion

Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act (2015)

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 is the key policy instrument to address the issue of climate change in Ireland. The Act sets out a roadmap for Ireland's transition towards a low carbon economy and details mechanisms for the implementation of the 'National Low Carbon Transition and Mitigation Plan' (National Mitigation Plan) published on the 19/07/2017, to lower Ireland's level of greenhouse emissions and a 'National Climate Change Adaptation Framework' (National Adaptation Framework) final submissions accepted on the 27/10/17 and 27 submissions received, to provide for responses to changes caused by climate change – Both of which were submitted for approval in 2018. They will be renewed every five years and are required to include tailored sectoral plans.

The Act requires public bodies to actively consider mitigation and adaptation efforts, drawing on the objectives set out in the National Low-Carbon Roadmap, national adaptation framework and sectoral adaptation plans.

National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (NCCAF) (2012)

The Framework provides the policy context for a strategic national adaptation response to climate change in Ireland. It highlights the role of planning and development in implementing adaptation measures and recognises the benefits of wider stakeholder engagement in achieving climate change objectives at a local level.

The NCCAF provides an overview of challenges for sectors that are impacted from climate change, including:

- water,
- coasts,
- marine,
- agriculture,
- forestry,
- biodiversity,
- energy,
- transport,
- communications,
- insurance,
- heritage;
- and health

National Adaptation Framework

The National Adaptation Framework (NAF), due to be published in 2018, will set out Ireland's first statutory strategy for the application of adaptation measures in different Government sectors, including the local authorities. Submissions closed on the 27/10/17, 27 submissions received. The Framework aims to reduce the vulnerability of the State to the negative effects of climate change but also to promote of any positive effects that may occur.

The NAF will build on the substantial work already carried out under the existing NCCAF and ensure that climate adaptation in Ireland is brought forward in line with EU and international best practice.

National Mitigation Plan

The first National Mitigation Plan, published in 2017, represents an initial step to set Ireland on a pathway to decarbonising its economy. It is a whole-of-Government Plan, which covers the following core sectors:

- Electricity Generation.
- Built Environment,
- Transport and

- Agriculture

The measures set out in the plan lay the foundations for transitioning Ireland to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. In support of this, the Plan also includes over 100 individual actions for various Ministers and public bodies to take forward through its implementation. Action 20 is to finalise the wind Energy Guidelines, completion of same is awaited.

National Planning Framework (NPF)

Sets out the role of the planning system in facilitating mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and ensuring that sustainable infrastructure networks build resilience to climate change.

In this regard National Strategic Outcome 8 is dedicated to achieving transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society. This objective will shape investment choices over the coming decades in line with the National Mitigation Plan and the National Adaptation Framework noting that new energy systems and transmission grids will be necessary for a more distributed, renewable energy focused system, harnessing both the considerable on-shore and off-shore potential from energy sources such as wind, wave and solar and connecting the richest sources of that energy to the major sources of demand. Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

The RSES acknowledges that climate change is a global challenge which requires a strong and coherent response at national, regional and local level. Climate change will have diverse and wide-ranging impacts on the Eastern and Midland Region's environment, society and economic development, including managed and natural ecosystems, water resources,

agriculture, food security and bio-economy, human health and coastal zones.

EMRA will work closely with the newly appointed Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO's). The Dublin Metropolitan Region Climate Change Office (run by the four Dublin local authorities assisted by Codema) and the Eastern and Midland Region Climate Change Office (run by Kildare County Council) will be responsible for planning and actions regarding Climate Change mitigation and adaptation in their regions. Climate Action Regional Offices shall ensure coherence and coordination with the RSES when formulating regional climate change adaptation plans.

The following Regional Policy Objectives relate to Climate Change

RPO 7.30:

Within 1 year of the adoption of the RSES, the EMRA shall seek with other stakeholders to carry out an assessment of transport emissions in the Region to identify GHG forecasting and to analyse the emissions impacts of development in the Region.

RPO 7.31:

Within 1 year of carrying out a regional emissions assessment, EMRA shall compile and publish an emissions inventory and, in collaboration with the relevant departments and agencies, agree emissions reductions targets in accordance with agreed national sectoral plans and to support an aggregate 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 in line with the EU 2030 Framework.

RPO 7.32:

With the assistance and support of the Climate

Action Regional Offices, local authorities shall develop, adopt and implement local climate adaptation and mitigation strategies which shall address issues including local vulnerability to climate risks and identify and prioritise actions, in accordance with the Guiding Principles of the National Adaptation Framework, National Mitigation Plan.

RPO 7.33:

Climate Action Regional Offices shall provide support to the local authorities on the development, adoption and implementation of local climate action strategies (which can address both adaptation and mitigation). Ongoing support should relate to the specific actions, and obligations and timescales for same that must be undertaken by the local authorities in accordance with local climate change adaptation strategies and compliance with national policy.

RPO 7.34:

EMRA supports the National Policy Statement on Bioeconomy (2018) and supports the exploration of opportunities in the circular resource-efficient economy including undertaking a bioeconomy feasibility study for the Region to identify the area of potential growth in the Region to inform investment in line with the national transition objective to a low carbon climate resilient economy.

10.5 Integrating Mitigation and Adaptation into the County Development Plan

Climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies have been incorporated into the

core Policies and Objectives of the County Development Plan. This is to ensure that climate change has been consistently integrated into the policy themes addressed by this plan. Only those sources and impacts of climate change within the Statutory remit of the County Development Plan are included. The Draft 'County Meath Adaptation Strategy' explores potential methods of emission reduction and sets out adaptation options.

10.5.1 Climate Change Objectives

1. To support the implementation of the National Climate Change Strategy and to facilitate measures which seek to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by:
 - a. Reducing Meath County Councils emissions by 33% by 2020.
 - b. Reducing CO2 emissions of the county by at least 40% by 2030
2. To support the implementation of the National Climate Change Strategy and the National Climate Change Adaption Framework Building Resilience to Climate Change 2012 through the County Development Plan and through the preparation of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders
3. To implement the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy in regard to the following:
 - Compact development in locations served by public transport;
 - Control of speculative rural dwellings in the open countryside;
 - Increased residential densities adjacent to public transport nodes;

- Provision of 'live work' communities

10.5.2 Climate Change Mitigation

Mitigation is defined as any human intervention aimed at reducing harmful influences on the earth's climate system, including actions which actively reduce emissions and the creation or enhancement of carbon sinks. This can be achieved by using new technologies, making older equipment more energy efficient, or by changing management practices and consumer behaviour.

However, even with significant improvements to the efficiency of technology, energy demand will still remain high. It is therefore essential to progress towards an energy system based

on low or no carbon fuels. This means moving away from using conventional coal and gas-fired power to electricity generated from renewable sources, and examining new technologies such as carbon capture and storage.

10.5.3 Emissions sources in the County

County Meath completed a Baseline Emissions Inventory in 2012 to determine the major sources of emissions in the county. This generated an indicative picture of Meath's current and projected energy footprint, which equated to a total of 1,453 CO₂ equivalent kilotons.

The sector split of the total emissions is as follows:

Sector	Proportion of Total Emissions
Transport	28.8 %
Agriculture	24.1%
Residential	23.9 %
Industry	14.6 %
Services	7.5 %
Meath County Council	1.2 %

The proportion of emissions split between the different sectors broadly aligns with the results from the National Ireland Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, but with a slightly higher allocation for transport. This is because the number of cars in County Meath is marginally higher than the national average.

10.5.4 Transport

The transport sector is the biggest contributor of GHG emissions in County Meath, The predominant source of this is private vehicle travel, with the majority of the emissions

originating from the use of petroleum based fuels - the combustion of which produces carbon and nitrogen dioxide. The County has the highest rates of outbound commuting in the Country¹ much of which is car based.

Encouraging people to move towards a higher uptake of public and active transport will therefore be critical if the emissions from this sector are going to be reduced.

The following areas of mitigation have therefore been addressed in the County Development Plan:

¹ Outside the Dublin Authorities.

Mitigation Strategy	Associated Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the efficiency of the transport system and reducing the need for car ownership. Promoting the development of 'live work' communities, Focus on consolidation, brownfield, infill development close to public transport nodes 	<p>MOV POL 1: To support and facilitate the integration of land use with transportation infrastructure, through the development of sustainable compact settlements which are well served by public transport.</p> <p>CS POL 1: To promote and facilitate the development of sustainable communities in the County by managing the level of growth in each settlement to ensure future growth is in accordance with the Core Strategy and County Settlement Hierarchy in order to deliver compact urban areas and sustainable rural communities.</p> <p>CS OBJ 4: To achieve more compact growth by promoting the development of infill and brownfield/ regeneration sites and the redevelopment of underutilised land within and close to the existing built up footprint of existing settlements in preference to edge of centre locations.</p> <p>MOV POL 3: To promote sustainable land use planning measures which facilitate transportation efficiency, economic returns on transport investment, minimisation of environmental impacts and a general shift towards the greater use of public transportation throughout the County.</p> <p>MOV POL 4: To promote higher residential development densities in settlement centres along public transport corridors, that are not located in areas sensitive to flooding, or will increase temperatures of urban areas.</p> <p>MOV POL 9: To ensure that the design and planning of transport infrastructure and services accords with the principles of sustainable safety, in order that the widest spectrum of needs, including pedestrians, cyclists, the ageing population and those with mobility impairments are taken into account.</p> <p>MOV POL 11: To facilitate in conjunction with relevant statutory agencies alternative transport modes to the private car, including enhanced delivery of public transport services along regional corridors (as defined in the NTA's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035); frequent local bus services linking residential areas to District Centres and Town Centres, and which also serve shopping areas, employment areas and other activity centres, and connecting to key transport interchange points.</p> <p>MOV POL 13: To promote and support the provision of Park-and-Ride facilities which improve public transport accessibility without exacerbating road congestion, or which cause increased car travel distances, at appropriate locations within the County.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the infrastructure necessary for people to be able to work from home or from local technology hubs, to reduce the need for outbound commuting 	<p>INF POL 54: To facilitate the delivery of a high capacity Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure and broadband network and digital broadcasting throughout the County.</p> <p>INF POL 55: To seek to have appropriate modern ICT, including open access fibre connections in all new developments and a multiplicity of carrier neutral ducting installed during significant public infrastructure works such as roads, rail, water and sewerage, where feasible.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging greater uptake of public transport in the region 	<p>MOV POL 4: To promote higher residential development densities in settlement centres along public transport corridors, that are not located in areas sensitive to flooding, or will increase temperatures of urban areas.</p> <p>MOV POL 6: To promote, facilitate and advance the delivery of Phase II of the Navan railway line project and associated rail services in cooperation with other relevant agencies.</p> <p>MOV POL 7: To support the DART Expansion Programme including new infrastructure and electrification of existing lines including provision of electrified services to Drogheda, Maynooth, and the M3 Parkway, on the Maynooth/Sligo Line.</p>

	<p>MOV POL 8: To cooperate with the NTA and other relevant agencies to have ongoing reviews of the network of bus routes in Meath, to support and encourage public transport operators to provide improved bus services in, and through, the County.</p> <p>MOV POL 10: 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.</p> <p>MOV OBJ 2: To improve, in conjunction with the NTA and Irish Rail, facilities at existing stations.</p> <p>MOV OBJ 4: To facilitate and encourage the upgrading of existing railway stations, and protect, as required, lands necessary for the upgrading of existing railway lines or stations or the provision of new railway stations throughout the County.</p> <p>MOV OBJ 9: To provide bus priority measures on existing and planned road infrastructure, where appropriate, in collaboration with the NTA, Bus Éireann and TII (where relevant).</p> <p>MOV OBJ 10: 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.</p> <p>MOV OBJ 12: To deliver, in conjunction with the NTA and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport a Public Transportation Hub in Navan to accommodate national, commuter, regional and local bus services.</p> <p>MOV POL 13: To promote and support the provision of Park-and-Ride facilities which improve public transport accessibility without exacerbating road congestion, or which cause increased car travel distances, at appropriate locations within the County.</p> <p>MOV OBJ 21: To provide public transport interchange facilities, including facilities for taxis, at appropriate points on the public transport network particularly in the main urban centres in cooperation with the NTA.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging greater uptake of active transport in the region 	<p>MOV POL 17: To identify and seek to implement a strategic, coherent and high-quality cycle and walking network across the County that is integrated with public transport and interconnected with cultural, recreational, retail, educational and employment destinations and attractions.</p> <p>MOV POL 18: To support the provision of a long distance inter-connecting walking/cycling route(s) between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland.</p> <p>MOV POL 19: To support the NTA in the development of a strategic pedestrian network plan for the main urban centres of the County.</p> <p>MOV POL 20: To encourage, where appropriate, the incorporation of safe and efficient cycleways, accessible footpaths and pedestrian routes into the design schemes for town centres/neighbourhood centres, residential, educational, employment, recreational developments and other uses.</p> <p>MOV POL 21: To require that adequate facilities for the secure parking of bicycles be provided at convenient locations close to public transport nodes and public transport interchanges.</p> <p>MOV POL 22: To prioritise the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists in proximity to public transport nodes.</p> <p>MOV OBJ 25: To implement the recommendations of the NTA strategy with regard to walking and cycling infrastructure.</p>

	<p>MOV OBJ 26: To revise road junction layouts, where appropriate, to provide dedicated pedestrian crossings, reduce pedestrian crossing distances, provide more direct pedestrian routes, and reduce the speed of turning traffic.</p> <p>MOV OBJ 27: To implement at appropriate locations pedestrian permeability schemes and enhancements.</p> <p>MOV OBJ 28: To request the submission of pedestrian permeability plans as part of new housing developments.</p> <p>MOV OBJ 29: To implement at appropriate locations pedestrianisation schemes, particularly in central areas of high pedestrian footfall, such as core retail areas.</p> <p>MOV OBJ 30: To continue the development of a network of Greenways in the County in accordance with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport Strategy for Future Development of Greenways.</p> <p>MOV OBJ 31: To engage in the Compulsory Purchase Order process when required in order to facilitate the timely delivery of the Greenway programme within the County.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the uptake of electric vehicles 	<p>MOV POL 16: To support the provision of electricity charging infrastructure for electrical vehicles both on street and in new developments in accordance with car parking standards and best practice.</p> <p>MOV OBJ 23: To facilitate the provision of electricity charging infrastructure for electric vehicles both on street and in new developments in accordance with car parking standards and best practice.</p> <p>MOV OBJ 24: To liaise and collaborate with relevant agencies to support and encourage the growth of electric vehicles and EBikes with support facilities/infrastructure, through a roll-out of additional electric charging points in collaboration with relevant agencies at appropriate locations including retrofit of charging points in existing urban centres and park and ride facilities.</p>

10.5.5 Agriculture and Land Use

all of the previously stored carbon back into the atmosphere.

Agriculture is the second biggest producer of greenhouse gas emissions, owing to high proportion of both arable and livestock farming occurring in the county. On a farm by farm basis, total emissions vary significantly depending on the nature of outputs produced, farming practices employed, and natural factors such as weather, topography, and hydrology.

Land use change can also be significant. Trees play a very important part in the carbon cycle, absorbing and storing significant quantities of carbon. Deforesting an area for agricultural purposes removes this benefit, but also releases

Mitigation Strategy	Associated Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of environmentally sustainable approach to agricultural practices 	<p>RUR POL 17: To maintain a vibrant and healthy agricultural sector based on the principles of sustainable development whilst at the same time finding alternative employment in or close to rural areas to sustain rural communities.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining and improving the quality of peatland to reduce their emissions 	<p>HER POL 45: To ensure that peatland areas which are designated (or proposed for designation) as NHAs, SACs or SPAs are conserved for their ecological, climate regulation, archaeological, cultural and educational significance.</p>

10.5.6 Residential

Greenhouse gas emissions produced by the residential sector predominantly arise from the activities and processes necessary for heating homes and for producing electricity. Direct residential consumption of primary oils (natural gas, heating oil, coal, kerosene, peat etc.) make up a significant proportion of overall emissions, but CO₂ emissions associated with

the generation of electric power for household use, including electricity-related losses are also very high.

Building energy standards in residential buildings need to be improved with objectives and policies needed to promote and incentivise reduction and efficiency in residential electricity and energy usage.

Mitigation Strategy	Associated Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and facilitate energy efficient building design, environmentally sustainable layout and locations 	<p>INF POL 37: To seek to improve the energy efficiency of the County's existing building stock in line with good architectural conservation practice and to promote energy efficiency and conservation in the design and development of all new buildings in the County, in accordance with the Building Regulations Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Energy).</p> <p>INF POL 38: To encourage that new development proposals maximise energy efficiency through siting, layout, design and incorporate best practice in energy technologies, conservation and smart technology.</p> <p>INF POL 39: To encourage the attainment of high standards of energy efficiency and environmental sustainability in development.</p> <p>INF POL 40: To support and encourage pilot schemes which promote innovative ways to incorporate energy efficiency.</p> <p>INF OBJ 43: To require, where feasible and practicable, the provision of Photovoltaic solar panels in new residential developments, commercial developments, and public buildings for electricity generation/storage and/or water heating purposes so as to minimise carbon emissions and reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels and reduce energy costs.</p> <p>INF OBJ 49: To support the use of heat pumps as an alternative to gas boilers, where appropriate, for domestic and commercial development</p>

	<p>SH POL 7: To encourage and foster the creation of attractive, mixed use, sustainable communities that include a suitable mix of housing types and tenures with supporting facilities, amenities, and services that meet the needs of the entire community and accord with the principles of universal design, in so far as practicable.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the use of lower carbon fuels in the home. 	<p>INF POL 44: To support Sustainable Energy Communities and local community group initiatives to develop clean energy opportunities within the county.</p> <p>INF OBJ 40: To seek to reduce reliance on fossil fuels in the County by reducing the energy demand of existing buildings, in particular residential dwellings.</p> <p>INF OBJ 41: To promote the generation and supply of low carbon and renewable energy alternatives, having regard to the opportunities offered by the settlement hierarchy of the County and the built environment.</p> <p>INF OBJ 42: To support the recording and monitoring of renewable energy potential in the County in partnership with other stakeholders including the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI).</p> <p>INF OBJ 43: To require, where feasible and practicable, the provision of Photovoltaic solar panels in new residential developments, commercial developments, and public buildings for electricity generation/storage and/or water heating purposes so as to minimise carbon emissions and reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels and reduce energy costs.</p>

10.5.7 Industry and Services

Nationally, the main source of greenhouse gases generated from the industrial and commercial sectors arises from the combustion of fuels used in manufacturing, industrial process emissions and the release of fluorinated gas emissions. Public lighting constitutes a significant proportion of the Councils own energy use.

Although the industrial and commercial sectors are large consumers of energy, there a number of options available to help reduce emissions substantially. These include an increase in the uptake of low-carbon and energy efficient technology, and a transition to low carbon energy supplies.

Mitigation Strategy	Associated Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and facilitate energy efficient building design, operations, environmentally sustainable layout and locations 	<p>ED POL 15: To seek to support and facilitate both existing and new businesses who seek to maximise the re-use and recycling of resources, create new business models and promote innovation and efficiency.</p> <p>INF POL 37: To seek to improve the energy efficiency of the County's existing building stock in line with good architectural conservation practice and to promote energy efficiency and conservation in the design and development of all new buildings in the County, in accordance with the Building Regulations Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Energy).</p> <p>INF POL 38: To encourage that new development proposals maximise energy efficiency through siting, layout, design and incorporate best practice in energy technologies, conservation and smart technology.</p>

	<p>INF POL 39: To encourage the attainment of high standards of energy efficiency and environmental sustainability in development.</p> <p>INF POL 40: To support and encourage pilot schemes which promote innovative ways to incorporate energy efficiency.</p> <p>ED OBJ 69: To work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to ensure that a sustainable approach is taken to enterprise development and employment creation across all sectors of the Meath economy in accordance with the Green Economy national frameworks relevant to each sector.</p> <p>ED OBJ 70: Engage with all relevant government stakeholders, enterprise agencies and sectoral representatives in pursuing 'green' approaches to economic development, and actively collaborate with key industry and educational bodies to promote Meath based initiatives across the economic sectors.</p> <p>INF OBJ 43: To require, where feasible and practicable, the provision of Photovoltaic solar panels in new residential developments, commercial developments, and public buildings for electricity generation/storage and/or water heating purposes so as to minimise carbon emissions and reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels and reduce energy costs.</p> <p>INF OBJ 49: To support the use of heat pumps as an alternative to gas boilers, where appropriate, for domestic and commercial development</p> <p>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.</p>
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10.5.8 Energy

Although emissions from the energy sector are not directly included in the inventory above, indirectly many of the previously discussed emissions sources (particularly the residential and industrial/service sectors) arise from the

production of electricity from non-renewable sources. The burning of fossil fuels for electricity generation is a major source of emissions.

Policies and Objectives therefore need to focus on reducing demand and need for fossil fuels and increase uptake of renewable energies.

