

Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019

Manager's Report on Pre Draft Public Consultation Stage



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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF PRE DRAFT CONSULTATION REPORT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide a description of the pre draft public consultation undertaken for the review of the Meath County Development Plan and preparation of a new County Development Plan 2013-2019.

The report consists of four sections:

Section 1 provides an introduction and overview of the report and describes the consultation that was undertaken during the pre-draft consultation phase of the review.

Section 2 details the legislative background and requirements for the report.

Section 3 provides a discussion of the issues raised during the pre draft consultation phase and the Manager's opinion on them.

Section 4 outlines the Manager's recommendations on the policies to be included in the draft development plan.

This report forms part of the statutory procedure for the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 and is being submitted to the Elected Members of Meath County Council for their consideration on the 29th July 2011.

1.2 PRE DRAFT PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The pre draft public consultation stage for the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 took place from 2nd March 2011 to 29th April 2011.

The public consultation stage was advertised through a number of media:

- An advertisement was placed in the Meath Chronicle in the newspaper edition dated 5th March 2011.
- An advertisement was placed in the Irish Independent in the newspaper edition dated 2nd March 2011



- A notice was placed on the Meath County Council website.
- Notification was issued through Meath County Council's twitter feed.
- A specific website for the County Development Plan review was set up providing background information to the process and details of public information events and how to make submissions.
- Prescribed authorities were notified. Appendix 1 contains the list of prescribed authorities notified.

A strategic issues paper was prepared for the purposes of raising awareness of the nature of both the development plan and the review process. The paper outlines some of the key characteristics and features of County Meath, recent trends in development and likely influences on the next development plan. The preparation of the strategic issues paper was notified in the public advertisements and the paper was made available for download from the County Development Plan review website and for sale from the planning department.

Submissions were invited from the public during the pre draft consultation period and could be made electronically or sent via post. A total of 67 submissions were received. A list of the persons and organisations who made submissions is included in Appendix 2.

1.2.1 Public Information Events

A series of public information evenings were held in order to provide an opportunity for members of the public to learn about the review process, to highlight some of the strategic issues facing the county and facilitate feedback from the public about issues they felt should be taken into account in the preparation of the draft Development Plan.

Public information evenings were held in each electoral area of the county as follows:

- Kells Town Council on 22nd March 2011
- Duleek Area Office on 24th March 2011
- Dunshaughlin Area Office on 28th March 2011
- Trim Library on 29th March 2011
- Planning Office Navan on 31st March 2011

A report on the information evenings is included in Appendix 3 to this report.



SECTION 2 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND TO MANAGER'S REPORT

2.1 STATUTORY CONTENTS OF THE MANAGER'S REPORT

Section 11(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2010 requires that the County Manager prepare a report on the submissions and observations received during the pre draft consultation period and on matters arising out of the consultations made during this phase. The Act requires that the Manager's Report shall:

- (a) List the persons or bodies who made submission or observations as well as any persons or bodies consulted by the authority.
- (b) Summarise the issues raised in the submissions and during the consultations, where appropriate but the report shall not refer to a submission relating to a request or proposal for zoning of particular land for any purpose.
- (c) Give the opinion of the Manager to the issues raised, taking account of:
 - the proper planning and sustainable development of the area,
 - the statutory obligations of any local authority in the area, and
 - any relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or of any Minister of the Government.
- (d) State the Manager's recommendation on the policies to be included in the draft development plan.
- (e) Summarise the issues raised and the recommendations made by the Dublin Transport Authority and outline the recommendations of the Manager in relation to the manner in which those issues and recommendations should be addressed in the draft development plan.
- (f) Summarise the issues raised and recommendations made by the Dublin and Mid East Regional Authorities and outline the recommendations of the Manager in relation to the manner in which those issues and recommendations should be addressed in the draft development plan.

2.2 PROCEDURE FOLLOWING PREPARATION OF MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager's report must be prepared not later than 16 weeks after giving notice of the review of the development plan. It must then be submitted to the members of the planning authority, or to a committee of the planning authority, as may be decided by the members of the authority, for their consideration. This report is being distributed to the members of Meath County Council on 29th July 2011.