Mitigation Strategy	Associated Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the uptake of more renewable energy sources 	<p>INF POL 34: To promote sustainable energy sources, locally based renewable energy alternatives, where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or local amenities.</p> <p>INF POL 35: To seek a reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources utilising the natural resources of the County in an environmentally acceptable manner consistent with best practice and planning principles.</p> <p>INF POL 41: To encourage the development of wind energy, in accordance with Government policy and having regard to the Landscape Character Assessment of the County and the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006) or any revisions thereof.</p>

INF POL 42:

To support the identification, in conjunction with EMRA, of Strategic Energy Zones, areas suitable to accommodate large energy generating projects within the Eastern and Midlands Regional area.

INF POL 44:

To support Sustainable Energy Communities and local community group initiatives to develop clean energy opportunities within the county.

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.

INF OBJ 41:

To promote the generation and supply of low carbon and renewable energy alternatives, having regard to the opportunities offered by the settlement hierarchy of the County and the built environment.

INF OBJ 42:

To support the recording and monitoring of renewable energy potential in the County in partnership with other stakeholders including the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI).

INF OBJ 43:

To require, where feasible and practicable, the provision of Photovoltaic solar panels in new residential developments, commercial developments, and public buildings for electricity generation/storage and/or water heating purposes so as to minimise carbon emissions and reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels and reduce energy costs.

INF OBJ 47:

To investigate the preparation of a Renewable Energy Strategy promoting technologies which are most viable in the County.

INF OBJ 48:

To support Ireland's renewable energy commitments by promoting the use of district heating systems in urban residential and enterprise developments, where such developments will not negatively impact upon the surrounding landscape, environment, biodiversity or local amenities.

10.6 Climate Change Adaptation

A changing climate will have specific impacts on County Meath, with the following predicted changes likely to be key concerns for County Meath.

- Mean temperatures are set to increase up to 1.7 °C by 2060, with the largest changes expected in the East of Ireland.
- In the extremes, the hottest summer days could be up to 2.6 °C warmer, with peak winter temperatures increasing 3.1 °C by 2060.
- Extended dry periods in the summer set

to increase between 12 – 40% by 2060.

- Frequency of heavy rainfall events set to increase by 20%.

Sea levels are set to rise by 0.55 m by 2050.

“Adaptation” means any adjustment to - (a) any system designed or operated by human beings, including an economic, agricultural or technological system, or (b) any naturally occurring system, including an ecosystem, that is intended to counteract the effects (whether actual or anticipated) of climatic stimuli, prevent or moderate environmental damage resulting from climate change or confer environmental benefits.

The climate change risk assessment undertaken

for County Meath, examined specific impacts across a number of sectors and the potential likelihood and magnitude of these impacts in both the short and long term.

These impacts are summarised below, in addition to areas where adaptation considerations are highlighted in the preceding chapters of the development plan.

10.6.1 Transport

Key Risks	Associated Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased damage to asphalt road surfaces in hotter temperatures Sea level rise increasing the risk of flooding and erosion to coastal roads Increase in magnitude and frequency of storm surges, increasing the risk of road damage and closure The occurrence of more frequent flood events after heavy rainfall events damaging and closing roads across the county and damaging road infrastructure such as bridges. This could have significant knock-on implications for businesses and industry in the areas affected. Increase in disruption to public transport following floods and road closures and damage to public transport infrastructure, such as busses and bus terminals 	<p>INF OBJ 23: To protect and enhance the County's floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas subject to flooding as "green infrastructure" which provide space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, and ensure that development does not impact on important wetland sites within river/stream catchments.</p> <p>INF OBJ 30: To ensure the County's natural coastal defences, such as beaches, sand dunes, salt marshes and estuary lands, are protected and are not compromised by inappropriate works or forms of development.</p> <p>INF OBJ 32: To Identify, prioritise and implement necessary coastal protection works subject to the availability of resources, whilst ensuring a high level of protection for natural habitats and features, and to ensure due regard is paid to visual and other environmental considerations in the design of any such coastal protection works. This will include the identification of coastal areas sensitive to climate change and consequent coastal erosion.</p>

10.6.2 Energy and Waste Infrastructure

Key Risks	Associated Objectives
<p>Energy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential increase surges in demand for energy to meet cooling requirements during heatwave Flooding may increase damage/disruption to energy infrastructure and supply Coastal infrastructure will be at a particular risk of damage, particularly with regard to an increase in storm surges Reduction in the capacity of distribution and transmission lines in higher temperatures, may reduce efficiency and increase costs Demand for freshwater for use in cooling is likely to rise significantly during hotter temperatures, which may affect already stretched supply <p>Waste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased risk of flood damage to waste facilities Increased waste arising's in the aftermath of flood and heavy rainfall events 	<p>INF POL 37: To seek to improve the energy efficiency of the County's existing building stock in line with good architectural conservation practice and to promote energy efficiency and conservation in the design and development of all new buildings in the County, in accordance with the Building Regulations Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Energy).</p> <p>INF POL 38: To encourage that new development proposals maximise energy efficiency through siting, layout, design and incorporate best practice in energy technologies, conservation and smart technology.</p> <p>INF POL 40: To support and encourage pilot schemes which promote innovative ways to incorporate energy efficiency.</p> <p>INF OBJ 14: To require the use of SuDS within Local Authority Developments and other infrastructural projects in accordance with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works.</p> <p>INF OBJ 15: To require the use of SuDS in accordance with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works for new developments (including extensions).</p> <p>INF OBJ 16: To ensure that all new developments comply with Section 3.12 of the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works V6 which sets out the requirements for new developments to allow for Climate Change.</p>

- Flooding of landfill sites can increase ground water surface water contamination

INF POL 19:

To implement the findings and recommendations of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment prepared in conjunction with the County Development Plan review, ensuring climate change is taken into account.

INF POL 20:

To require that a Flood Risk Assessment is carried out for any development proposal, where flood risk may be an issue in accordance with the "Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (DoECLG/OPW, 2009). This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to and from the potential development and shall consider the impact of climate change.

INF POL 24:

To ensure that flood risk management is incorporated into the preparation of Local Area Plans in accordance with 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)'.

INF POL 26:

To undertake a review of the 'Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Meath' in light of the completed flood mapping which has been developed as part of the Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study.

INF OBJ 25:

To require the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage techniques where appropriate, for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.

INF OBJ 27:

To encourage the use of Green Roof technology particularly on apartment, commercial, leisure and educational buildings.

INF POL 29:

To facilitate the provision of new, or the reinforcement of existing flood defences and protection measures where necessary and in particular to support the implementation of flood schemes being progressed through the planning process during the lifetime of the Plan. The provision of flood defences will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process. If adverse effects on European Site integrity are identified, alternative locations and/designs will be developed to ensure that flood defence structures will not adversely affect the integrity of European Sites, either alone or in combination with any other plans or projects. If, despite the implementation of mitigation measures, there remains a risk that the proposals will adversely affect the integrity of the European Sites, the project will not be progressed unless an alternative solution can be implemented which avoids/reduces the impact to a level that the integrity of the European Site(s) is(are)_unaffected. It is reasonable to assume that at the detailed design stage any potential for a project to impact on European Sites could, and will, be resolved through the exploration of alternatives locations or designs while still fulfilling their function/role.

INF OBJ 30:

To ensure the County's natural coastal defences, such as beaches, sand dunes, salt marshes and estuary lands, are protected and are not compromised by inappropriate works or forms of development.

10.6.3 Water Resource Management

Key Risks	Associated Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surges in demand for water with hotter temperatures may extend beyond capacity. Increased demand for water for cooling energy and industry infrastructure may be particularly significant. 	<p>INF POL 1:</p> <p>To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water in the development and upgrade of water supply systems to ensure that the County has an adequate, sustainable and economic supply of suitable quality piped water for all users.</p>

- Increased pressure on current abstraction points during droughts may be unable to sufficiently match demand.
- Water quality risks are most likely to be exacerbated during extreme weather events, particularly if timing coincides with fertilisation of agricultural land
- Increased risk of sewerage flooding overflow

INF POL 2:

To utilise the existing water supply in an efficient and equitable manner and in the best interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.

INF POL 3:

To seek to secure water resources for the County in conjunction with Irish Water from any project supplying water to the Greater Dublin Area from the River Shannon or any other water source.

INF OBJ 6:

To liaise and work with Irish Water's in their implementation of water Conservation measures.

INF POL 31:

To protect and develop, in a sustainable manner, the existing groundwater sources and aquifers in the County and to manage development in a manner consistent with the protection of these resources.

10.6.4 Built Environment: Residential, Business and Industry and Services

Key Risks	Associated Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surges in demand for water with hotter temperatures may extend beyond capacity. Increased demand for water for cooling energy and industry infrastructure may be particularly significant. • Increased risk of buildings overheating in the summer, particularly for new homes meeting strict energy efficiency regulations • Risk of household water disruptions during both drought and flood events. May lead to a decrease in quality which can cause health and well-being concerns • Existing drainage capacity may be exceeded with more extreme rainfall occurrences. • An increase in the prevalence of storm surges puts coastal infrastructure at risk • Increased risk of flooding may cause damage, damp and mould in buildings. • Severe flooding may also damage stock and machinery. Road damage and closures will also reduce accessibility and demand for shops and amenities, which could generate significant economic impacts. • Damage to/inaccessibility of critical amenities such as health services. 	<p>SOC OBJ 2: To promote and assist in the provision of lifetime adaptable housing units to meet the needs of all in society taking account of climate change.</p> <p>INF OBJ 14: To require the use of SuDS within Local Authority Developments and other infrastructural projects in accordance with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works.</p> <p>INF OBJ 15: To require the use of SuDS in accordance with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works for new developments (including extensions).</p> <p>INF POL 19: To implement the findings and recommendations of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment prepared in conjunction with the County Development Plan review, ensuring climate change is taken into account.</p> <p>INF POL 20: To require that a Flood Risk Assessment is carried out for any development proposal, where flood risk may be an issue in accordance with the "Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (DoECLG/OPW, 2009). This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to and from the potential development and shall consider the impact of climate change.</p> <p>INF POL 24: To ensure that flood risk management is incorporated into the preparation of Local Area Plans in accordance with 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management -Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)'. INF POL 26: To undertake a review of the 'Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Meath' in light of the completed flood mapping which has been developed as part of the Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study.</p> <p>INF OBJ 21: To restrict new development within floodplains other than development which satisfies the justification test, as outlined in the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 for Planning Authorities (or any updated guidelines).</p> <p>INF OBJ 14: To require the use of SuDS within Local Authority Developments and other infrastructural projects in accordance with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works.</p>

INF OBJ 15:

To require the use of SuDS in accordance with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works for new developments (including extensions).

INF OBJ 27:

To encourage the use of Green Roof technology particularly on apartment, commercial, leisure and educational buildings.

INF POL 29:

To facilitate the provision of new, or the reinforcement of existing flood defences and protection measures where necessary and in particular to support the implementation of flood schemes being progressed through the planning process during the lifetime of the Plan.

INF OBJ 30:

To ensure the County's natural coastal defences, such as beaches, sand dunes, salt marshes and estuary lands, are protected and are not compromised by inappropriate works or forms of development.

10.6.5 Agriculture

Key Risks	Associated Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heat stress in plants may result in lower crop yields. Warmer temperatures may also introduce new and invasive pests and diseases for both crops and livestock Increase in animal stress due to both water shortages and heatwaves Irrigation requirements may increase during more frequent droughts Increase in crops loss/damage during floods and inaccessibility of farming machinery. Increased risk of livestock mortality, and loss of grazing land Water damage to fodder stores can decrease availability for livestock Damage to/loss of farm infrastructure during heavy rainfall and flood events 	<p>HER POL 43: To promote best practice in the control of invasive species in the carrying out its functions in association with relevant authorities including TII and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.</p> <p>HER POL 44: To require all development proposals to address the presence or absence of invasive alien species on proposed development sites and (if necessary) require applicants to prepare and submit an <i>Invasive Species Management Plan</i> where such a species exists to comply with the provisions of the <i>European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015</i>.</p> <p>RUR POL 17: To maintain a vibrant and healthy agricultural sector based on the principles of sustainable development whilst at the same time finding alternative employment in or close to rural areas to sustain rural communities.</p> <p>RUR POL 21: To work with the the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly and other relevant stakeholders in identifying areas of high value agricultural land in the County to address the need for sustainable food supplies. The consideration of future climate scenarios and water availability for agricultural purposes shall form part of this assessment.</p> <p>RUR OBJ 30: To facilitate the development of agriculture while ensuring that natural waters, wildlife habitats and conservation areas are protected from pollution.</p>

10.6.6 Ecosystems and Biodiversity

Key Risks	Associated Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in prevalence of invasive species in warmer temperatures, both through the spread of existing and introduction of new. Increased risk of loss of native species 	<p>INF OBJ 22: To ensure flood relief measures are suitably designed to protect the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites, and to avoid direct or indirect impacts upon qualifying interests or Natura 2000 sites that would result in adverse effects on site integrity.</p>

- Increase in risk of forest fires during drought episodes
- Increased risk of damage and loss to habitats during flood events and a significant increase in erosion rates
- Ecosystems in the coastal zone (and the services/functions they provide) are at a high risk of loss/damage

INF OBJ 23:

To protect and enhance the County's floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas subject to flooding as "green infrastructure" which provide space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, and ensure that development does not impact on important wetland sites within river/stream catchments.

INF OBJ 31:

To employ soft engineering techniques as an alternative to hard coastal defence works, as appropriate.

INF OBJ 32 :

To identify, prioritise and implement necessary coastal protection works subject to the availability of resources, whilst ensuring a high level of protection for natural habitats and features, and to ensure due regard is paid to visual and other environmental considerations in the design of any such coastal protection works. This will include the identification of coastal areas sensitive to climate change and consequent coastal erosion.

INF OBJ 35:

To prohibit development along the coast outside existing urban areas where such development is not adequately safeguarded over the lifetime of the development without the need to construct additional coastal defences.

HER POL 45:

To ensure that peatland areas which are designated (or proposed for designation) as NHAs, SACs or SPAs are conserved for their ecological, climate regulation, archaeological, cultural and educational significance.

HER OBJ 43:

To maintain and enhance our natural coastal defences to increase resilience to climate change.

HER OBJ 44:

To investigate how the County's natural coastal defences, can be enhanced to increase climate resilience of our coastal communities.

HER POL 43:

To promote best practice in the control of invasive species in the carrying out its functions in association with relevant authorities including TII and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

HER POL 44:

To require all development proposals to address the presence or absence of invasive alien species on proposed development sites and (if necessary) require applicants to prepare and submit an *Invasive Species Management Plan* where such a species exists to comply with the provisions of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015*.

10.6.7 Heritage and Tourism

Key Risks	Associated Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heat stress in plants may result in lower crop yields. Warmer temperatures may also introduce new and invasive pests and diseases for both crops and livestock • Increased risk of erosion and damage to heritage sites, decreasing tourist attraction following heavy rainfall and storm events • Increased risk of land damage/footpath erosion around popular sites • Loss/damage of coastal attractions-particularly for more vulnerable small businesses which are clustered here • Damage/closure to roads/rail, both within the county and in the surrounding areas, may limit the accessibility of Meath 	<p>HER OBJ 4: To encourage the management and maintenance of the County's archaeological heritage, including historic burial grounds², in accordance with best conservation practice that considers the impact of climate change</p> <p>MOV OBJ 55: To undertake a risk assessment of County Meath transport infrastructure to identify areas at high risk of climate change impacts (e.g. flooding), over the life of the Development Plan.</p> <p>MOV OBJ 56: To ensure that any transport maintenance and improvement strategies ensure future climates are considered, to allow appropriate selection of materials and prioritisation of road for repair</p>

² Heritage Council (2011). Guidance for the Care, Conservation and Recording of Historic Graveyard

CHAPTER 11

**Development
Management Standards
and Land Use Zoning
Objectives**

11.1 Introduction

This Chapter sets out the development standards and land use zoning objectives to be applied in the assessment of planning applications to ensure that development takes place in an orderly manner in the interests of the common good.

This chapter should be read in conjunction with the remainder of the Development Plan. Please note parking requirements for all development types are set out in Section 9. Section 4 which sets out general development standards should be considered in all cases when designing a development.

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SECTION 1

11.2 Statutory Context

Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended.

Section 34 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, sets out the process to be followed when seeking planning permission for the development of land.

Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, provides that guidelines can be issued at any time by the Minister to Planning Authorities regarding any of their functions under the Act and Planning Authorities are required to comply with any guidelines issued under Section 28 in the performance of their functions.

Planning Authorities are required to have regard to Ministerial guidelines when assessing planning applications.

Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016

This Act provides that certain planning applications for certain types of housing development¹ could be made directly to An Bord Pleanála. The associated regulations, the Planning and Development (SHD) Regulations 2017 came into effect in July 2017.

The Strategic Housing Development legislation was introduced as part of the Governments Policy- 'Rebuilding Ireland' and is intended to accelerate the delivery of large housing and student accommodation proposals.

11.3 Policy Context

This section is not exhaustive; however the principal documents which should be consulted are set out below. Further details can be obtained from www.housing.gov.ie.

- Design Standards for New Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018), Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.
- Urban Development and Building Heights, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018), Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019), (DMURS), Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government.
- The Planning System and Flood Risk Management (and Technical Appendices) – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009), Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government and OPW.
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages) (2009), Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government.
- Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines (2005), Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The following circular was issued since the publication of these guidelines:
 - Circular PL 2/2017 Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2005 – Local Needs Criteria in Development Plans.
- Urban Design Manual-A Best Practice

¹ Residential Development in excess of 100 units/student accommodation in excess of 200 beds.

- Guide (2009), Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government.
- Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2006), Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government. A number of circulars have been issued since the publication of these guidelines including the following:
 - Circular PL 5/2017 Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate change and Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006- Update on Review.
 - Circular PL 20/2013 Review of Wind Energy and Renewable Energy Policies in Development Plans
 - Circular PL 19/2013 Review of 2006 Wind Energy Development Guidelines
 - Circular Letter PD/3/08 Wind Energy Developments – Planning Permission and Grid Connections
 - Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, (1996), Department of Environment and Local Government. The following circular was issued since the publication of these guidelines:
 - Circular PL03/2018 Revision of Development Contribution Guidelines in respect of Telecommunications Infrastructure.
 - Retail Planning Guidelines (2012), Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.
 - Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines, (2012), Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.
 - Development Management Guidelines (2007), Department of Environment and Local Government.
 - Childcare Facilities Guidelines (2001), Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
 - Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009), Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
 - Urban Design Manual (2009), Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
 - Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (2000), Department of the Environment and Local Government. Further Guidelines on Part V of the Planning and Development Act were issued in 2003 and 2017. In addition, a number of circulars have been issued following the publication of these guidelines including the following:
 - Circular Housing 5 of 2017 – Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 – Guidelines January 2017, Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.
 - Circular Housing 20 of 2016 and Planning 4 of 2016.
 - Circular PL 10/2015 Part V – Implementation of Article 22(2)(e) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended – Validation of Planning Applications.
 - Quarries and Ancillary Activities (2004), Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Section 261A Supplementary Guidelines for

Planning Authorities (2012), Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

- Towards Nearly Zero Energy Buildings in Ireland - Planning for 2020 & Beyond (2012), Department of Environment, Community & Local Government. European Energy Performance of Buildings Directive Recast (EPBD -EU Directive 2010/31/EU) requires all new buildings occupied after the 31st December 2020 to be Nearly Zero – Energy Buildings (NZEB) and all new buildings owned and occupied by public bodies after the 31st December 2018 to be NZEB.
- Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings (2010), Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
- Bringing Back Homes Manual for the reuse of existing buildings (2018), Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.
- Best Practice Guidelines, Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities (2007), Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government.
- Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland (2009-2020), Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.
- Irish Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013), Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and Department of Housing Planning and Local Government.
- National Cycle Policy Framework 2009 2020, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.
- National Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Ireland 2009-2020, Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment.
- Government White Paper Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030, Department of Communications, Energy & National Resources.
- National Renewable Energy Action Plan, Ireland (2010), Department of Communications, Climate Change & Environment.
- National Climate Change Adaptation Framework; Building Resilience to Climate Change (2012), Department of Environment, Community & Local Government.
- National Mitigation Plan (2017), Department of Communications, Climate Change & Environment.
- The Building Control Acts, 1990 and 2014 and technical guidance documents, particularly Part L of the Building Regulations for Domestic and non Domestic Buildings, conservation of fuel and energy. Part M regarding universal access.
- Guidelines on Residential Development for 3rd Level Students (1999) and the supplementary review document of July 2005, Department of Education and Science.
- A number of circulars have been issued by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in relation to short-term letting as follows:
 - Circular PL 05/2019 Regulation of Short

Term Letting – New Rent Pressure Zone Designations

- o Circular PL 04/2019 New Regulation on Short Term Letting
- o Circular Letter PL 10/2017 guidance on Planning Applications for Short Term Lettings

11.3.1 Environmental Impact Assessment²

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is the process of examining the anticipated environmental effects of a proposed project - from consideration of environmental aspects at design stage, through consultation and preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), evaluation of the EIAR by a Competent Authority, the subsequent decision as to whether the project should be permitted to proceed, encompassing public response to that decision.

Circular letter PL 1/2017 confirms that an EIAR submitted to the EPA or other Consent Authorities on or after the 16th May 2017 must meet the requirements of Directive 2014/52/EU.

An EIAR is required to accompany a planning application for development of a class set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, which exceeds a limit, quantity or threshold set for that class of development. In the assessment of the EIAR of the proposed development (including the entire project), the relevant guidelines include the DECLG³ (2013) Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment.

The EIA Portal, hosted on the Department of Housing and Planning's website, is a central point for notification to the public on all

applications for development consent that are subject to an EIA, including development, works or activities, made across the country and under the various legislative codes. Further information can be obtained from <https://www.housing.gov.ie/planning/environmental-assessment/environmental-impact-assessment-eia/eia-portal>.

11.3.2 Appropriate Assessment

Appropriate Assessment is a focused and detailed assessment in regard to the implementation of a plan or project, alone and in combination with other plans and projects, on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site. There are two phases to the process, firstly the preparation of a screening report and if, following screening, it is considered that further assessment is required a Natura Impact Statement (Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment) must be prepared (Refer to Chapter 8- Cultural Heritage , Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure).

SECTION 2

11.4 Pre-Application Discussions

Section 247 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) sets out the formal procedure for prospective applicants seeking planning advice. The Planning Authority actively encourages pre-application discussions prior to the submission of any planning application.

The Planning and Development Act 2018 amended Section 247 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 to provide for at least one pre-application consultation for development of:

² Planning and Development Regulations 2017

Draft guidelines on the information to be contained in EIAR's were published by the EPA in August 2017.

³ Replaced by Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

- (i) more than 10 housing units (to include Part V) ;
- or non-residential development of more than 1,000 square metres gross floor space⁴,
- or (ii) such other development as may be prescribed.

Such consultations shall be held within 4 weeks of the date of receipt of a request for a meeting, unless extended by a specified period. The failure of the Planning Authority to comply shall not prevent an applicant from making a planning application. Regulations may be made with respect to this procedure.

There are assessments that may be deemed necessary to accompany planning applications including, but not limited to: Flood Risk Assessment, Landscape Impact Assessment, Archaeological Assessment, Architectural Assessment, Ecology/Biodiversity- including for example bat surveys. These requirements are decided on a case by case basis, and these are discussed with the Planning Authority at pre-application discussion stage.

Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audits (RSA) are required to accompany planning applications for major developments with significant potential to generate traffic and or which could have a significant impact on a major road, particularly national roads. When preparing the TTA's regard should be had to the provision of the NRA's 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges' and the 'Traffic Management Guidelines, 2012'. Where a Transport and Traffic Assessment identifies necessary on and off site improvements for the development to be able to proceed, the developer will be required to fund the improvements by entering into a formal agreement with the Council.

The requirement for a TTA is at the discretion of the Council but the following thresholds can be used for guidance purposes only:

- Traffic to and from the proposed development exceeds 10% of the traffic flow on the adjoining road;
- Traffic to and from the proposed development exceeds 5% of the traffic flow on the adjoining road where congestion exists;
- Residential development in excess of 100 dwellings⁵;
- Retail and leisure development in excess of 1,000 sq.m;
- Industrial development in excess of 5,000 sq.m, and;
- Distribution and warehousing in excess of 10,000 sq.m.

11.4.1 Small-Scale Projects & Rural Development

Clinics which facilitate pre-application discussions for smaller scale projects, including residential development of less than 100 units, non-residential development of more than 1,000 square metres gross floor space and rural development are currently held fortnightly. Further information and how to obtain an appointment are set out at www.meath.ie.

11.4.2 Economic Development

The Council seeks to positively assist businesses during the planning process by offering relevant advice and assistance for proposals of economic importance. The Council's staff are available to advise and assist potential investors. Pre-application enquiries for economic

⁴ Gross floor space is clarified as meaning the internal measurement of the floor space on each floor of a building (including internal walls and partitions), disregarding any floor space provided for the parking of vehicles.

⁵ Applications for 100 or more dwellings are decided by An Bord Pleanála as an SHD.

proposals are afforded priority. Decision making is expedited where possible. Further information and how to obtain an appointment are set out at www.meath.ie.

11.4.3 Strategic Housing Development (SHD)

Strategic Housing Development (SHD) applications are defined as applications for:

- The development of 100 or more houses on land zoned for residential use or for a mixture of residential and other uses,
- The development of student accommodation units which, when combined, contain 200 or more bed spaces, on land the zoning of which facilitates the provision of student accommodation or a mixture of student accommodation and other uses thereon,
- Development as outlined above or containing a mix of houses and student accommodation.
- The alteration of an existing planning permission where the proposed alteration related to development specified above.

The Planning Authority is statutorily required to facilitate pre-planning discussions in respect of prospective Strategic Housing Developments. The SHD provisions apply for an initial period, until the end of 2019. In accordance with the 2016 Act the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government may, by order, extend that period by a further limited period of 2 years, up to the end of 2021 to coincide with the timeframe of Rebuilding Ireland. However, prior to the making of such an order, and not later than 30 October 2019, the legislation requires that the Minister review the operation and effectiveness of the SHD arrangements and lay

before both Houses of the Oireachtas a report of the conclusions of the review. This review has commenced and outcomes of same are awaited. Further details regarding the SHD process are available from www.pleanala.ie.

11.4.4 Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID)

The Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006 provides that applications for permission/approval for specified private and public infrastructure developments should be made to An Bord Pleanála. These developments are listed in the 7th schedule of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and include major energy, transport, environmental and health infrastructure developments.

It is a mandatory requirement for a prospective applicant for planning permission for development listed in the 7th Schedule to enter into pre-application consultations with the Board and obtain notice from the Board stating whether or not the proposed development is regarded as strategic infrastructure development. For the purposes of these consultations, the prospective applicant must supply sufficient information to the Board to enable it to assess the proposed development in the light of the criteria set out for strategic infrastructure development.

Further details regarding the SID process are available from www.pleanala.ie

SECTION 3

11.5 Public Realm

Meath's built, cultural and natural heritage has an intrinsic value in defining the character of urban and rural areas and adding to their attractiveness and sense of place. Public realm

has a key role to play in this process. Public realm consists of all areas to which the public has access (such as roads, streets, paths, lanes, parks, squares and bridges). It includes the publicly accessible spaces between buildings, along with the buildings or other structures that enclose them.

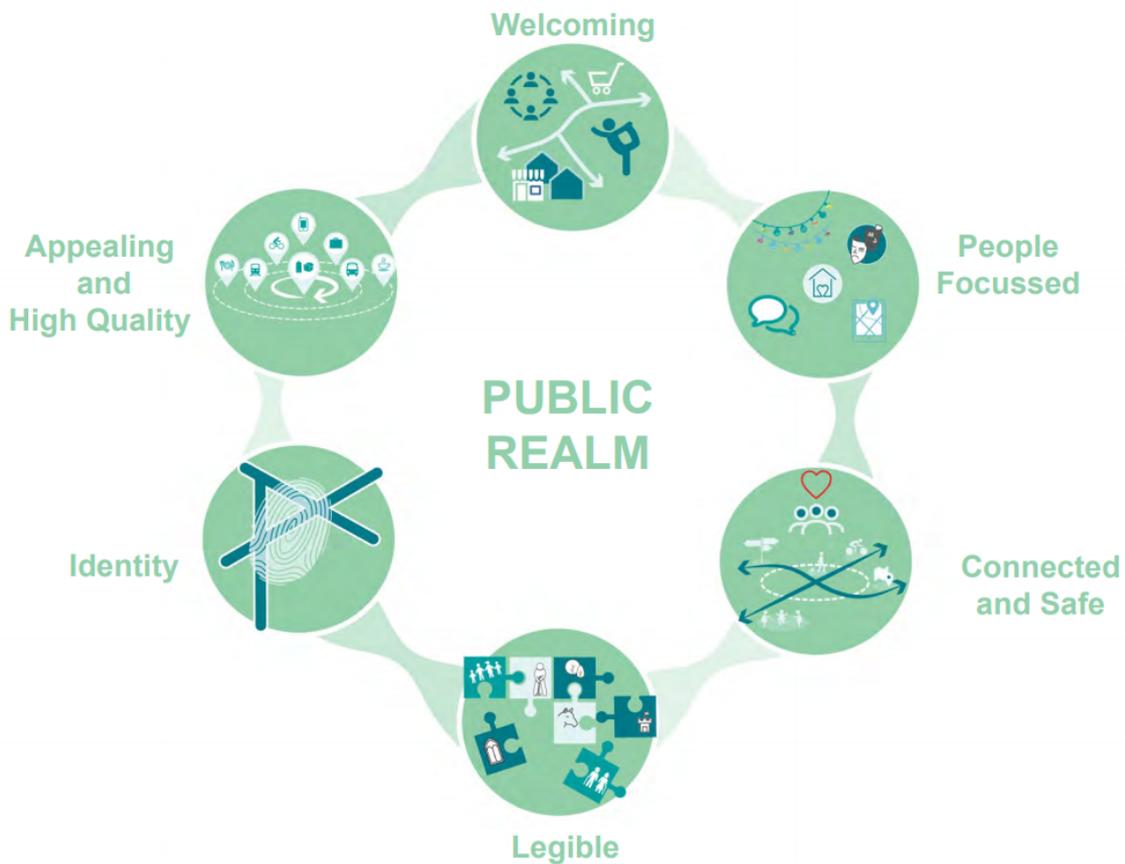


Fig 11.1 Extract from the Ashbourne Public Realm Strategy

The quality of the public realm plays a vital role in the creation of a place with an enhanced sense of identity, where people will choose to spend their time. It gives great scope for public art, community based activities, temporary interventions/events, 'greening' the town/village centres with landscaping and the inclusion of

creative lighting schemes. The public realm provides the context for highlighting the built heritage. Well maintained and presented buildings are an important component of the public realm.

There is now a better understanding of the economic, social and environmental benefits

that public realm can contribute to an area. It is acknowledged that a successful public realm is a component of a successful place. The importance of investment in public realm is recognised in the National Planning Framework, 2018 as one of the 'key factors in developing, promoting and investing in a sense of place and aligning the objectives of creating high quality with that of spatial planning.' (National Policy Objective 18 (a) refers). This is further reflected by the Governments commitment to public realm improvement projects in the Urban and Rural Regeneration and Development Funds.

Public Realm Plans have been prepared by Meath County Council for Ashbourne (Ashbourne Public Realm Strategy, July 2018)

and Navan (Navan 2030-Public Realm Strategy, December 2016). Public Realm Plans are nearing completion for Athboy, Bettystown/Laytown and Oldcastle and are due to be published in 2019. Public Realm Plans are also currently advancing for brownfield underutilised sites in Navan in need of regeneration (i.e. Flowerhill/Abbeylands and lands at Railway Street) where funding was successfully secured through the Urban Regeneration Fund. All of the aforementioned strategies are the result of input from multidisciplinary teams and extensive public consultation. These consultations are instrumental in exploring and identifying the best way to help an area reach its full potential.

4.2 What Makes a Good Town Park?

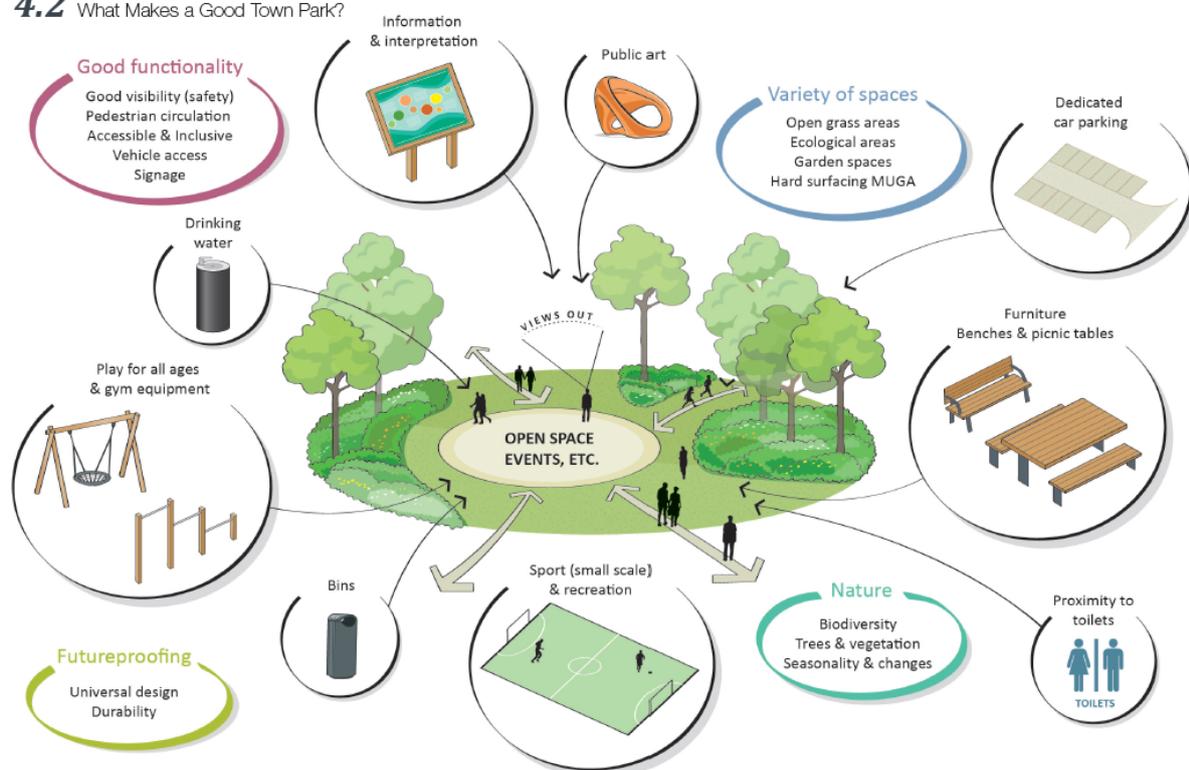


Fig. 11.2 Public Realm Plan extract.

The Public Realm Plans will be used as a tool to guide the development of these central areas into the future. These strategies seek to strengthen and enhance the attributes of a town or village which contributes to the distinctive physical and social character of the area. While these strategies are design-led, compliance with prevailing planning legislation and Development Plan context is required. These strategies will continue to be promoted and it is proposed to extend this programme to include other settlements such as Kells, Ratoath and Duleek.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 1

To support, be proactive and implement the objectives, actions and recommendations of the Public Realm Plans as completed.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 1

To prepare and implement Public Realm Strategies, throughout the County where appropriate, liaising closely with residents, community and local business groups and other relevant stakeholders.

DM OBJ 2

To enhance the visual amenity of existing town and village centres, minimising unnecessary clutter, and provide guidance

on public realm design, including wirescape, shopfront design, street furniture and signage.

DM OBJ 3

To implement the following Public Realm Strategies: Navan 2030, Ashbourne, Athboy, Laytown/Bettystown, Oldcastle, Flowerhill, Navan and County Hall/St Pat's Classic School, when complete.

DM OBJ 4

To prepare a Public Realm Strategy for Kells and Ratoath over the life of this Development Plan.

SECTION 4

11.6 General Standards applicable to all Development Types

11.6.1 Energy Efficiency

Mitigation of the causes and impacts of climate change is one of the cross cutting themes of this Development Plan. The importance of reducing energy requirements associated with the built environment is one of the challenges identified in the Climate Action Plan 2019. The issues to be considered in addressing this challenge include selection of building materials, type of buildings being constructed, orientation on site and life time energy demands of the building. The challenge presented in measuring the carbon footprint of new residential development

is currently being examined by EMRA in conjunction with other State Agencies. It is noted that ongoing research relating to the number of jobs located in towns and the size of the resident population forms part of this process. The 'live work' community concept, one of the key tenets of this plan represents a solution to the disconnect between where people live and work, this is particularly relevant to Co Meath which experienced the highest level of out-bound commuting in 2016.⁶

The Council's approach to encouraging gains in energy efficiency is based on the following concepts:

- Focus on compact sustainable growth as set out in the National Planning Framework;
- Increased energy efficiency in the design of buildings,
- Increased promotion of sustainable mobility measures in order to achieve significant future reductions in energy demands.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 2

Appropriate energy conservation strategies should be employed in location, design, mass, orientation and the choice of materials of all new and renovated developments.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 5

Building design which minimises resource consumption, reduces waste, water and energy use shall be incorporated where possible, in all new and renovated developments.

DM OBJ 6

Building design shall maximise natural ventilation, solar gain and daylight, where possible, all new and renovated developments.

DM OBJ 7

SuDS⁷ measures are required to form part of the design of all developments.

11.6.2 Access for All

Universal equality of access to all aspects of the built and external environment is an essential part of an inclusive society. Part M of the Building Regulations⁸ sets out standards to ensure that buildings are accessible to and usable by everyone, including older people, people with disabilities and people with children.

Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 8

The Council will seek to encourage the implementation of best practice standards with regard to access in both indoor and outdoor environments.

⁶ Census 2016

⁷ Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

⁸ Public buildings and residential dwellings

11.6.3 Public Lighting

Functioning public lighting that is well designed and suitably located is of critical importance to our urban communities.

It is important that trees and other vegetation do not impede the functions of public lighting units. Trees planted in close proximity to public lighting often block the light, rendering the light useless. This can lead to road safety issues, security concerns for residents and leads to demands on the Council to prune or remove the problematic trees.

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 3

All public lighting proposals shall be in accordance with the Council's Public Lighting Technical Specification & Requirements, June 2017, and the Council's Public Lighting Policy, December 2017, (or any updates thereof).

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 9

A separation distance of 5 metres between the lighting column and the outside of the crown is required for the lighting to work as designed. Trees or vegetation shall not be planted within 7 metres of a public light column.

DM OBJ 10

The design of all new developments shall take into consideration the layout of the proposed public lighting column locations and the proposed landscape design. Both layouts should achieve the 7 metres separation between all trees and public lighting columns.

SECTION 5

11.7 Residential Development

This section sets out the Development Management Standards for residential development in towns and villages.

Development Management Standards for rural nodes, rural dwellings and rural extensions in the open countryside are contained in Chapter 9.

Please note that parking standards- car and cycle applicable to residential development are set out in Section 9.

Section 4 general development standards and Section 15 land use zoning objectives should also be consulted.

11.7.1 Urban Design

Design of development must demonstrate compliance with relevant National, Regional and Local planning policy while promoting best practice in architectural design incorporating the principles of sustainability, energy efficiency and accessibility. Urban design is concerned with the relationships of buildings to each other and to the spaces around them. Good urban design

is fundamental to creating and shaping vibrant urban places.

The key principles of good urban design are set out in the Urban Design Manual as follows:

- Context
- Connections
- Inclusivity
- Variety
- Efficiency
- Distinctiveness
- Layout
- Public Realm
- Adaptability
- Privacy and Amenity
- Parking
- Detailed Design

Development proposals shall demonstrate compliance with the above principles.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 4

To require that all proposals for residential development demonstrate compliance with the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages) and the Urban Design Manual-A Best Practice Guide, 2009 or any updates thereof.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 11

A detailed Design Statement shall accompany all planning applications for residential development on sites in excess of 0.2 hectares or for more than 10 residential units.

The design statement shall:

- Describe the design concept;
- Clearly demonstrate how the 12 urban design criteria have been taken into account when designing schemes in urban area (as per the 'Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide');
- Set out how the development meets the relevant Development Plan Objectives, Local Area Plan, Masterplan, Public Realm Strategy etc;
- Provide site photographs;
- Provide an open space/landscape strategy which identifies any areas of ecological interest and sets out proposals for same.
- Set out how energy efficiency measures have been incorporated into the project design process (Refer to DM POL 2).

11.7.2 Density

In general the number of units to be provided on a site should be determined with reference to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' (2009) or any update thereof. This Plan seeks to promote the development of 'live work' communities by promoting sustainable development by creating compact, high quality developments. Higher residential densities will be encouraged within walking distance of town

centres and public transport infrastructure. It is acknowledged that there may be instances where specified densities cannot be achieved due to specific circumstances such as site constraints; however, all developments should strive to achieve the prescribed density in order to support the delivery of more compact development and to ensure a maximum return on investment in social and physical infrastructure.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 5

To promote sustainable development, a range of densities appropriate to the scale of settlement, site location, availability of public transport and community facilities including open space will be encouraged.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 12

To encourage a minimum density of 45 units/ha in the town centre of Regional Growth Centres and Key Towns and on lands in proximity to existing and future rail stations only on lands with an A2 residential land use zoning objective or as part of a mixed use development on B1(Town Centre)/C1(Mixed Use) zoned lands⁹. To encourage a density of up to 35 units per/ha elsewhere in these centres.

DM OBJ 13

To encourage a density of 35 units/ha on town centre and edge of centre sites in Self Sustaining Growth Towns and Self Sustaining Towns on lands with an A2 residential land use zoning objective and on B1 (Town Centre)/C1(Mixed Use)¹⁰ zoned lands as part of a mixed use development.

DM OBJ 14

In small towns a density of up to 25 units/ha is generally considered appropriate only on lands with an A2 residential land use zoning objective.

DM OBJ 15

In rural villages and rural nodes any development should take cognisance of the prevailing scale, pattern of development and services availability.

11.7.3 Plot Ratio

Plot ratio seeks to control the mass and bulk of buildings to prevent the adverse effect of over-development whilst ensuring the efficient and sustainable use of serviced land. Plot ratio is calculated as the gross building(s) floor area divided by the gross site area. For clarity, the gross floor area is the sum of all floor space within the external walls of the buildings, excluding basement, plant, tank rooms and above level car parking areas with the gross site area constituting all land within the curtilage of the site.

To ensure an appropriate level of development,

⁹ A maximum 30% of any development on C1 or B1 zoned lands can comprise of residential development, please refer to Chapter 2 Core Strategy for further details.

¹⁰ A maximum 30% of any development on C1 or B1 zoned lands can comprise of residential development, please refer to Chapter 2 Core Strategy for further details.

plot ratio standards need to be used in combination with other development management standards, including site coverage, building height, public and private open space, and parking provision. Plot ratio will apply to both new buildings and extensions to existing buildings.

Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 16

As a general rule, the indicative maximum plot ratio standard shall be 1.0 for housing at edge of town locations with an indicative maximum plot ratio of 2.0 in town centre/core locations.

11.7.4 Site Coverage

Site coverage standards seek to avoid adverse effects of over-development particularly in urban areas thereby safeguarding sunlight and daylight within or adjoining a proposed layout of buildings. Site coverage relates to the percentage of the development site covered by buildings and structures (excluding the public roads and footpaths) and is calculated by dividing the total area of ground covered by buildings by the total ground area within the site.

Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 17

Site coverage shall generally not exceed

80%. Higher site coverage may be permissible in certain limited circumstances such as adjacent to public transport corridors; to facilitate areas identified for regeneration purposes; and areas where an appropriate mix of both residential and commercial uses is proposed.

11.7.5 Building Line

In the context of urban development, building lines should be followed where appropriate. Where located along major roads with significant traffic flows, increased set back may be required to provide for greater amenity and safety of road users and residents. On existing roads, building lines may be required to be set back to accommodate future road widening.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 18

To seek to ensure that development is not carried out forward of established building lines. In deciding where a building line should be located, the form of development to which it relates will be considered.

DM OBJ 19

To seek to provide building setbacks along Motorways, National Primary, National Secondary, Regional and Local Roads to allow for future road improvements.

11.7.6 Separation Distances

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 20

A minimum of 22 metres separation between directly opposing rear windows at first floor level in the case of detached, semi-detached, terraced units shall generally be observed.

DM OBJ 21

A minimum of 22 metres separation distance of between opposing windows will apply in the case of apartments/duplex units up to three storeys in height.

DM OBJ 22

Any residential development proposal which exceeds three or more storeys in height shall demonstrate adequate separation distances having regard to layout, size and design between blocks to ensure privacy and protection of residential amenity.

DM OBJ 23

A minimum distance of 2.3 metres shall be provided between dwellings for the full length of the flanks in all developments of detached, semi-detached and end of terrace houses.

The relaxation of any of the standards set out at DM OBJ 20-23 will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and should not be accepted as the Council setting a precedent for future development.

11.7.7 Dwelling Design, Size & Mix

All residential schemes should ensure an appropriate mix of housing typologies and unit sizes to support the provision of a variety of household types and tenures that accord with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas.

The changing nature of the age profile of the County requires greater consideration of the housing needs of an ageing population. For those who wish to continue to live independently in their community but wish to downsize, it is imperative to offer a range of attractive and appropriately located accommodation choices which will in turn will enable the underutilisation of larger houses, particularly in more established areas, to be addressed. Design of accommodation needs to take account of the needs of persons with a disability.

Housing with long term adaptability and potential for flexibility allows for change as circumstances alter or families grow. Adaptability that allows for the alteration of the fabric of a building and flexibility which allows for spaces to accommodate a range of uses are key considerations in the design of a home.

A high standard of building design, specification of materials and detailing are required.

Contemporary designs are welcomed and will be assessed having regard to the context of the site.

All applications for residential development shall include a phasing plan. Phasing proposals shall ensure that open space and infrastructure to serve dwellings in a given phase e.g. public lighting, footpaths, and community facilities such as crèches and playgrounds are completed to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority prior to the initiation of the succeeding phase.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 6

To require that the unit typologies proposed provide a sufficient unit mix which addresses wider demographic and household formation trends. The design statement required at DM OBJ 11 shall set out how the proposed scheme is compliant with same.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 24

To ensure that all residential developments are of a high design quality, incorporating a suitable mix of unit types, high quality, durable external finishes and make a positive contribution to the visual amenities of the area.

DM OBJ 25

To ensure that new residential developments are designed in accordance

with DMURS to create low-speed, people friendly, environments.

DM OBJ 26

To encourage the use of bespoke design solutions which compliment the character of the built environment of the area.

DM OBJ 27

To support the Lifetime Homes guidance contained in Section 5.2 of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities' (2007) and require residential unit design to incorporate lifetime adaptability, where feasible.

DM OBJ 28

The design of any housing scheme shall have regard to the requirement for connectivity between residential areas, community facilities etc. The design of any walkways, lanes or paths connecting housing estates or within housing estates shall be of sufficient width to allow for the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists They shall be adequately overlooked and lit and not be excessive in length.

DM OBJ 29

To require that all applications for

residential development shall be accompanied by a detailed phasing plan which demonstrates the early delivery of key infrastructure associated with that scheme.

DM OBJ 30

To require the provision of EV charging points to serve residential development.

11.7.8 Building Height

The Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines, December 2018 require that Development Plans identify and provide policy support for specific geographic locations where increased building height is a fundamental policy requirement.

In this regard in accordance with SPPR1 of the Guidelines, the following locations have been identified as suitable to accommodate increased building height in the County:

- Dunboyne at both Dunboyne Central and Pace rail stations,
- Maynooth Environs,
- Drogheda Environs,
- Navan

Specific locations within these settlements in the case of Drogheda, Maynooth and Navan are identified by means of spot objectives in Volume 2 Written statements and Maps for settlements.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 7

To require compliance with the Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines, December 2018, and any updates thereof.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 31

To require development with increased building height at the following locations:

- Dunboyne Central rail station;
- Pace Rail Station;
- Maynooth Environs, Drogheda Environs and Navan.

Specific locations within these settlements in the case of Drogheda, Maynooth and Navan are identified by means of spot objectives in Volume 2 Written statements and maps for settlements.

In all cases all proposals for buildings in excess of 6 stories at these locations shall be accompanied by a statement demonstrating compliance with the Urban Development and Building Heights, Guidelines for Planning Authorities December 2018, or any updates thereof.

DM OBJ 32

In all other cases except for those locations identified at DM OBJ 31 there is a presumption against buildings

in excess of 6 storeys unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal complies with the Urban Development and Building Heights, Guidelines for Planning Authorities December 2018, or any updates thereof with particular reference to the availability of high capacity and frequent public transport services.

DM OBJ 33

In assessing planning applications for increased height the following criteria will be taken into account:

- The design of the proposed development should take privacy and overlooking into account.
- The height of the proposal should not interfere with the scale, amenities or visual quality of existing development.
- In general, there should be a gradual transition between high rise buildings and low rise buildings.
- Where proposals occur on areas of architectural sensitivity the proposal should integrate and enhance the character of the area. While also taking note of the topography, cultural context, locations of key landmarks and the protection of key views. A landscape and visual assessment for such development proposals shall be undertaken by a suitably qualified practitioner.
- When planning the redevelopment on larger sites the proposed developments should play a positive role in place-making, incorporating new streets and

public spaces. While also responding to its overall natural and built environment.

- The design of the proposal should be carefully modified to maximise access to natural daylight and to minimise overshadowing and loss of light.

11.7.9 Open Space

The provision of accessible and useable open space is a critical element in community building. Existing green infrastructure should be identified at the initial stages of the design process and should guide the design of an appropriate site layout. A landscaping plan submitted with an application should clearly illustrate how existing green infrastructure and opportunities to create more linkages have informed and been incorporated into the development layout.

11.7.9.1 Public Open Space

Public open space within residential developments should be designed so as to complement the residential layout and be informally supervised by residents. A variety of types and sizes of open spaces should be provided at suitable locations to cater for the active and passive recreational needs of children and adults of all ages.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 8

Each planning application shall comply

with the standards outlined in Section 4.18 of the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DEHLG, (2009) or any updates thereof.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 34

Public open space shall be provided for residential development at a minimum rate of 15% of total site area. In all cases lands zoned FI Open Space, G1 Community Infrastructure and H1 High Amenity cannot be included as part of the 15%. Each residential development proposal shall be accompanied by a statement setting out how the scheme complies with this requirement.

DM OBJ 35

Stand alone residential developments comprising of 5 residential units or less shall be exempt from the requirement to provide 15% open space. In all such cases the private amenity space serving each dwelling shall exceed the minimum requirements.

DM OBJ 36

In all residential development applications where the future population will exceed 1000 persons, open space in addition to

the 15% requirement set out at DM OBJ 34 shall be provided at a minimum rate of 3.2 hectares (8.0 acres) per 1000 population in accordance with Table 11.1. All such residential development proposals shall be accompanied by a statement setting out how the scheme complies with the requirements set out in Table 11.1.

DM OBJ 37

Narrow tracts of open space, (less than 10 metres in width), incidental pieces of land at road edges and areas of archaeological interest are not generally acceptable as functional open space.

DM OBJ 38

Existing and proposed areas of open space shall, where possible, be linked thus providing green linkages for wildlife habitats and improving walking and cycling permeability throughout the site.

DM OBJ 39

The location, siting and design of the open space shall have regard to the following:

- Be well designed and of a high visual standard, generally flat, so that it is functional and accessible to all;
- Provide for the retention of natural features, for example; trees, hedgerows and wetland sites, and incorporate same into public open space areas, where possible.

- Include proposals for drainage and landscaping of the public open space;
- Houses shall not be permitted to back onto open spaces;
- Provide high levels of natural surveillance and overlooking by as many houses as possible.

DM OBJ 40

All planning applications for residential development shall be accompanied by a landscaping scheme prepared by a suitably qualified professional.

DM OBJ 41

Areas dedicated for public open space in a residential development shall be transferred to the ownership of the Council where the development is taken in charge by the Council.

Proposed Use	Minimum Standard per 1000 population
Children’s play area	0.4 ha
Urban Parks/General Amenity Space	1.2 ha
Playing Fields	1.6 ha
Overall requirements	3.2 ha

Table 11.1 Public Open Space

11.7.9.2 Private Open Space

All houses should have an appropriate and

useable area of private open space, exclusive of car parking, to the rear of the front building line. The minimum area of private open space to be provided is set out in Table 11.2. Exceptions to this may only be considered in relation to the redevelopment of brownfield/regeneration sites where a focus should be on design led and performance based outcomes rather than specific absolute requirements in all cases.

Flexibility will only be permissible in response to well-designed development proposals.

Housing developments which provide private open space at the minimum standard throughout the scheme will be discouraged.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 9

Residential development shall provide private open space in accordance with the requirements set out in Table 11.2. Each residential development proposal shall be accompanied by a statement setting out how the scheme complies with the requirements set out in Table 11.2.

House Type	Minimum Area of Private Open Space to be Provided
One/two bedroom	55sq.m.
Three Bedroom	60sq.m.
Four bedrooms or more	75sq.m.

Table 11.2 Minimum Private Open Space Standards for Houses

11.7.10 Boundary Treatments

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 10

To require the provision of high quality, durable, appropriately designed, secure boundary treatments in all developments.

DM POL 11

To consider the retention of field boundaries where such boundaries are of ecological/habitat significance, as demonstrated by a suitably qualified professional.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 42

To require that boundaries between the rear of existing and proposed dwellings shall be a minimum of 1.8 metres high and shall be constructed as capped, rendered concrete block or brick walls, to ensure privacy, security and permanency. Alternative solutions will not be considered.

DM OBJ 43

To require that all rear boundaries within the development shall be a minimum of

1.8 metres high and shall be constructed as capped, rendered concrete block or brick walls, to ensure privacy, security and permanency. Alternative solutions will not be considered.

DM OBJ 44

Open plan front gardens will generally be discouraged and will only be acceptable in innovative layouts and where a high level of safety is achieved and services can be accommodated at a location which meets the needs of service providers. Open plan gardens will not be permitted on main access roads.

DM OBJ 45

In general, where provided, front boundaries shall be defined by walls or fences at least 0.5 metres high in keeping with the house design and to a uniform scheme design.

DM OBJ 46

In the case of residential development where the layout does not provide for front boundaries, there will be a general prohibition against the erection of front boundaries.

DM OBJ 47

To require the provision of concrete post and concrete panel fencing at a minimum as a side boundary between dwellings.

DM OBJ 48

To require the provision of walls at a minimum of 1.8 metres high capped, rendered concrete block or brick walls where residential sites abut public open spaces.

DM OBJ 49

All planning applications for residential development shall be accompanied by a schedule which demonstrates compliance with these requirements.

11.7.11 Naming of Residential Development

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 12

The name proposed for all residential developments shall be clearly linked with the locality in which the scheme is located.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 50

In all cases the name chosen for a residential development shall reflect local place names, particularly townlands or

local names which reflect the landscape or shall reflect culture and /or history, including names of historical persons who have some association with the area.

DM OBJ 51

Names shall be in English accompanied by an Irish translation. Name plates shall be fixed to walls and buildings where they can be clearly seen. Bilingual (Irish & English) street name plates, shall be erected on all estate roads at a location that is clearly visible.

DM OBJ 52

In order to assist the public and delivery personnel, all houses within housing estates or in street developments shall be provided with numbers and/or names, which shall be visible from the adjoining roadway.

DM OBJ 53

Applicants shall, as part of pre-application discussions include three draft name proposals in accordance with DM OBJ 50 and 51 for consideration.

DM OBJ 54

Three draft name proposals in accordance with above objectives shall be submitted to the Planning Authority as part of a planning application. The name shall be approved by the Meath County Council Naming Committee.¹¹

¹¹ Comprising of the Senior Executive Officer, Planning Department, Conservation Officer, Planning Department and County Librarian

11.7.12 Art Work

Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 55

All proposals for residential developments above 75 units shall incorporate works of public art into the overall scheme or make a financial contribution to the Council to provide the piece of public art in order to enhance the amenities of the local environment (Refer to Chapter 7, Community Building).

11.7.13 Light and Overshadowing

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 13

New residential development should be designed to maximise the use of natural daylight and sunlight. Innovative building design and layout that demonstrates a high level of energy conservation, energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources will be encouraged.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 56

Daylight and sunlight levels should, generally, be in accordance with the recommendations of Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice (B.R.209, 2011), and any updates thereof.

DM OBJ 57

Where taller buildings are proposed adjoining/adjacent to lower buildings, the Council may require that the developer submit daylight and shadow projection diagrams by a suitably qualified person(s) to appropriately demonstrate that the adjoining/adjacent properties will not be unduly affected by the proposed development.

11.7.14 Acoustic Privacy

Excessive transmission of sound between adjoining residential units can cause a nuisance to occupiers.

Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 50

To require that sound transmission levels in semi-detached, terraced, apartments and duplex units comply as a minimum with the 2014 Building Regulations Technical Guidance Document Part E or any updated standards, where appropriate a qualified sound engineer shall confirm that these levels have been met.

11.7.15 Apartments

Please note this section must be considered in conjunction with Sections 4, 9 and 14 of this chapter.

Policies:

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 14

Apartment schemes shall generally be encouraged in appropriate, sustainable, locations, accessible to public transport in the following settlements: Drogheda, Navan, Dunboyne, Kilcock, Maynooth, Ashbourne and Dunshaughlin.

DM POL 15

In towns and villages, there will be a general presumption against apartment developments however there are opportunities for infill developments and consolidation which would contribute to the regeneration of these settlements.

DM POI 16

All planning applications for apartments are required to demonstrate compliance with 'Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments', Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018) and any updates thereof. While these guidelines set out minimum design standards, the Council strongly encourage the provision of apartments above these standards, in the interest of creating attractive living environments and sustainable communities.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 59

An appropriate mix of units shall be provided to cater for a variety of household types and tenures. Apartment development proposals will be assessed having regard to the following requirements:

- Aspect- dual aspect units are encouraged;
- Mix of units- to cater for different size households;
- Floor areas and room widths;
- Private and communal amenity space;
- Floor to ceiling height;
- Car and bicycle parking;
- EV Charging points;
- Lift/ stair core access;
- Storage provision;
- Adaptability.

All planning applications for apartment development shall be accompanied by a statement which sets out how the scheme complies with this objective.

DM OBJ 60

A design statement is required to be submitted with any planning application for apartment development. The following minimum standards for floor areas, private open space provision and storage area requirements for apartments shall be complied with as set out in Table 11.3.

Apartment Unit Type	Floor area	Storage	Private Open Space
Studio	37 m ²	3 m ²	4 m ²
One Bedroom	45 m ²	3 m ²	5 m ²
Two Bedroom (3 person)	63 m ²	5 m ²	6 m ²
Two Bedroom (4 person)	73 m ²	6 m ²	7 m ²
Three Bedroom	90 m ²	9 m ²	9m ²

Table 11.3

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 61

Apartment development proposals shall also have regard to the following:

- A minimum of 33% of apartments in any apartment scheme shall be dual aspect;
- A minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.7metres in apartment units, at ground floor level;
- Private amenity space shall be provided, primarily accessible from the main living area of the apartment, generally in the form of balconies/ terraces. Vertical privacy screens should be provided between adjoining balconies;
- Communal amenity space shall be provided suitable for passive recreation;
- For apartment schemes of 10 or more, the majority of all apartments in a proposed scheme must exceed the minimum floor area standard for any combination of the relevant 1, 2 or 3 bedroom unity types, by a minimum of 10%.

11.7.16 Build to Rent and Shared Accommodation

The build to rent (BTR) and shared accommodation sectors are emerging sectors in housing provision. Specific Planning Policy Requirement 7 and 8 of the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments sets out the requirements in respect of BTR schemes including specific reference in public notices that a BTR scheme is proposed, supporting communal and recreational amenities must be provided and details of same must accompany any planning application.

The requirements in respect of shared accommodation or shared living/co-living are set out in Specific Planning Policy Requirement 9 of the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments.

Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 62

To require that all planning applications for Build to Rent Schemes demonstrate compliance with Specific Planning Policy

Requirement 7 and 8 of the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2018 or any updates thereof.

DM OBJ 63

To require that all planning applications for shared accommodation schemes demonstrate compliance with Specific Planning Policy Requirement 9 of the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2018 or any updates thereof.

11.7.17 a) Infill Sites in Urban Areas

Infill development relates to development located in gaps between existing buildings in built-up urban areas. The Council will support infill development on appropriate sites that make the most sustainable use of serviced land and existing urban infrastructure.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 64

Proposals for infill development shall accord with the following;

- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas- Guidelines for Planning Authorities DEHLG, 2009 and the accompanying document Urban Design Manual or any updates thereof.
- The Design Manual for Urban Roads

and Streets, 2013, Department of Environment, Community & Local Government or any updates thereof.

DM OBJ 65

Infill development shall take account of the character of the area and where possible retain existing features such as building line, height, railings, trees, gateways etc.

11.7.17 b) Backland Sites in Urban Areas

Backland residential development relates to small scale development located to the rear of existing buildings in built-up areas.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 66

Having regard to the requirement to protect the residential amenity and character of existing A1 residential areas backland site development shall satisfy the criteria for infill development, avoid undue overlooking and overshadowing of adjacent properties and shall respect existing building lines where possible.

DM OBJ 67

Backland development proposals shall avoid piecemeal development that

adversely impacts on the character of the area and the established pattern of development.

DM OBJ 68

In the case of backland development proposals in urban areas the existing dwelling and the proposed dwelling shall have minimum individual private open spaces of 48sq.m for one or two bedroom units and 60sq.m plus for three/four+ bedroom units.

11.7.18 Corner/Side Garden Sites

Corner Site/Side Garden development refers to sub-division of an existing house curtilage to provide an additional dwelling in existing built-up areas.

Larger corner sites may allow for a variation in dwelling design, however, proposals should more closely relate to adjacent dwellings, albeit with a modern design in order to avoid a pastiche development. At the discretion of the Planning Authority there may be some relaxation in private open space and car parking standards for this type of proposal.

Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 69

To require corner site /side garden development proposals to have regard

to the following criteria: Size, design, layout, building line and the relationship with existing dwellings and immediately adjacent properties; External finishes; Accommodation standards for the occupants; Car parking for existing and proposed development; Private open space for existing and proposed development; Development Plan standards for dwellings; Side/gable and rear access/maintenance space, where possible.

11.7.19 Upper Floors/ 'Living over the Shop'

One of the guiding principles of the RSES 2019-2031 is to, 'Set out measures to reduce vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within urban centres'. It is desirable to maintain an element of residential use in or close to town centres as it provides night time activity. Further, a more substantial residential presence adds to the vitality and viability of a town centre. Unfortunately, residential uses in some of our towns and villages have become limited. As such, proposals for the residential conversion of the upper floors of retail and commercial premises will be favourably considered. Any proposed residential use must respect the historic fabric (if relevant), whilst also providing adequate residential amenity.

In recognising the need to protect the historic fabric of our towns/villages while encouraging people to live in upper floors of retail/commercial premises, it is not always possible or practical to achieve current residential

standards. In this regard, at the discretion of the Planning Authority and subject to protecting residential amenity, a reduction in open space and car parking standards may be considered for 'living over the shop' accommodation proposals particularly in town centre locations. Minimum standards in relation to overall floor areas, storage space and natural light must be complied with in order to protect residential amenity.

The Department of Environment has brought in exemptions in relation to vacant commercial buildings being converted to residential use (applies until 31st December 2021). In this regard, a manual was launched by the Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development in 2019 entitled, 'Bringing Back Homes', to assist property owners, the public, local authorities and the construction industry to develop vacant buildings. Further information can be found at www.housing.gov.ie

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 70

To require that these proposals accord with the relevant guidelines and standards contained in this Plan and should contribute positively to the renewal of these areas and to the established character and amenities of the area.

DM OBJ 71

To require that a separate and distinctive point of entry with an identifiable address be provided. Mitigation measures to address possible sources of external noise should be provided.

DM OBJ 72

To encourage residential uses in existing under-utilised or vacant building stock as a mechanism to combat vacancy in town centres.

DM OBJ 73

To require a high level of residential amenity ensuring natural light in living rooms and bedrooms and minimum standards are met in relation to overall floor areas and storage space requirements as set down in the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (DoHPLG, 2018).

DM OBJ 74

To allow a reduction in open space and car parking standards for 'living over the shop' accommodation proposals in town centre locations, subject to protecting residential amenity, where considered appropriate by the Planning Authority.

At the discretion of the Planning Authority and subject to protecting residential amenity, a reduction in open space and car parking standards may be considered for 'living over the shop' accommodation proposals particularly in town centre locations.

11.7.20 Student Accommodation

The demand for high quality student accommodation is increasing nationally.

DM POL 17

To promote the sustainable development of bespoke student accommodation at suitable locations in Maynooth Environs, Dunboyne and Drogheda.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 75

To require that all proposals for student accommodation comply with the Department of Education and Science Guidelines on Residential Development for Third Level Students (1999), the subsequent supplementary document (2005) and the 'Student Accommodation Scheme', Office of Revenue Commissioner (2007), or any updates thereof.

DM OBJ 76

To require that proposals for off-campus accommodation have regard to their proximity to existing or planned public transport corridors, cycle and pedestrian routes.

DM OBJ 77

To require that written confirmation of a 'Qualifying Lease' as defined in the Guidelines on Residential Developments for Third Level Students published by the Department of Education and Science in 1999¹² which demonstrates that the accommodation is let to students within the academic year.

DM OBJ 78

All permissions for student accommodation shall have a condition attached requiring planning permission for a change of use from student accommodation to other type of accommodation. These applications will only be permissible in cases where it is demonstrated that an over-provision of student accommodation exists in the area.

11.7.21 Amendments to approved residential development

Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 79

Where an application is made for changes to the design or layout of elements of a residential scheme, the duration of the permission shall be linked by condition

¹² supplementary review document in 2005

with that of the grounding permission. This is to ensure compliance with the Core Strategy and implementation of residential schemes in an orderly and integrated fashion.

11.7.22 Family Flat Extensions

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 18

The creation of a custom-built 'family flat'¹³ to be occupied by a member of the occupant family with a housing need is generally acceptable subject to site suitability and compliance with DM OBJ 80.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 80

All applications for family flat development shall comply with the following criteria:

- The flat shall form an integral part of the structure of the main house with provision for direct internal access to the remainder of the house i.e. not detached;
- The flat shall be modest in size and shall not have more than one bedroom (2 bedrooms in exceptional

circumstances). The unit shall not exceed a gross floor area of 50 square metres;

- The flat shall not have a separate access provided to the front elevation of the dwelling;
- There shall be no permanent subdivision of the garden/private amenity space;
- The flat shall remain in the same ownership as that of the existing dwelling on site. In this regard, the flat shall not be let, sold or otherwise transferred, other than as part of the overall property;
- The design proposed shall enable the flat to easily fully revert to being part of the original house when no longer occupied by the family member(s);
- If the site is not connected to public mains, the existing wastewater treatment system on site must be capable for any additional loading from the flat, and if not proposals should be submitted to accommodate the additional loading.

11.7.23 Extensions

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 81

All applications for residential extensions in urban areas shall comply with the following criteria:

- High quality design which respects,

¹³ May also be referred to as a 'granny flat'

harmonises and integrates with the existing dwelling in terms of height, scale, materials used, finishes, window proportions, etc;

- The quantity and quality of private open space that would remain to serve the house;
- Flat roof extensions, in a contemporary design context, will be considered on their individual merits;
- Impact on amenities of adjacent residents, in terms of light and privacy. Care should be taken to ensure that the extension does not overshadow windows, yards or gardens or have windows in the flank walls which would reduce a neighbour's privacy;
- Extensions which break the existing front building line will not normally be acceptable. A porch extension which does not significantly break the front building line will normally be permitted;
- Dormer extensions shall not obscure the main features of the existing roof, i.e. should not break the ridge or eaves lines of the roof;
- Proposed side extensions shall retain side access to the rear of the property, where required for utility access, refuse collection etc.
- Ability to provide adequate car parking within the curtilage of the dwelling house; In all cases where diversion or construction over existing sewerage and/or water mains is required, the consent of Irish Water will be required as part of the application;
- Extensions are subordinate to the existing dwelling with a presumption

against the size of any extension exceeding 100% of the floor area of the existing dwelling.

11.7.24 Home Based Economic Activity

Home based economic activity is defined as small scale commercial activity carried out by residents of a house or person's main residence, being subordinate to the use of the house as a single dwelling unit and includes working from home. The Council recognises that such working arrangements can benefit individuals, families and the local community in addition to contributing to more sustainable land use patterns by reducing the need for commuting. There is no objection to minor changes of use to allow for this provided the use remains ancillary to the main residential use, the applicant continues to reside in the house and the use has no adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring dwellings.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 82

In determining applications for developments involving working from home, the Council will have regard to the following:

- The nature and extent of the work.
- The effects on the amenities of adjoining occupiers, particularly in relation to hours of work, noise and general disturbance.

- Anticipated levels of traffic generated by the proposed development and the potential increased demand for parking.
- Arrangements for the storage of refuse and collection of waste.
- There will be a presumption in favour of this type of use in residential areas. However, such use will not normally be permitted in apartments except in the case of own-door units accessed from street level.

11.7.25 Waste Management

Regard should be had to the number of individual bins required to serve each residential unit at design stage and in particular the requirement for segregating waste for recycling and food waste, (Refer to Chapter 6 Infrastructure for further details)

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 19

All new residential schemes shall include appropriately sited and designed secure refuse storage areas, details of which shall be clearly shown in pre-application discussion and planning application documentation.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 83

In residential schemes, appropriately sized bin storage areas must be provided to the front of terraced dwellings in locations which are easily accessible by the householder. These areas shall be well screened and the design shall integrate with the dwelling.

DM OBJ 84

Apartment schemes shall make provision for waste segregation and recycling.

DM OBJ 85

In apartment schemes, bin storage shall generally be on the ground floor level of development, be adequately ventilated, screened from public view and adjacent to the block it serves. Where appropriate, the bin storage area shall be a separate structure to the apartment building.

DM OBJ 86

Shared bin storage areas shall be located conveniently for residents and collection service providers with appropriate security measures.

DM OBJ 87

Development proposals should ensure that production/management methods do not

give rise to environmental pollution, result in undue loss of amenity or be detrimental to public health.

DM OBJ 88

All development proposals of five or more residential units shall include a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) with planning application documentation.

DM OBJ 89

Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMP) shall focus on waste minimisation and optimise waste prevention, re-use and recycling opportunities.

DM OBJ 90

In the case of development which requires the removal of soil and stones, any removal requires the appropriate permits and disposal to authorised sites.

11.7.26 Short Term Letting

Legislation to regulate the short term letting sector, Planning and Development Act 2000 (Exempted Development) (No. 2) Regulations 2019, came into effect on 1 July 2019 which is applicable only in areas designated as “rent pressure zones” (please refer to chapter 3 Settlement and Housing Strategy to obtain further information on rent pressure zones).

These regulations are intended to address the ‘*impact on the private rental market by the use of residential homes for short-term tourism type letting in areas of high housing demand*’. Short-term letting is defined as ‘the use of a bedroom or bedrooms¹⁴ in a home as paid overnight guest accommodation for a continuous period of up to 14 days. Planning permission is now required to be obtained for a formal change of use.

Further details can be obtained from:

<https://www.housing.gov.ie/planning/private-rented-housing/new-regulation-short-term-letting>.

SECTION 6

11.8.1 Retail Development

Retailing has an important role in the economy of the County. Retail development is generally located at key locations in our urban areas and has an important contribution to make to the character and sense of place of urban spaces. It is essential therefore that retail development is of a high design quality and at an appropriate scale to the centre in which it is located. (Please refer to Chapter 4 Economy and Appendix 4 Retail strategy for further information)

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 20

To encourage the provision of new retail development in the County in accordance with the County Retail Strategy contained in Appendix 4, which will make a positive contribute to achieving the aims of the core strategy and the economic strategy.

¹⁴ Applicable to an apartment, house or rooms in a house, that is not a person's principal private residence

DM POL 21

To require that all retail development complies with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities in April 2012 and accompanying Retail Design Manual, or any updates thereof.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 91

Retail development shall be in accordance with the role and function of the settlement in which it is located. Compliance with the sequential approach must be set out in pre application discussion and planning application documentation.

DM OBJ 92

All retail proposals exceeding 1,000 sqm shall provide a detailed Retail Impact Assessment (RIA) and a Transport Impact Assessment (TIA) in addition to any other information deemed necessary by the Council.

DM OBJ 93

To require the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) in respect of all retail proposals on sites exceeding 0.5 ha.

11.8.1.1 Fast Food/Takeaway Outlets

Fast food outlets have the potential to cause noise, littering and can detract from the amenities of an area. Therefore proposals for new or extended outlets will be carefully considered, particularly in locations where a proliferation of such uses already exists. Chapter 7 of the Development Plan sets out the Council's policies and objectives in respect of its 'Healthy Meath Strategy'. An over concentration of such uses will affect the achievement of the objectives of this strategy.

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 22

To assess the appropriateness of any proposal for a new or extended takeaway/ fast food outlet on the potential cumulative effect of these uses on the amenities of an area.

DM POL 23

Give careful consideration to the appropriateness and location of fast food outlets in the vicinity of schools and, where considered appropriate, to restrict the opening of new fast food/takeaway outlets in close proximity to schools so as to protect the health and wellbeing of school-going children.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 94

To require that all proposals for new or extended fast food/takeaway outlets address the following as part of any pre- application discussion or planning application documentation:

- The cumulative effect of fast food outlets on the amenities of an area.
- Opening/operational hours of the facility.
- The location of vents and other external services
- Advertising signage
- External seating.

DM OBJ 95

To only consider drive-through restaurants in locations where development will not interfere with the free flow of traffic or detract from the amenities of an area.

Refer to Section 3 Public realm and section 11.8.1.2 Shop Fronts for further details.

11.8.1.2 Shop Fronts

Shop fronts make a significant contribution to the visual amenities of a settlement and many have strong heritage value which should be preserved.

The Council produced a 'Shop front and Signage Guidance' document in 2017 to assist designers of shop fronts and signage, which is available to download from www.meath.ie¹⁵ (Refer to Chapter 4 Economy and Employment Strategy).

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 24

To ensure new/replacement shop fronts are of an appropriate scale and design in order to integrate successfully with existing streetscapes.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 96

To require that proposals for new/ replacement shop fronts have regard to the 'Shop front and Signage Guidance' document, 2017 or any updates thereof.

DM OBJ 97

New/replacement shop front design shall respect the scale and proportions of the streetscape by maintaining the existing grain of development along the street and respecting the appropriate plot width.

DM OBJ 98

Generally, individually mounted lettering or hand painted lettering is required. Letter design shall be simple and legible.

¹⁵ <https://www.meath.ie/system/files/media/file-uploads/2019-05/Shopfront%20and%20Signage%20Guidelines.pdf>

DM OBJ 99

The choice of materials shall compliment the character of the building and integrate with the overall visual unity of the street scheme.

DM OBJ 100

The use of roll-down or external type security screens will generally not be encouraged in town centre areas. Where the provision of screens is considered imperative, the use of perforated external and back lit screens or translucent internal screens will be considered.

11.8.1.3 Local/Neighbourhood Shopping Facilities

Shops in neighbourhood centres in our larger settlements perform a key function locally providing services including convenience shopping, laundry, hairdresser, takeaways etc. The aim of providing such shopping facilities locally serve catchment areas within approximately 800 metres is to reduce the necessity to travel by car to the town centre to avail of basic services and thereby ensure reduced traffic congestion and improved sustainability.

Additional neighbourhood facilities may be required as part of large residential developments, these will be determined on a case by case basis have regard to the policies and objectives of Chapter 4 Economy and Employment and the Retail Strategy in Appendix 4.

In rural villages and nodes, these facilities often provide a focal point for the locality and can include post services etc

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 25

To enable convenience retail needs to be better met locally and to encourage the provision of local convenience shops at an appropriate scale in residential areas in urban areas where there is a clear deficiency in retail provision, subject to the protection of residential amenity.

DM POL 26

To encourage the provision of local convenience shops, exclusive of service stations, at an appropriate scale in rural villages and nodes where there is a clear deficiency in retail provision, subject to the protection of residential amenity.

Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 101

To ensure that the scale, design and proposed uses accord with the Council's Retail Strategy.

11.8.1.4 Service Stations

The role of service stations has become more diverse with the expansion from merely selling fuel to also providing convenience services and goods including functioning as rest areas. Ancillary uses include tyre repair, collection points for online retail activity and self service launderettes.

Proposals for new and extended service stations will be carefully considered and will not generally be encouraged within the core retail area of urban centres or in rural areas outside of villages and rural nodes.

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 27

Proposals for petrol filling stations in close proximity to the National Road Network shall have regard to the "Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities", Department of Environment Community and Local Government, 2012 and the Dangerous Substances (Retail and Private Petroleum Stores) Regulations 1979 to 2010 (or any such other relevant standards and legislation that may be enacted).

DM POL 28

Proposals for new and extended service stations will be carefully considered and will not generally be encouraged within the core retail area of urban centres or in rural areas outside of villages and rural nodes

and shall be located in all cases within the speed limit restriction zones.

DM POL 29

Service stations will not generally be permitted in/adjoining residential areas, unless it can be clearly demonstrated no significant effect on residential amenities by reason of as noise, traffic, visual obtrusion, safety considerations or fumes and smells. Hours of operation will be limited if a service station is permitted in a residential area. Proposals to demonstrate the above will be required to be submitted as part of pre-application discussion and planning application documentation.

Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 102

The following shall be submitted as part of pre-application discussion and/or planning application documentation for a service station:

- A high quality design including roof design, layout and external finishes to ensure it integrates and complements the surrounding environment. The layout should provide for safe pedestrian access to the shop and rest facilities.
- Adequate provision of rest areas and toilets accessible safely by pedestrians and cyclists.

- Where the development would be likely to have a significant impact on the historic or architectural character of the area, the use of standard corporate designs and signage may not be acceptable.
- A comprehensive landscaping scheme prepared by a fully qualified landscape architect.
- Any retailing component shall not exceed 100 sq.m. of retailing area and shall be restricted to convenience goods only. Where permission is sought for a retail floorspace in excess of 100sq.m, the sequential approach to retail development shall apply.
- Forecourt lighting, including canopy lighting, should be limited where possible. All external lighting shall be cowled and diverted away from the public roadway to prevent a traffic hazard.
- The placing of signs on footpaths, grass verges or any part of a public roadway will not be permitted. No advertisements or other structures, whether temporary or permanent, shall be placed on the forecourt which would interfere with the sight lines of motorists entering / egressing the site.
- EV Charging points for electric cars shall be provided with every new/extended service station.

11.8.1.5 Retail Warehousing

The retail strategy has outlined that there is no current need for additional floorspace of this type within the County. A very cautious approach will therefore be taken regarding

further such development over the period of the Plan, (please refer to Chapter 4 Economy Strategy and Retail Strategy contained in Appendix 4 for further details), other than completion of existing parks and areas identified in Volume 2.

Any retail warehousing development shall be restricted to 'bulky goods' or goods which are not easily portable by customers travelling by foot, bicycle, or bus (See Annex 1 of Retail Planning Guidelines 2012 for definitions of bulky goods), otherwise these developments could have a damaging material impact on the commercial viability of town centres. Ancillary products should not exceed 20% of the total net retail floorspace of the relevant retail unit.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 103

To ensure that retail warehousing is only permissible on lands identified in Volume 2 of this Development Plan for this use. All planning applications for retail warehousing shall set out clearly in the planning documentation how the proposal complies with the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012, this Development Plan and the Retail Strategy.

DM OBJ 104

Any retail warehousing development shall be restricted to 'bulky goods' as defined by Annex 1 of Retail Planning Guidelines (2012). Ancillary products shall not exceed 20% of the total net retail floorspace of the relevant retail unit.

11.8.2 Industrial, Office, Warehousing and Business Park Development

Building on the momentum of the successful implementation of the Economic Strategy and having regard to the need identified in the RSES to address the disconnect experienced most acutely in the Mid East between where people live and work the Council is setting out an ambitious programme for the delivery of a wider spread of economic growth throughout the County. Support structures are in place in the Council to encourage the development of quality enterprise development.

The Development Plan identifies a range of lands to accommodate various employment uses. It is intended that these areas will develop as high quality, sustainable working environments which will attract further investment. Therefore the Development Plan places significant emphasis on ensuring development proposals are of high design quality, suitably landscaped, provide good facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and include staff facilities. The choice of coloured cladding used should be most suitable to Ireland's natural landscape. The development of high quality employment development is a critical component to releasing and supporting the 'live work' community concept.

This section should be considered in conjunction with Chapter 4 Economy and Employment. Section 9 sets out the applicable parking standards for these developments.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 105

To require innovative contemporary designs for new industrial, office, warehousing and business park developments.

DM OBJ 106

That indicative site coverage for industrial/commercial development on greenfield sites is 50% coverage unless the design characteristics of the scheme, proposed uses and mobility management plan indicate support for higher site coverage.

DM OBJ 107

In town centre locations, in order to encourage and facilitate the development of a compact town centre, and to achieve desirable massing and heights of buildings, plot ratio and site coverage of 1.5 and 70% respectively will generally be the norm.

DM OBJ 108

To require that full details of the proposed use(s), including industrial processes involved provided as part of any planning application.

DM OBJ 109

To require that full details of the hours of operation be provided as part of any planning application.

DM OBJ 110

To require that details of suitable access arrangements, internal roads layout including details of footpaths, turning areas, loading bays be provided as part of any planning application.

DM OBJ 111

Boundaries which are visible from the public road should be of a high architectural quality. Palisade fencing to the front of any building line shall not be permitted.

DM OBJ 112

The use of retention ponds as an urban design feature within business parks will be encouraged to enhance the setting, subject to compliance with all relevant safety requirements.

DM OBJ 113

To require that proposals for and location of on site areas for storage and disposal (if applicable) of waste be provided as part of any planning application. All external storage including bin storage, oil tanks, etc, shall be visually screened from public areas, details to be provided as part of any planning application.

DM OBJ 114

To require that waste and recycling areas

be covered, screened and enclosed from public view and wind, compliant with the Council's Waste Management Strategy.

DM OBJ 115

All overground oil, chemical storage tanks should be adequately bunded to protect against spillage.

DM OBJ 116

Existing trees and hedgerows of biodiversity and/or amenity value shall be retained, where possible.

DM OBJ 117

To require that a survey of any existing vegetation on site and a suitable landscaping scheme prepared by an appropriately qualified professional, taking account of same, be submitted as part of any planning application to enhance the development.

DM OBJ 118

Open space shall be provided in suitable locations as part of the development in order to enhance the development and provide amenity and passive recreation for future employees.

DM OBJ 119

To require that all significant Industrial,

Office, Warehousing and Business Park Development incorporate works of public art in the form of outdoor sculptures, special architectural and landscape features or other appropriate art work in the development.

DM OBJ 120

To require that all planning applications for Industrial, Office, Warehousing and Business Park Development on sites in excess of 0.5 hectares are accompanied by a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

DM OBJ 121

To require that all new developments with over 100 employees shall have a Mobility Management Plan.

DM OBJ 122

To encourage the provision of supporting facilities for employees including childcare facilities, leisure uses and coffee shops in business parks.

DM OBJ 123

To encourage research and development activities as an ancillary part of all new and existing business parks in the County in conjunction with 3rd level Institutions.

11.8.3 Agricultural Buildings & Structures

The design, scale, siting and layout of agricultural buildings should respect, and where possible, enhance the rural environment, (Refer to Chapter 9 Rural Development for further information.)

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 124

To require that buildings are sited appropriately in order to minimise obtrusion on the landscape, having regard to the Landscape Character Assessment contained in Appendix 5.

DM OBJ 125

The use of dark coloured cladding, for example dark browns, greys, greens and reds are most suitable for farm buildings, and roof areas should be darker than walls.

DM OBJ 126

Developments shall comply with the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, (GAP Regs 2014).

DM OBJ 127

All planning applications for agricultural development shall be accompanied by

comprehensive details of all land holdings and herd number(s), if applicable.

DM OBJ 128

All new and existing agricultural developments will be required to contain sufficient detail which demonstrates that all effluent, including yard run-off, is collected and stored within the confines of the development.

DM OBJ 129

In the case of new farm enterprises, a clear evidence base must be provided which demonstrates the need for the proposal and details of how any buildings proposed form part of a comprehensive business plan for the farm holding supported by Teagasc.

11.8.4 Extractive Industry

The Council recognises the contribution of the extractive industry in supporting jobs in the construction and aggregates section of the County. (Please refer to Chapter 9 Rural Development Strategy for grounding policies and objectives regarding extractive industries).

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 30

To require that all extract industry development complies with the

requirements of Section 261 and Section 261A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), the Quarries and Ancillary Activities Guidelines 2004 or any updates thereof and EPA Guidelines for Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry 2006 or any updates thereof.

DM POL 31

To encourage the rehabilitation of disused pits and quarries to productive agricultural use where appropriate having regard to all appropriate environmental considerations.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 130

All applications for extract industry development shall comprehensively address the following criteria as part of a pre-application discussion and/or planning application proposal:

- Impact on groundwater, surface water and important aquifers and compliance with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (Refer to chapter 7 for further information on Water Framework Directive);
- Impact on Natura 2000 sites, NHAs, sites of ecological importance, geological or geomorphological heritage features; (Refer to Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure for further information);

- Impact on the quality of the landscape, particularly sensitive landscapes and protected views (Refer to Volume 3 Book of Maps for Views and Prospects, Appendix 5 Landscape Character Assessment, Appendix 6 Record of Protected Structures, Appendix 10 Protected Views and Prospects for further information.);
- Visual impact of the development, a detailed landscape and visual assessment prepared by a suitably qualified professional;
- Impact on existing local communities with regard to but not limited to:
- Noise, vibration and subsidence;
- Contents of the 'Archaeological Code of Practice' (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Irish Concrete Federation, 2009);
- The extent of land ownership, nature of the deposits and details of any ancillary processes (such as crushing, concrete manufacture, etc);
- Proposals for surface water management and flood risk minimisation;
- Transportation impacts with particular reference to details of all haul routes, trip movements etc¹⁶;
- Effective control of emissions and dust;
- Phasing programme for extraction and rehabilitation;
- A scheme of rehabilitation and after care for the site upon abandonment / exhaustion of resource. Details to be submitted should include plan

and section drawings, detailing the following:

- Anticipated finished landform and surface/landscape treatments (both of each phase and the whole excavation),
- Quality and condition of topsoil and overburden,
- Rehabilitation works proposed,
- Type and location of any vegetation proposed,
- Proposed method of funding and delivery of restoration/reinstatement works etc. Please note that provision for sinking funds under the control of the Council may be conditioned to ensure satisfactory reinstatement on completion of extraction, if considered appropriate.
- A detailed proposal which recommends a sum of money to be paid as bond as a security for the suitable restoration of the site. The proposal shall include details as to how the bond was calculated with an associated schedule of works, materials and costings.

DM OBJ 131

Where possible, sites shall be subject to rehabilitation and landscaping programmes in tandem with the various phases of extraction. Possible uses post closure could include local recreational facilities and habitat areas, where appropriate community support exists and subject to funding.

¹⁶ A special contribution may be attached to a grant of permission in accordance with Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act, as amended.

11.8.5 Land reclamation

The Council recognises the need for land reclamation for the improvement of agricultural lands. It is also of note that in recent years significant pressure has come on the Council to facilitate the provision of waste recovery sites for soil and stone.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 32

To require that all land reclamation developments which include the importation of any material onto site have the requisite waste authorisation in place in accordance with the stipulations of the Waste Management Act 1996.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 132

All applications for land reclamation / soil and stone recovery shall comprehensively address the following criteria as part of a pre-application discussion and/or planning application proposal:

- Impact on groundwater, surface water and important aquifers and compliance with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (Refer to chapter 7 for further information on Water Framework Directive);
- Impact on Natura 2000 sites, NHAs, sites of ecological importance,

geological or geomorphological heritage features; (Refer to Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure for further information);

- Details of the overall and annual quantities of material to be brought on to the site in tonnes having regard to Mandatory EIA Thresholds set out in Schedule 5 Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018;
- Details of the nature of material including EWC or LoW codes for all waste materials proposed for acceptance at the site;
- Justification for agricultural improvement and detail of proposed agricultural use;
- Transportation impacts with particular reference to details of all haul routes, Load size, Trip movements¹⁷;
- Details of site services including wheel wash, site office, security welfare facilities quarantine areas and weighbridges;
- Phasing programme for reclamation with accurate drawings showing the development in layout and sections through the phases to completion;
- Impact on existing local communities with regard to but not limited to:
 - Noise, dust, emissions;

¹⁷ A special contribution may be attached to a grant of permission in accordance with Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act, as amended.

SECTION 7**11.9 Community Development****11.9.1 Sheltered Accommodation/Step Down**

Housing, Residential Care Homes, Retirement Homes, Nursing Homes, Retirement Villages
The Council recognises that the provision of care for the elderly and other vulnerable people in our community is an essential requirement particularly in the context of changing national demographics. A range of accommodation options fall within this sector including: step down housing which supports independent living as support services are available in a complex arrangement, nursing homes, retirement homes etc (Please refer to Chapter 7 Community Building for further details).

Nursing homes, residential and retirement homes and retirement villages should be located in towns and villages for reasons of sustainability, accessibility and proximity to services.

There is a presumption against this type of development in the open countryside for reasons relating to sustainability, poor accessibility and lack of public transport, social exclusion and isolation.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 33

Require that residential care homes, retirement homes, nursing homes, retirement villages and sheltered

accommodation/step down housing be located in towns and villages for reasons of sustainability, accessibility, social inclusion, and proximity to the availability of services, except where a demonstrated need to locate in a rural environment because of the nature of the care required can be clearly established.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 133

Planning applications for the change of use of a residential dwelling or other building to nursing home, residential care home, or for the construction of new residential care homes, retirement homes, nursing homes, retirement villages or sheltered accommodation/step down housing, shall be assessed for compliance with the following criteria:

- The Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (or any such other relevant standards and legislation that may be enacted);
- The National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland, 2009;
- Sustainability, is the location served by good public transport links, pedestrian and cycle facilities close to local services and facilities;
- Suitability of the size and scale of the proposal having regard to the site

constraints and the area in which it is located;

- The degree to which the residential amenity of surrounding properties is protected;
- The requirement for a high standard of design and external finishes;
- The adequacy of off street car parking;
- High quality open space proposals with comprehensive landscaping plans prepared by a fully qualified landscape professional;
- Availability of services.

DM OBJ 134

Reduced open space standards may be acceptable for the following development types: residential care homes, retirement homes, nursing homes, retirement villages and sheltered accommodation only in cases where it is clearly demonstrated with a supporting evidence base that it is appropriate by having regard to the specific open space needs of residents and only where suitable accessible public open space is available as part of the development.

11.9.2 Childcare

There is a continuing demand for suitable high quality childcare facilities in the County, (Refer to Chapter 7 Community Building for the grounding policies in respect of childcare development).

Applicants are encouraged to seek the

advice and support of the County's Childcare Committee, Tulsa, HSE and other relevant bodies in the design and layout of proposed childcare facilities prior to the submission of a planning application.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 34

To facilitate the provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations as set out in DM POL 35 in accordance with the provisions of the DoEHLG 'Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2001).

DM POL 35

Development of childcare facilities at the following locations will normally be encouraged;

- Areas of concentrated employment and business parks;
- Within new and existing residential developments;
- Neighbourhood centres;
- Large retail developments;
- Schools or major educational facilities;
- Adjacent to public transport nodes, and
- Villages and Rural Nodes.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 135

Planning applications for childcare facilities shall be assessed for compliance with the following criteria:

- Suitability of the site for the type and size of facility proposed.
- Impact on residential amenity of surrounding residential development;
- Adequate availability of indoor and outdoor play space;
- Convenience to public transport nodes, pedestrian and cycling facilities;
- Local traffic conditions;
- Safe access and sufficient convenient off-street car parking and/or suitable drop-off and collection points for customers and staff;
- Number of such facilities in the area. In this regard, the applicant shall submit a map showing the locations of childcare facilities within the vicinity of the subject site and demonstrate the need for an additional facility at that location;

DM OBJ 136

All applications for childcare facilities shall comprehensively set out the following as part of a pre-application discussion and/or planning application proposal:

- The type of childcare facility proposed
 - Full day care; sessional service including playgroups, preschools and Montessori; Child minding;
- No. of children;

- No. of employees;
- Proposed hours of operation;
- Car-parking provision; (please refer to Section 11.11.1)
- Location of secure external play area including secure site boundaries.

DM OBJ 137

In the case of proposals within an existing dwelling the Council will consider whether there is sufficient private open space remaining for the enjoyment of the occupant of the dwelling. The potential impact on the residential amenities of adjoining residences will also be considered. In such cases a significant residential component shall be retained.

11.9.3 Education

The Council will be guided by the Department of Education and Skills as to the need for new educational facilities or expansion of facilities at existing schools (Please refer to Chapter 7 Community Building for grounding policies in respect of educational facilities).

Policies

It is the policy of the Council

DM POL 36

All sites for schools shall comply with the requirements of the following:

- 'The Provision of Schools and the

- the Planning System A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities', 2008, or any update thereof;
- Technical guidance document TGD 025 (or any such updated document) in respect of primary schools;
- Technical guidance document TGD 027 (or any such updated document) in respect of post primary schools.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 138

Assessing planning applications for new schools and/or redevelopment/extensions of existing schools, the Planning Authority will have regard to the following:

- Site location, proximity of school to catchment area, size of site relative to outdoor space requirements and the future needs of the school (i.e. sufficient space provided for future expansion).
- Public transport availability.
- Traffic and transport impact, good, safe accessible pedestrian and cyclist routes to and from the school from nearby residential and commercial areas.
- Provision of safe and adequate set down etc facilities for buses.
- Provision of adequate, secure, covered cycle facilities.
- Provision of safe access and adequate car parking and set down areas to facilitate drop off/pick up.

- Adequate signage, lighting and boundary treatments.
- Impact on local amenities and out of school hours uses.

DM OBJ 139

Temporary classrooms will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will generally be accepted for a temporary period not exceeding five years and such classrooms should not interfere with onsite car/cycle parking spaces or unduly impact the usability of outdoor play/sports facilities. Any such proposal shall be accompanied by a timeline for the construction of permanent facilities.

DM OBJ 140

Extensions to schools will generally be accepted subject to scale, high quality design and satisfactory integration with the existing structure. School extensions should not negatively impact on adjoining amenities and amenities within the school site.

DM OBJ 141

Dual function of sports facilities/halls etc, outside of school hours will be encouraged where the use of such facilities will be of a benefit to the wider community, however, any outside hours usage of the school should not be to the detriment of adjoining residential amenities.

DM OBJ 142

To require that all planning applications for new schools are accompanied by a Mobility Management Plan. Existing schools seeking permission to expand will also be required to provide a Mobility Management Plan.

11.9.4 Places of Worship

The pattern of religious practice is becoming increasingly diverse in County Meath arising in part from the significant in migration into the County. This Development Plan supports proposals for the regular use of a building as a place of worship or religious instruction in the context of the land use zoning of the site and the amenities of the area.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 143

To require that details in relation to the capacity of the facility (seating capacity), hours of operation and a traffic assessment (including details of the proposed parking provision) accompany any pre application discussion and/or planning application proposal.

DM OBJ 144

To require that all planning applications for new places of worship are accompanied by a Mobility Management Plan.

11.9.5 Allotments

Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 145

All proposals for allotment development of shall be assessed against the following criteria;

- Site location - the suitability of the site comparable to the location of the population served; sites in or at the edge of the settlements are more preferable;
- The adequacy of the public road network serving the site and car parking provision; and,
- The adequacy of water supplies.

SECTION 8

11.10 Energy Development

The Council encourages and facilitates early pre-application discussions on these projects.

Refer to Chapter, 6 Infrastructure which contains the grounding policies and objectives relevant to energy related development.

Refer to Section 11.4.4, Strategic Infrastructure Development as the proposal may fall within a category of development which constitutes SID.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 37

To encourage renewable development proposals which contribute positively to reducing energy consumption and carbon footprint.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 146

In the assessment of individual energy development proposals, the Council will take the following criteria into account:

- The proper planning and sustainable development of the area;
- The environmental and social impacts of the proposed development;
- Traffic impacts including details of haul routes;
- Impact of the development on the landscape, (please refer to Appendix 5 Landscape Character Assessment) ;
- Impact on protected Views and Prospects, (please refer to Appendix 10 Protected Views and Prospects);
- Impact on public rights of way and walking routes, (please refer to Appendix 12 Public Rights of Way) ;
- Connection to the National Grid (where applicable);
- Mitigation features, where impacts are inevitable;
- Protected of designated areas - NHAs, SPAs and SACs, areas of archaeological potential and scenic importance,

proximity to structures that are listed for protection, national monuments, etc. (Please refer to Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Appendices 6-9 inclusive for further details);

- Cumulative Impact of proposal.

11.10.1 Solar Energy

There are a variety of solar technologies available in the form of roof-top domestic, roof-top commercial, large-scale ground land (where solar cells are mounted to supply energy to the grid) and solar energy storage facilities. There are a significant number of solar farm planning applications in the system nationally. Section 28 Guidance is awaited from the Department of Housing and Planning to assist in the assessment of this development type.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 38

To implement Section 28 Guidelines from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government on Solar Farms when available.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 147

To require that any pre-application discussion and/or planning application proposal for solar farm development sets out how the project complies with DM OBJ 146 above.

DM OBJ 148

To ensure that proposals for the development of solar farms are not located within areas identified as being within Flood zones A or B as per the *Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 for Planning Authorities* (or any updated guidelines)

11.10.2 Wind Energy

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 39

To require compliance with the Wind Energy Development Guidelines, (2006) and Circular PL20-13, and any updates thereof. Any proposal shall be supported by both a technical and an environmental statement prepared to an acceptable standard which sets out how the proposal complies with the Guidelines.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 149

To require that any pre-application discussion and/or planning application proposal for wind farm development sets out how the project complies with DM OBJ 146.

DM OBJ 150

Topographical enclosures and extensive areas of degraded or previously developed lands should be identified for wind farm development to help minimise visual impacts and to harmonise wind turbines with the landscape.

DM OBJ 151

In general, matt finishes and neutral colours for turbines and structures are required.

DM OBJ 152

The Council will support appropriate innovative designs for wind farms.

DM OBJ 153

All planning applications shall be accompanied by detailed proposals for the restoration of the site after removal of the turbines and associated infrastructure including access roads. Adequate financial security will be required to ensure site restoration and removal of the wind farm.

11.10.3 Energy Networks

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 154

In the assessment of individual proposals, the Council will take the following criteria into account:

- The proper planning and sustainable development of the area;
- The environmental and social impacts of the proposed development;
- Traffic impacts including details of haul routes;
- Impact of the development on the landscape, (please refer to Appendix 5 Landscape Character Assessment);
- Impact on protected Views and Prospects, (please refer to Appendix 10 Protected Views and Prospects);
- Impact on public rights of way and walking routes, (please refer to Appendix 12 Public Rights of Way);
- The development is required in order to facilitate the provision of significant economic or social infrastructure);
- Mitigation features, where impacts are inevitable;
- Protection of designated areas - NHAs, SPAs and SACs, areas of archaeological potential and scenic importance, proximity to structures that are listed for protection, national monuments, etc. (Please refer to Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Appendices 6-9

inclusive for further details);

- Cumulative Impact of proposal.

11.10.4 Telecommunications and Broadband

High quality communications and information technology networks are critical for the continued implementation of the Economic Strategy. Please refer to Chapter 6 for grounding policies for telecommunications and broadband.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 40

To require compliance with the requirements of the *“Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities”* July 1996, except where they conflict with Circular Letter PL 07/12 which shall take precedence, and any subsequent revisions or expanded guidelines in this area.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 155

Encourage the location of telecommunications structures at appropriate locations within the County, subject to environmental considerations.

DM OBJ 156

Require the co-location of antennae on existing support structures and where this is not feasible require documentary evidence as to the non-availability of this option in proposals for new structures.

DM OBJ 157

To avoid the location of structures in sensitive landscapes, in nature conservation areas, in highly sensitive landscapes and where views are to be preserved. (Please refer to Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Appendices 6-9 inclusive for further details).

DM OBJ 158

To generally discourage the use of wires or other devices affixed to the facade of buildings in town and village centres.

DM OBJ 159

To encourage the development of open access networks in all developments.

11.10.5 Anaerobic Digesters

Anaerobic Digesters are widely used in the agricultural sector in the form of small on-farm digesters producing biogas to heat farmhouses and other farm buildings.

An Anaerobic Digestion plant typically comprises of:

- a digester tank
- buildings to house ancillary equipment such as a generator, a biogas storage tank
- a flare stack (3-10m in height)
- associated pipework.

Plants can vary in scale from small schemes treating the waste from an individual farm through medium-sized centralised facilities dealing with wastes from several farms (potentially supplemented by crops such as maize grown specifically to feed the digester) to sizeable industrial AD plant handling large quantities of municipal solid waste. In the case of small plants it is likely that the plant can be accommodated within the vicinity of existing farm buildings. Some forms of biomass produce digestate and other end products which must be disposed of.

Siting is a key consideration when assessing proposals for Anaerobic Digesters. The development of a bio energy project regardless of scale has development implications on the environs in which it will be situated. The development impacts which may be exacerbated by an improperly sited bio energy project. Key considerations include:

- Visual Impact;
- External Finishes.
- Sky lining.
- Residential Amenity;
- Transport;
- Road Capacity of Site Entrance
- Light Pollution;
- Noise Pollution.

Objective

It is the policy of the Council:

DM OBJ 160

To seek to facilitate the development of alternative energy sources where such proposals are consistent with landscape preservation, the protection of natural habitats, the protection of visual and residential amenities and Development Plan policy and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

sufficient car parking is important particularly in areas of the County which are currently poorly served by public transport networks. Therefore the rationale for the application of car parking standards is to ensure that consideration is given to the accommodation of vehicles in assessing development proposals while being mindful of the need to promote a shift towards more sustainable forms of transport.

Objective

It is the objective of the Council:

SECTION 9**11.11.1 Parking Standards**

One of the cross cutting themes of the Development Plan is to encourage a shift to more sustainable forms of transport. The provision of

DM OBJ 161

Car parking shall be provided in accordance with Table 11.4 and associated guidance notes.

Table 11.4 Car Parking

Land Use – Residential	Car Spaces
Dwellings	2 per conventional dwelling
Flats/ Apartments ¹⁸	2 per unit
Hotel Accommodation (excluding bars, functions rooms, etc.)	In all cases, 1 visitor space per 4 apartments
B&B / Guesthouse	1 per bedroom
Hostel Accommodation	1 per bedroom
Self-Catering Accommodation	1 per bedroom or 1 per 10 beds
Caravan/Mobile Home Parks	1 per unit
Institutions	1 per employee
Student Accommodation	To be determined on a case by case basis
Land Use – Employment	
Land Use – Employment	1 per 50 sq.m. gross floor area
Institutions	1 per 100 sq.m. gross floor area

¹⁸ Refer to the Design Standards for New Apartments in relation to reduced car parking requirements for development adjacent to existing and future rail stations and minimum requirements in peripheral/or less accessible urban locations.

Offices	1 per 25 sq.m. gross floor area. Where the floor area exceeds 1,500 sq.m. gross floor area, 1 space per 50sq.m. gross floor area.
Data Centres	1 per 100 sq.m. gross floor area
Land Use – Commercial	
Food Retail	1 per 20 sq.m. gross floor area. Where the floor area exceeds 1,000 sq.m. gross floor area, 1 space per 14 sq.m. gross floor area. *Provision should be made for taxi drop off spaces.
Non Food Retail	1 per 20 sq.m. gross floor area.
Retail Warehousing	1 per 20 sq.m. gross floor area
Cash and Carry	1 per 50 sq.m. gross floor area
Banks	1 per 20 sq.m. gross floor area
Restaurants	1 per 5 sq.m dining area
Bars, Night Clubs, Lounges, Function Rooms incl. such spaces in hotels	1 per 4 sq.m. of public area
Vehicle Service Station	4 per fuel pump provided
Retail Outlets within Vehicle Service Garages	1 per 10 sq. m of net floor area. 1 HGV parking space per 30sq.m. net floor area is required where food is served on the premises.
Land Use - Health and Education Facilities	
Hospitals	1 per bed
Surgeries	2 per consulting room
Nursing Homes	1 per 3 beds and one space per employee
Schools	3 per classroom plus dedicated pick up/set down area within site boundary
Colleges/Third Level Institutions	To be determined by the Planning Authority.
Land Use - Community Facilities	
Places of Public Worship	1 per 4 seats
Libraries	1 per 20 sq.m. gross floor area
Cultural buildings	To be determined by the Planning Authority
Crèches	1 per employee & dedicated set down area and 1 per 4 children plus dedicated set down area

Cinemas/Theatre	1 per 3 seats. Where gross floor area exceeds 1000 sq.m., 1 space per 5 seats.
Funeral Homes	1 per 5 sq. m. gross floor area
Community Centres	1 per 5 sq. m. gross floor area
Allotments	1 space per plot
Land Use - Sports Facilities	
Sport Clubs-including swimming pools, tennis courts, gyms, fitness studios, etc.	2 per court, 5 per 100 sq.m.
Golf / Pitch & Putt courses	3 per hole
Golf Driving Ranges	1 per 2m of base line/per trap whichever is less
Bowling Alleys	5 per lane
Stadia	To be determined by the Planning Authority
Playing fields	15 spaces per pitch

Guidance Notes

- Where parking is permitted in the view of the general public, adequate soft landscaping shall be provided to soften the appearance of hard surfaced areas;
- Parking areas shall be reserved solely for the parking of vehicles and should not be used for the storage of materials or goods associated with the development, nor for the parking of goods or other heavy vehicles;
- The standards set out in Table 11.4 shall apply to all new developments, be it new construction or a new extension or a material change of use of existing buildings.
- Accessible car parking spaces shall generally be provided at a rate of 5% of the total number of spaces, for developments requiring more than 10 car parking spaces, with the minimum provision being one space (unless the nature of the development requires otherwise). Such spaces shall be proximate to the entry points of buildings and comply with the requirements of the Building Regulations.
- Age Friendly car parking spaces should generally be provided, where possible, in all developments.
- In the case of any specific uses not listed in the above table, the Council will specify its requirements in relation to parking.
- The above car parking standards shall be applied at the discretion of the Council in the County's rural towns and villages having regard to the availability and adequacy of on street parking, existing or proposed off street parking to serve the development and the status of the town/village within the settlement hierarchy of the County.

- Non-residential car parking standards are set down as “maxima” standards.
- Adequate car parking bays should be provided within the confines of the public areas of residential areas to address public needs.
- All parking areas shall be clearly demarcated and numbered with indelible paint which shall be permanently maintained to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 162

The dimension of parking bays shall comply with Table 11.5

Table 11.5 Car Parking Bays

Parking dimensions (Perpendicular to Kerb)	5.0m x 2.5m
Where space is adjacent to a wall or other obstruction	5.0m x 2.75m
Parking dimensions (Parallel to Kerb)	6.0m x 2.5m
Accessible Parking Bay to comply with Building Regulations.	5.0m x 2.5m + 1.2m to the sides and rear of each space
Loading Bay	6.0m x 3.0m
Circulation Aisles	6.0m in width

Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 163

Car parking provision shall normally be provided within the curtilage of the development site. Where, in the opinion of the Council, it would be impracticable for individual developers to provide for on-site parking, a contribution may be required.

DM OBJ 164

Loading bays shall be located and designed

to prevent any obstructions to traffic circulation and to accommodate vehicular manoeuvring on site.

DM OBJ 165

New residential development should take account of the following regarding car parking:

- Vehicular parking for detached and semi-detached housing should be within the curtilage of the house;
- Vehicular parking for apartments, where appropriate, should generally be

at basement level. Where this is not possible, parking for apartments and terraced housing should be in small scale informal groups overlooked by residential units;

- The visual impact of large areas of parking should be reduced by the use of screen planting, low walls and the use of different textured or coloured paving for car parking bays;
- Consideration needs to be given to parking for visitors and people with disabilities; and,
- Provision of EV Charging points.

11.11.2 EV Charging Points

The Climate Action Plan, 2019 acknowledges that the pricing structure for EV vehicles is a major factor in consumers decision making. However the Plan also acknowledges the importance of *'ensuring the EV Charging network underpins public confidence.'*¹⁹ The Council will encourage the provision of EV charging points in all developments for future proofing.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 166

All car parks shall include the provision of necessary wiring and ducting to be capable of accommodating future Electric Vehicle charging points, at a rate of 10% of total space numbers.

DM OBJ 167

In any car park in excess of 20 spaces where public access is available, one fully functional charging point for Electric Vehicles shall be provided in accordance with IEC 61851 Standard for Electric Vehicle Conductive Charging Systems.

11.11.3 Cycling Parking

The Council will require an appropriate amount of cycle parking facilities to be provided with new development.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 168

To require the provision of cycle parking facilities in accordance with Table 11.6 Cycle Parking Standards.

DM OBJ 169

Cycle parking facilities shall be conveniently located, secure, easy to use, adequately lit and well sign posted. All long-term (more than three hours) cycle racks shall be protected from the weather.

DM OBJ 170

Secure cycle parking facilities shall be provided in new office, residential apartment development, retail and

¹⁹ Refer to the Design Standards for New Apartments in relation to reduced car parking requirements for development adjacent to existing and future rail stations and minimum requirements in peripheral/or less accessible urban locations.

employment generating developments. Such facilities shall be within 25 metres for short-term parking, (shops) and 50 metres for long term parking (school, college, and office). The number of stands required will be a third of the number of car spaces required for the development, subject to a minimum of one stand.

DM OBJ 171

In residential developments without private gardens or wholly dependent on balconies for private open space, covered secure bicycle stands should be provided in private communal areas;

DM OBJ 172

All cycle facilities in multi-storey car parks shall be at ground floor level and segregated from vehicle traffic. Cyclists shall also have designated entry and exit routes at car parks.

Table 11.6 Cycle Parking Standards

Type of Development	Cycle Parking Standard
Residential units	
Apartments	1 private secure bicycle space per bed space (note – design should not require bicycle access via living area), minimum 2 spaces 1 visitor bicycle space per two housing units
Shops	1 space for every 10 car spaces or 1 space per till/checkout, whichever is greater
Offices	10% of employee numbers subject to minimum of 10 bicycle places or one bike space for every car space, whichever is the greatest.
Schools²⁰	25% of pupil registration numbers/minimum of 10 spaces. Consider separate teacher/employee parking.
Other Developments	1 bike space per car space, or 10% of employee numbers in general
Off Street car parks (including Multi-Storey Car Parks) Park and Ride locations	10% of total car spaces/minimum provision of 50 spaces Consider sheltered parking at P+R

²⁰ Rural schools will be assessed on a case by case basis

On-street (public)	Minimum of 5-10 spaces, depending on expected level of usage
Public Transport pick up points/interchanges	2.5% of number of daily boarders at that point/station, minimum of 10 bicycle spaces
Events	5% of forecast attendees

11.11.3 Taxi Services

Accessible taxi services are important in providing a demand responsive 24 hour door-to-door service.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 173

Planning applications for significant commercial, industrial and other developments taxi services shall demonstrate the provision of adequate drop-off and set-down areas for taxi services.

DM OBJ 174

To require the provision of facilities for taxis in all new supermarket and neighbourhood development proposals.

SECTION 10

11.12 Advertising

Advertising structures are an accepted and necessary part of commercial activity and are essential for way finding.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 41

To permit only advertisements which enhance the appearance and vitality of an area and make a positive contribution to the streetscape.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 175

The following signage types will be discouraged:

- Signs which advertise general products or services,
- Animated, moving, flashing, rotating or sound-emitting signs,
- Billboards,
- Roof mounted signs or signs which project above the ridge height of the building,
- Internally illuminated awnings,
- Changeable message signs,
- Pole mounted signs
- Wall signs.
- Free standing signs.

DM OBJ 176

In assessing advertising signage, the Council will consider the following criteria:

- The size and scale of signs which should not conflict with existing structures in the vicinity.
- The potential impacts on the streetscape of the proposal.
- Large scale commercial advertisement structures are not acceptable on or near Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas (please refer to Map 8.3), in public parks and in areas of high amenity.
- Signs should not interfere with windows or other façade features or project above the skyline.

DM OBJ 177

Advertisement structures will not be permitted where they give rise to a potential traffic hazard. In general, advertisement structures will not be permitted at roundabouts, at traffic signalised junctions, at locations where they obstruct sight lines, compete with other traffic signs, give rise to confusion for road users or endanger traffic safety.

DM OBJ 178

Applications for advertisement structures along national routes and along approach roads to towns and villages will generally not be permitted except for tourist attractions of national or regional

importance which utilise the approved designated signage.

DM OBJ 179

The number of advertisement structures for any one premises shall be kept to a minimum and will generally be restricted to a maximum of two in the local area. In exceptional cases this maximum may be exceeded at the discretion of the Council.

DM OBJ 180

The use of electronic variable messaging signs commonly known as “VMS signs”, shall be reserved strictly for use in roadwork activities, hazard information and or as part of an approved event traffic management plan. Advanced written consent of the Council will be required prior to installation and usage of such signage.

DM OBJ 181

In urban centres where public realm strategies have been prepared the Council reserve the right to de-exempt any signage in the interests of visual amenity in these areas.

11.12.1 Advertising Hoardings

Advertising hoardings, including tri-vision and three-dimensional signs, if inappropriately located can constitute one of the most obtrusive elements of all forms of outdoor advertisement. They rely for their impact on size, scale and location and are thus usually detrimental to the character of the area in which they are situated and in some cases contribute to a traffic hazard. However, they can help to screen derelict or obsolete sites awaiting re-development, in certain circumstances.

The practice of parking trailers or other mobile objects bearing advertisements in fields adjoining roads has become a feature of Irish roads over the past number of years. Such advertisements can be harmful to the visual amenities of the area, represent a traffic hazard by virtue of distracting motorists and could have impacts on biodiversity. Where such advertisements do not have the benefit of planning permission, the Council shall take appropriate enforcement action. The potential negative impacts of such development shall also be taken into account in assessing applications for such development.

Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 182

Outdoor advertising hoardings shall not be permitted where it would detract from the visual quality of the setting of Protected Structures. In all other cases, planning applications for such development will be considered on

the basis of the visual impact of the proposed advertising hoarding and the potential for a traffic hazard arising from same will be imperative. The number and scale of hoardings in the vicinity of the site will be a material consideration.

SECTION 11

11.13 Development Contributions

Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) allows the Planning Authority when granting planning permission to include conditions requiring the payment of a financial contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefitting development in the area of the planning authority and that is provided, or that it is intended will be provided, by or on behalf of a local authority. The current Meath County Development Contributions Scheme 2016 – 2021 (as amended)²¹ sets out the contributions applicable to development, the scheme should be consulted in advance of the making of a planning application. There are three type of development contributions; General, Special and Supplementary.

11.13.1 General Development Contribution

These contributions apply in respect of public infrastructure and facilities provided by or on behalf of the Planning Authority that benefit development in its functional area, as noted above. Section 48 (1) of the Act outlines that a Planning Authority when making a grant of permission, may include a condition requiring

²¹ <https://www.meath.ie/council/council-services/planning-and-building/planning-permission/apply-for-planning-permission/development-contribution-schemes>

the payment of a contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities such as open spaces, community and recreational facilities and amenities and landscaping works; infrastructure to facilitate public transport, cycle and pedestrian facilities; refurbishment, upgrading, enlargement or replacement of roads and surface water drainage infrastructure.

11.13.2 Special Development Contributions

In circumstances where additional specific infrastructure for an area is required, the Council may attach a special contribution. Developers may also be required to carry out works at their own expense to facilitate their development and this would be specified as a condition of the planning permission.

11.13.3 Supplementary Development Contributions

Under Section 49 of the Act, a Planning Authority may, when granting permission include conditions requiring the payment of a contribution in respect of any public infrastructure service or project specified in a "Supplementary Development Contribution Scheme" that will benefit the development to which the planning permission relates. The Council has adopted Supplementary Development Contribution Schemes for the following projects;

- Navan- Dublin Rail Line
- Kells Backlands.

These schemes remain active. The Council will consider the need for additional contribution schemes over the plan period.

SECTION 12

11.14 Development in Proximity to Approach Zones/Noise Zones of Airports and Airfields²²

Developments shall be restricted (and where appropriate, prohibited) in public safety zones and approach zones of airports and airfields, and in noise zones associated with airport flight operations as illustrated on Map 5.4.1 & 5.4.2. In the assessment of such applications regard shall be had to the relevant policy documents and consultation shall take place with the relevant authorities. Please refer to Chapter 5 Movement.

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 42

To strictly control inappropriate development and require noise insulation where appropriate within the Outer Noise Zone.

DM POL 43

To actively resist new provision for residential development and other noise sensitive uses within the Inner Noise Zone, as shown on Map no. 5.4.1 and 5.4.2.

DM POL 44

Under no circumstances shall any dwelling be permitted within the predicted 69 dB

²² Chapter 5, section 5.12 refers.

L_{Aeq} 16 hours noise contour. Residential development in areas likely to be affected by levels of noise inappropriate to residential use should be avoided.

Comprehensive noise insulation shall be installed for any house permitted. Any planning application shall be accompanied by a noise impact assessment report produced by a specialist in noise assessment which shall specify all proposed noise mitigation measures together with a declaration of acceptance from the applicant with regard to the recommendations of the noise impact assessment report.

Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 183

Development should be restricted which would give rise to conflicts with aircraft movements on environmental or safety grounds on lands in the vicinity of Dublin Airport and on the main flight paths serving Dublin Airport.

SECTION 13

11.15 Seveso Sites

The Seveso III Directive, 2012/18/EU came into force in Ireland on 1st June 2015 replacing the Seveso II Directive, 96/82/EC. The Seveso III (Directive 2012/18/EU) was adopted taking into account, amongst other factors, the changes in EU legislation on the classification of chemicals

and the increased rights for the public to access information and justice.

This Directive is aimed at the prevention of major accidents involving dangerous substances. However, as accidents may nevertheless occur, it also aims at limiting the consequences of such accidents not only for human health but also for the environment.

The Directive covers establishments where dangerous substances may be present (e.g. during processing or storage) in quantities above a certain threshold. Excluded from the Directive are certain industrial activities which are subject to other legislation providing a similar level of protection (e.g. nuclear establishments or the transport of dangerous substances).

Depending on the amount of dangerous substances present, establishments are categorised in lower and upper tier establishments, the latter are subject to more stringent requirements.

The Chemicals Act (Control of Major Accident Hazards involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 209 of 2015) (the "COMAH Regulations"), implement the Seveso III Directive (2012/18/EU). The purpose of the COMAH Regulations is to lay down rules for the prevention of major accidents involving dangerous substances, and to seek to limit as far as possible the consequences for human health and the environment of such accidents, with the overall objective of providing a high level of protection in a consistent and effective manner.

The intention is to achieve this through tiered controls on the operators of the establishments subject to the Regulations - the larger the quantities of dangerous substances present at an establishment, the more onerous the duties on the operator.

The European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2006 and the European Union (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which implemented the Seveso II Directive (96/82/EC), have been revoked by the European Union (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances)(Revocation) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 208 of 2015) and replaced by the COMAH Regulations.

Part 7 of the COMAH regulations 2015 provides that appropriate consultation procedures must be put in place to ensure that before decisions are taken, technical advice is available to Planning Authorities in respect of:

- (a) the siting and development of new establishments;
- (b) modifications to establishments of the type described in Regulation 12(1);
- (c) new developments including transport routes, locations of public use and residential areas in the vicinity of establishments, where the siting, modifications or developments may be the source of, or increase the risk or

consequences of, a major accident;

Such technical advice will be taken into account in the consideration of applications for planning permission.

The Central Competent Authority in the case of planning advice is the Health and Safety Authority (“HAS”). The HSA are also obliged to provide the Planning Authority with information to assist in the long term planning of the County in order to:

- (a) to maintain appropriate safety distances between establishments covered by these Regulations and residential areas, buildings and areas of public use, recreational areas, and, as far as possible, major transport routes;
- (b) to protect areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest in the vicinity of establishments, where appropriate, through appropriate safety distances or other relevant measures; and;
- (c) for the operator to take additional technical measures, in the case of existing establishments, in accordance with Regulation 7, so as not to increase the risks to human health and the environment.

Table 11.5: List of Seveso Sites in County Meath or Sites where Consultation Distances extend into the County, these are illustrated on Map 11.1.

Map 11.1	Name of Company	Seveso Location	Seveso Tier	Consultation Radius Distance from Facility	County
Site 1	Boliden Tara Mines DAC	Knockumber Road, Navan, Co. Meath	Upper Tier	1,000 metres	Meath
Site 2	Xtratherm Limited	Liscarton Industrial Estate, Kells Road, Navan	Lower Tier Site	1000 metres	Meath
Site 3	Grassland Fertilizers Limited	The Pound Road, Slane	Lower Tier Site	700 metres	Meath

Site 4	Flogas Ire. Ltd	Marsh Road, Drogheda	Upper Tier Site	600 metres	Louth
Site 5	Irish Industrial Explosives Limited	Clonagh, Enfield	Upper Tier Site	1000 metres	Kildare
Site 6	Clarochem Ireland Ltd	Damastown, Mullhuddart,	Lower Tier Site	1000 metres	Fingal
Site 7	Chemco (Ireland) Limited (t/a Chemsorce Logistics)	Macetown North, Damastown Industrial Estate, Mullhuddart	Upper Tier Site	1,000 metres	Fingal
Site 8	Aestellas Ireland Co. Ltd	Damastown Industrial Park, Mullhuddart	Lower Tier Site	1,000 metres	Fingal
Site 9	Guerbet Ireland ULC	Damastown Industrial Estate, Mullhuddart	Upper Tier Site	1,000 metres	Fingal

At present there are 3 no. Seveso III sites in the County. In addition, there are 5 no. Seveso III sites in neighbouring counties Louth, Fingal and Kildare where the 'Seveso Consultation Distance' extends into the County or whose consultation distance overlaps with the consultation distance of adjoining sites which extend into the County.

Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

DM POL 45

To comply with the Seveso III Directive in reducing the risk and limiting the potential consequences of major industrial accidents.

DM POL 46

To permit new Seveso development only in low risk locations within acceptable distances from vulnerable residential, retail and commercial development.

DM POL 47

To ensure that land use policies take account of the need to maintain appropriate distances between future major accident hazard establishments and residential areas, areas of substantial public use and of particular natural sensitivity or interest.

DM POL 48

To have regard to the advice of the Health & Safety Authority when proposals for new SEVESO sites are being considered or modifications to existing Seveso sites are being considered.

DM POL 49

To have regard to the advice of the Health & Safety Authority when proposals for

development within the consultation zone of a SEVESO site are being considered.

Objective

It is an objective of the Council:

DM OBJ 184

Have regard to the provision of the 'Major Accident Directive' (Seveso III) (European Council Directive 2012/18/EU) and in consultation with the HSA impose restrictions, on developments adjoining or within proximity of a Seveso site. The extent of restrictions on development will be dependent on the type of risk present and the quantity and form of the dangerous substance present or likely to be present.

SECTION 14

11.16 Land Use Zoning Objectives

11.16.1 Introduction

This section sets out the general land use and zoning policies and objectives of this Plan. These zoning policies primarily relate to urban areas. The zoning strategy for the County is based on the following principles:

- To ensure that sufficient lands are zoned to allow the aims of the core strategy to be realised.
- The consolidation of development in established settlements that identifies

opportunities for the redevelopment of under-utilised infill and brownfield lands in order to add vitality to existing settlements and to ensure the efficient use of urban lands.

- To support the intensification of development in centres in the upper tiers of the settlement hierarchy adjacent or close to public transport nodes and corridors to maximise the use of public transport, minimise trip generation and distribution and to promote sustainable development.
- To support the creation of compact settlements by following the sequential approach in the identification of lands for development.
- To promote particular classes of use in appropriate locations and to provide certainty to the public and in particular communities and investors.
- To promote and support economic development and employment generation in suitable locations.
- To promote and support 'live work' communities in suitable locations.
- To only consider lands for zoning if there is a likelihood that these lands can be accessed and serviced within the life of the Plan.
- To protect and promote our rural areas and rural nodes for a range of appropriate uses acknowledging, biodiversity, the rural landscape, and the built and cultural heritage.

11.16.2 Land Use Zoning Objectives

The following section sets out the land use

zoning objectives that will be applicable to all statutory land use plans and the zoning objectives for the urban centres to be included

in the County Development Plan. Table 11.7 below provides an explanation of each land use zoning.

Table 11.7 Land Use Zoning Objectives

Zoning	Objective
A1 Existing Residential	To protect and enhance the amenity and character of existing residential communities.
A2 New Residential	To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities and employment uses as considered appropriate for the status of the centre in the Settlement Hierarchy.
B1 Commercial/Town or Village Centre	To protect, provide for and/or improve town and village centre facilities and uses.
B2 Retail Warehouse Park	To provide for the development of a retail warehouse park.
C1 Mixed Use	To provide and facilitate mixed residential and business uses.
D1 Tourism	To provide for appropriate and sustainable visitor and tourist facilities and associated uses.
E1 Strategic Employment Zones (High Technology Uses)	To provide for the creation of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for employment through industrial, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing and other general employment/enterprise uses in a good quality physical environment.
E2 General Enterprise and Employment	To facilitate logistics, warehousing, distribution and supply chain management inclusive of related industry facilities which require good access to the major road network.
E3 Warehousing and Distribution	To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities.
F1 Open Space	To provide for necessary community, social, and educational facilities.
G1 Community Infrastructure	To facilitate opportunities for high technology and major campus style office based employment within high quality accessible locations.
H1 High Amenity	To protect and improve areas of high amenity.
R1 Rail Corridor	To provide for a strategic rail corridor and associated physical infrastructure.
WL White Lands	To protect strategic lands from inappropriate forms of development which would impede the orderly expansion of a strategic urban centre.
TU Transport & Utilities	To provide for essential transport and public utilities and infrastructure including rail stations, park and ride facilities, water and waste water infrastructure, electricity, gas, and telecommunications infrastructure.
RA Rural Areas	To protect and promote in a balanced way, the development of agriculture, forestry and rural-related enterprise, biodiversity, the rural landscape, and the built and cultural heritage.
RN Rural Nodes	To provide for small scale infill development serving local needs while maintaining the rural nature of the node.

11.16.3 Permissible and Non-Permissible Uses

This section provides guidance on the various uses that are considered acceptable in principle in each of the zoning objectives. Uses other than the primary use for which an area is zoned may be permitted provided the use is not in conflict with the zoning objective or any other policies and objectives in the Plan.

Any use not listed in the permissible or open for consideration categories is deemed not to be acceptable in principle. Such uses will be considered on their individual merits and will only be permitted if they enhance, complement, are ancillary to, or neutral to the zoning objective.

There are instances across the County of established uses that do not conform to the zoning objective for the particular location. Any proposals for the expansion, improvement, or alteration of such uses will be considered on their merits.

The guidance provided in this section is not intended to replace the normal planning process. An indication that a proposal would be 'permissible' within a particular land use zoning objective should in no way be taken to imply a grant of permission, or indeed that a planning application may necessarily be successful.

Individual applications are a matter for the Council to decide upon, taking into consideration the wider policies and objectives that pertain to statutory land use planning including Development Plan Standards, Ministerial Guidance, and the merits of individual proposals.

11.16.4 Permissible Uses

A "permissible use" is one which is generally acceptable in principle in the relevant zone, but which is subject to normal planning consideration, including policies and objectives outlined in the Plan.

11.16.5 Open for Consideration Uses

An "open for consideration use" is one which may be permitted where the Council is satisfied that the proposed development would be compatible with the overall policies and objectives for the zone, would not have undesirable effects on any permitted uses, and would otherwise be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

11.16.6 Relaxation of Zoning Objectives for Protected Structures

The Council actively encourages and supports uses which are compatible with the character of Protected Structures. In certain limited cases, to ensure the long-term viability of a Protected Structure, it may be considered appropriate not to stringently apply generic zoning restrictions, including site development standards, provided the Protected Structure is being restored to the highest standard, the special interest, character and setting of the building is protected and the use and development is consistent with conservation policies and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

11.16.7 Land Use Zoning Categories

This section sets out the details of each of the zoning categories, including the specific zoning objective and permissible uses and uses open for consideration.

For clarification purposes the definition of the following uses included in these categories are as follows:

- A Convenience outlet is a single level store selling food and other convenience items with a net sales area of not more than 200m².
- A Health Care Centre is a stand alone premises (i.e. not connected with a dwelling) generally with multiple consulting rooms which may cover a variety of health disciplines.
- A Healthcare Practitioner is a practice operated by the owner/occupier of a dwelling and which is ancillary to the primary use of the dwelling as a normal place of residence.
- Home based economic activities are small scale commercial and professional activities carried out by the owner/occupier of the property that is ancillary to the main use of the property as residential accommodation.
- A Supermarket is a single level, self-service store selling mainly food, with a net retail floorspace less than 2,500m².
- A Superstore is generally a single level, self-service store selling mainly food, or food and some non-food goods, with at least 2,500m² net retail floorspace but not greater than 5,000m² net retail floorspace and with integrated or shared parking.
- A Shop is a comparison retail outlet excluding retail warehouse units.
- Sheltered Housing: The Irish Council for Social Housing define sheltered housing as schemes with on site communal facilities for assisted independent living. Sheltered housing schemes usually have an on-site warden, may include care supports such as the provision of meals and assistance with personal hygiene, and on site facilities can include recreation areas, alarm systems, and a laundry.
- Utilities comprise of water, wastewater, electricity, telecommunications, transport infrastructure.

Zoning Category	Guidance	Permitted Uses	Open for Consideration Uses
A1 Existing Residential Objective: To protect and enhance the amenity and character of existing residential communities	Lands identified as 'Existing Residential' are established residential areas. Development proposals on these lands primarily consist of infill developments and the extension and refurbishment of existing properties. The principle of such proposals are normally acceptable subject to the amenities of surrounding properties being protected and the use, scale, character and design of any development respecting the character of the area.	Residential , Sheltered Housing, B & B / Guest House, Community Facility / Centre, Home Based Economic Activities, Utilities.	Bring Banks, Convenience Outlet, Childcare Facility, Halting Site, Sheltered Housing, Healthcare Practitioner, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Bar, Retirement Home / Residential Institution / Retirement Village, and Veterinary Surgery.

Zoning Category	Guidance	Permitted Uses	Open for Consideration Uses
<p>A2 New Residential</p> <p>Objective: To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities as considered appropriate.</p>	<p>This is the primary zone to accommodate new residential development.</p> <p>Whilst residential zoned lands are primarily intended for residential accommodation, these lands may also include other uses that would support the establishment of residential communities. This could include community, recreational and local shopping facilities.</p> <p>These facilities must be at an appropriate scale and can not interfere with the primary residential use of the land. The detail of ancillary uses to be provided as part of a residential development shall form part of pre-application discussions in respect of any planning proposal unless otherwise indicated in Volume 2 of the Development Plan.</p> <p>Individual convenience stores in neighbourhood centres on A2 zoned lands should generally not exceed 1,000m² net retail floorspace unless otherwise identified in a Local Area Plan.</p> <p>In order to protect the built heritage in the County sensitivity should be given to the design of any residential development within the grounds of or in proximity to any protected structures (Please refer to Appendix 6).</p>	<p>Residential / Sheltered Housing, B & B / Guest House, Bring Banks, Community Facility / Centre, Childcare Facility, Convenience Outlet, Childcare Facility, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Education (Primary or Second Level), Halting Site / Group Housing, Home Based Economic Activities, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Retirement Home / Residential Institution / Retirement Village, Utilities.</p>	<p>Betting Office, Caravan Park, Cultural Facility, Education (Third Level), Enterprise Centre, Health Centre, Healthcare Practitioner, Hotel / Motel / Hostel, Offices <100m²³, Place of Public Worship, Bar/ Restaurant / Café, Take-Away / Fast Food Outlet, Veterinary Surgery.</p>
<p>B1 Commercial/ Town or Village Centre</p> <p>Objective: To protect, provide for and/or improve town and village centre facilities and uses.</p>	<p>Town and Village centres are characterised by a concentration of shops, services, meeting points, and places of employment. Centres in the upper tier of the settlement hierarchy have a more comprehensive range of shops and services than smaller settlements.</p> <p>The majority of new commercial and retail uses will be accommodated on B1 lands in towns and villages. Whilst the principle of a retail outlet on town/village centre lands is acceptable in principle, the size and scale of any such development should be reflective of the role and function of the town and village in the settlement hierarchy. Such developments will be assessed against the relevant policies and objectives in the Retail Strategy in Appendix 4, retail policy in Chapter 4 of this Plan, the DECLG 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities Retail Planning' (2012) and Section 6 of this Chapter.</p> <p>The primary land use in B1 zones is employment generating, service and retail provision. In order to achieve balanced development and create vibrant urban communities, residential use can also be considered on these lands. In order to ensure the delivery of commercial uses commensurate with the status of the settlement the percentage of residential development in B1 zones shall generally not exceed 30 % of the quantum of development in any development proposal in Key Towns, Self-sustaining Growth Towns, Self Sustaining Towns. Exceptions may be facilitated on a case by case basis.</p>	<p>B & B / Guest House, Bank / Financial Institution, Betting Office, Bring Banks, Cinema, Community Facility / Centre, Conference/Event Centre, Convenience Outlet, Childcare Facility, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Cultural Facility, Night Club, Education (Primary or Second Level), Education (Third Level), Funeral Home, Health Centre, Healthcare Practitioner, Home Based Economic Activities, Hotel / Motel / Hostel, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Research & Development, Offices <100m², Offices 100 to 1,000m², Offices >1,000m², Place of Public Worship, Public House, Residential / Sheltered Housing, Restaurant / Café, Supermarket / Superstore, Shop, Take-Away / Fast Food Outlet, Telecommunication Structures, Veterinary Surgery, utilities.</p>	<p>Amusement Arcade, Car Park (incl. Park and Ride), Enterprise Centre, Garden Centre, Hospital, Motor Sales / Repair, Plant & Tool Hire, Factory Outlet Stores, Retirement Home / Residential Institution / Retirement Village, Science & Technology Based Enterprise.</p>

²³ Not for visiting members of the public

Zoning Category	Guidance	Permitted Uses	Open for Consideration Uses
<p>B2 Retail Warehouse Park</p> <p>Objective: To provide for the development of a retail warehouse park.</p>	<p>The objective of B2 zones is to provide for the development of retail warehouse parks.</p>	<p>Cinema, Factory Outlet Stores, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Retail Warehouse, Telecommunication Structures, Service Stations, Utilities.</p>	<p>Bring Banks, Childcare Facility, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Drive Through Restaurant, Enterprise Centre, Garden Centre, Research & Development, Motor Sales / Repair, Offices²⁴, Restaurant / Café, Take-Away / Fast Food Outlet, Science & Technology Based Enterprise, Wholesale Warehousing / Cash and Carry.</p>
<p>C1 Mixed Use</p> <p>Objective: To provide for and facilitate mixed residential and employment generating uses</p>	<p>Lands identified for mixed use development are only appropriate in higher tier settlements. The objective on these lands is to provide opportunities for high density mixed use employment generating activities that also accommodate appropriate levels of residential development thereby facilitating the creation of functional 'live work' communities. These areas are generally located in proximity to high frequency public transport corridors.</p> <p>In order to achieve balanced development the percentage of residential development in C1 zones shall generally not exceed 50 % of the quantum of development.</p>	<p>B & B / Guest House, Bring Banks, Childcare Facility, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Community Facility / Centre, Convenience Outlet, Cultural Facility, Education (Primary or Second Level), Education (Third Level), Enterprise Centre, Health Centre, Healthcare Practitioner, Home Based Economic Activities, Hotel / Motel / Hostel, Offices <100m² Offices 100 to 1,00m², Offices >1,000m², Service Station, Place of Public Worship, Pub, Residential / Sheltered Housing, Restaurant / Café, Utilities.</p>	<p>Betting Office, Car Park (incl. Park and Ride), Cinema, Conference/Event Centre, Dance Hall / Night Club, Drive Through Restaurant, Funeral Home, Garden Centre, Hospital, Industry – Light, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Motor Sales / Repair, Offices >1,000m², Plant & Tool Hire, Research & Development, Retirement Home / Residential Institution/ Retirement Village, Science & Technology Based Enterprise, Shop, Supermarket, Take-Away / Fast Food Outlet, Telecommunication Structures, Veterinary Surgery, Wholesale Warehousing / Cash and Carry.</p>
<p>D1 Tourism</p> <p>Objective: To provide for appropriate and sustainable visitor and tourist facilities and associated uses.</p>	<p>D1 zones have been identified to provide for tourism type uses such as accommodation, and entertainment.</p>	<p>B & B / Guest House, Caravan Park, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Community Facility / Centre, Conference/Event Centre, Medical & related uses, Craft Centre / Craft Shop, Cultural Facility, Hotel / Motel / Hostel, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Restaurant / Café, Water Services / Public Services.</p>	<p>Amusement Arcade, Cinema, Convenience Outlet, Childcare Facility, Cultural Facility, Dance Hall / Night Club, Offices <100m², Public House, Shop, niche type commercial supports, Telecommunication Structures.</p>

²⁴ Uses where the services are not principally for visiting members of the public

Zoning Category	Guidance	Permitted Uses	Open for Consideration Uses
<p>E1 Strategic Employment Zones (High Technology Uses)</p> <p>Objective: To facilitate opportunities for high end technology/ manufacturing and major campus style office based employment within high quality and accessible locations.</p>	<p>E1 zones facilitate opportunities for high end, high value added businesses and corporate headquarters. This adheres to the concept of 4th Generation Science & Technology Parks. It is envisaged that such locations are suitable for high density employment generating activity with associated commercial development located adjacent to or in close proximity to high frequency public transport corridors. This will apply to suitable lands in Navan, Drogheda, Dunboyne and Maynooth Environs.</p>	<p>Bio Technology Manufacturing, Call Centres, Childcare Facility, Convenience Outlet, Cafe, Leisure facilities, Data Centres, Green / Clean Light Industries, Education (third level), High Technology Manufacturing, Information Communication Technologies, International and National Traded Services, Knowledge Based Economic Development, Offices 100 to 1,000m², Offices >1,000m², Medical and Related Uses²⁶, Research & Development, Science & Technology Based Enterprise, Telecommunication Structures, Utilities, Public Park.</p>	<p>Conference/Event Centre, Education, Enterprise / Training Centre, Hotel / Aparthotel, Industry – Light, Transport Depot/Logistics, Warehousing.</p> <p>Uses which are ‘open for consideration’ or not identified as ‘permitted’ under the E1 zoning objective will only be considered where they do not compromise the objective of the overall zoning objective of E1 lands, as a strategic employment zone for high technology uses.</p>
<p>E2 General Enterprise and Employment</p> <p>Objective: To provide for the creation of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for employment through industrial, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing and other general employment/ enterprise uses in a good quality physical environment.</p>	<p>E2 lands constitute an important land bank for employment use which must be protected. The development of E2 lands seek to provide for the creation and production of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for industrial, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing and other general employment / enterprise uses in a good quality physical environment.</p>	<p>Bring Banks, Builder’s Providers, Childcare Facility, Car Park (incl. Park and Ride), CHP / Waste to Energy Facilities, Domestic Fuel Depot, Energy Installation, Enterprise & Business Start Ups, Enterprise / Training Centre, Factory Shop, Furniture Showroom (only where product displayed is manufactured on site), Go Kart Track, Industry – General, Industry – Light, Heavy Vehicle Park, Logistics, Mart / Co-op, Motor Repair / Servicing, Plant & Tool Hire, Recycling Facility (Civic & Amenity), Science & Technology Based Enterprise, Telecommunication Structures, Transport Depot, Warehousing, Utilities.</p>	<p>Abattoir, Car Dismantler / Scrap Yard, Construction & Demolition Waste Recycling Facility, Garden Centre, Leisure Facilities, Motor Sales, Offices 100 – 1,000m²⁶, Service Station, Restaurant / Café, Veterinary Surgery, Waste Recycling / Transfer / Sorting Centre, Wholesale Warehousing / Cash and Carry.</p> <p>Uses which are ‘open for consideration’ or not identified as ‘permitted’ under the E2 zoning objective will only be considered where they do not compromise the objective of the overall zoning objective of E2 lands, for general enterprise and employment uses.</p>
<p>E3 Warehousing and Distribution</p> <p>Objective: To facilitate logistics, warehousing, distribution and supply chain management inclusive of related industry facilities which require food access to the major road network</p>		<p>Bring Banks, Childcare Facility, Car Park (incl. Park and Ride), CHP / Waste to Energy Facilities, Data Centres, Distribution & Supply Chain Management, Domestic Fuel Depot, Energy Installation, Fuel Depot, Heavy Vehicle Park, Logistics, Plant Storage, Recycling Facility (Civic & Amenity), Telecommunication Storage Depot, Transport Depot, Warehousing, Water Services / Public Services, Wholesale Warehousing / Cash and Carry, Utilities.</p>	<p>Enterprise & Business Start Ups, Enterprise/Training Centre, Garden Centre, Industry – Light, Petrol Station, Restaurant / Café, Waste Recycling / Transfer / Sorting Centre.</p> <p>Uses which are ‘open for consideration’ or not identified as ‘permitted’ under the E3 zoning objective will only be considered where they do not compromise the objective of the overall zoning objective of E3 lands, for general enterprise and employment uses.</p>

²⁶ Uses where the services are not principally for visiting members of the public.

Zoning Category	Guidance	Permitted Uses	Open for Consideration Uses
<p>F1 Open Space</p> <p>Objective: To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities.</p>		Car Park for Recreational Purposes, Craft Centre / Craft Shop, Community Facility / Centre, Cultural Facility, Cycleways / Greenways / Trail Development, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Playing Pitches, Playgrounds, Utilities.	Allotments, Bring Banks, Childcare Facility, Place of Public Worship.
<p>G1 Community Infrastructure</p> <p>Objective: To provide for necessary community, social, and educational facilities.</p>		Allotments, Car Park (incl. Park and Ride), Cemetery/Crematorium, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Childcare Facility, Community Facility / Centre, Cultural Facility, Education, Health Centre, Hospital, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Place of Public Worship, Playing Pitches, Playgrounds, Recycling Facility (Civic & Amenity), Utilities.	Bring Banks, Funeral Home, Gymnasium, Halting Site / Group Housing, Healthcare Practitioner, Residential / Sheltered Housing, Restaurant / Café, Retirement Home / Residential Institution / Retirement Village, Telecommunication Structures.
<p>H1 High Amenity</p> <p>Objective: To protect and improve areas of high amenity.</p>		Cycleways / Greenways / Trail Development, Land & Water Based Recreational Activities Open Space, Cultural Activities.	Kiosk, Restaurant, Tea Room
<p>R1 Rail Corridor</p> <p>Objective: To provide for a strategic rail corridor and associated physical infrastructure.</p>	The RSES includes an objective supporting the implementation of the extension of the rail from Dunboyne to Navan ²⁷ . The protection of the designed route of the extension of the Clonsilla to Parkway rail line to Navan differs from most of the land use zoning objectives included in this Development Plan. It has a single purpose use which is to protect the designed route from development which would compromise its future delivery. It is not necessary to therefore identify the suitability or otherwise of individual uses on said lands as the intention of Meath County Council is clear.		

²⁷ This is subject to a Draft Ministerial Direction in relation to the RSES 2019-2031.

Zoning Category	Guidance	Permitted Uses	Open for Consideration Uses
<p>TU Transport and Utility Infrastructure</p> <p>Objective: To provide for necessary community, social, and educational facilities.</p>	<p>These lands have been identified to provide for essential public infrastructure. The nature of these facilities is such that the use of the lands is dedicated to the provision and maintenance of this infrastructure. It is acknowledged however that there are instances where additional uses may be appropriate. This would primarily relate to rail stations and park and ride facilities close to or within town centres where additional commercial uses may be acceptable. Applications for a commercial/mixed use on such lands will be assessed on a case by case basis and will be required to demonstrate that such a use would be compatible to the location and would not undermine the primary use of the land which is to provide essential infrastructure and services.</p>		
<p>RA Rural Areas</p> <p>Objective: To protect and promote in a balanced way, the development of agriculture, forestry and sustainable rural-related enterprise, community facilities, biodiversity, the rural landscape, and the built and cultural heritage.</p>	<p>The primary objective is to protect and promote the value and future sustainability of rural areas. Agriculture, forestry, tourism and rural related resource enterprises will be employed for the benefit of the local and wider population. A balanced approach involving the protection and promotion of rural biodiversity, promotion of the integrity of the landscape, and enhancement of the built and cultural heritage will be adopted.</p>	<p>Agriculture, Agricultural Buildings, Agri-Tourism, Boarding Kennels²⁸, Burial Grounds, Extractive Industry/Quarrying, Equestrian, Farm Shop²⁹, Forestry related activities, Horticulture, Caravan and Camping Park³⁰, Golf Course, Open Space, Research and Development³¹, Residential³², Restaurant/Cafe³³, Sustainable Energy Installations, Utility Structures.</p>	<p>Community Facility, Cultural Facility, Education, Garden Centre, Micro Businesses³⁴, Playing Fields, Recreational Facility, Sports Club, Telecommunication Structures, Workshop³⁵, Veterinary Clinic.</p>

²⁸ Where the use is ancillary to the use of the dwelling as a main residence.

²⁹ Only where the bulk of the produce is produced on the farm

³⁰ No static mobile homes or permanent structure (unless ancillary to the operation of the campsite) shall be permitted

³¹ Rural related research and development only

³² Subject to compliance with the Rural Settlement Strategy

³³ Only where ancillary to tourism uses or conversion of protected or vernacular structures

³⁴ Refer to the Economic Chapter for further information

³⁵ Only where ancillary to an existing dwelling where it is demonstrated that the proposed activity is carried out by a resident of the dwelling, with no visiting members of the public.

³⁶ Only where the bulk of the produce is produced on the farm.

³⁷ Where the use is ancillary to the use of the dwelling as a main residence.

³⁸ Subject to compliance with the Rural Settlement Strategy.

³⁹ Only where ancillary to tourism uses or conversion of protected or vernacular structures.

⁴⁰ Where the use is ancillary to the use of the dwelling as a main residence.

⁴¹ No static mobile homes or permanent structure (unless ancillary to the operation of the campsite) shall be permitted.

⁴² Refer to Chapter 4 Economy and Employment Strategy for further information on micro businesses.

⁴³ Rural related research and development only.

⁴⁴ Only where ancillary to an existing dwelling where it is demonstrated that the proposed activity is carried out by a resident of the dwelling, with no visiting members of the public.