Following consideration of the report, the members of the planning authority or of the committee, as the case may be, may issue directions to the Manager regarding the preparation of the draft development plan. Any such directions must be strategic in nature, consistent with the draft core strategy, and must take account of the statutory obligations of any local authority in the area and any relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or of any Minister of the Government. In issuing directions, the members shall be restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which the development plan relates. Directions must be issued not later than 10 weeks after the submission of the Manager's report. The Manager shall comply with any such directions.

No later than 12 weeks following receipt of any directions from the members, the Manager shall prepare a Draft Development Plan and submit it to the members of the planning authority for their consideration. The members consider the Draft Development Plan and it shall be deemed to be the Draft Development Plan unless the planning authority by resolution amend the draft plan.



SECTION 3 ISSUES RAISED DURING THE PRE DRAFT CONSULTATION PHASE AND MANAGER'S OPINION ON ISSUES RAISED

3.1 INTRODUCTION

A total of 67 submissions were received during the pre draft consultation phase and a list of the persons and organisations who made submissions is included in Appendix 2. In addition, a number of comment cards were completed following the public consultation events. A wide range of issues were raised which are discussed in this report under the following headings:

1. Strategic planning
2. Population, settlement and housing
3. Economic development and employment
4. Urban and architectural design
5. Physical infrastructure
6. Transportation
7. Rural development
8. Community, recreation and open space
9. Environment
10. Heritage and conservation
11. Miscellaneous

In accordance with Section 11(4)(bb) and (bc) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the submissions received from the Dublin Transport Authority (submission made by the National Transport Authority) and the Dublin and Mid East Regional Authorities are summarised and responded to separately.

3.2 SUBMISSION BY THE NATIONAL TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

Main Issues Raised

The Authority advise that a Draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area has been prepared and that the consultation process for the draft document is complete. The final document will be submitted to the Minister for Transport for approval over the next few months.

Although the Transport Strategy is a draft document, the Authority advises that Meath County Council reflects the policies, objectives and measures contained within the Draft Transport Strategy in the preparation of the County Development Plan.

The Draft Transport Strategy includes the provision that local transport plans be prepared for each of the Designated Towns and Districts (Measure LU3). These plans comprise the implementation of the relevant measures contained in the Draft Transport Strategy by local authorities in conjunction with the Authority and should form part of the County Development Plan once adopted. The Authority will then clarify how these plans can be implemented and will work in partnership with the Council on transport and land use matters in the preparation of the County Development Plan.

Manager's Opinion on Main Issues Raised

The preparation of the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area will be an important consideration in the preparation of the next Development Plan, guiding strategic policies in terms of land use and transport and more specific objectives for measures such as facilitating walking and cycling and transport investment projects. Meath County Council support the hierarchy of road users set out in the draft strategy which places pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users at the top of the hierarchy and the higher level objective to redress unsustainable car dominated travel trends and are committed to including measures to realise these and other objectives of the draft Strategy in the next Development Plan. The preparation of transport plans for larger towns would constitute an important input for development plans and local area plans

3.3 SUBMISSION BY THE DUBLIN AND MID EAST REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Main Issues Raised

General

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) 2010-2022 aim to direct the future growth of the Greater Dublin Area up to 2022 by implementing the strategic planning framework set out in the National Spatial Strategy and by supporting the forthcoming National Transport Authority Strategy. The RPGs provide policy guidance to local authorities in the areas of population and housing targets, settlement patterns, infrastructure, rural development, economic development, flood risk, heritage and the environment and social infrastructure.

Settlement, Population and Housing

It is submitted that the settlement strategy and growth scenario for County Meath supports the key fundamentals of the Regional Planning Guidelines settlement strategy and is informed by the regional population and housing targets within the RPGs. An integrated approach should be taken to settlement, transport policy and employment.

The population and housing targets are repeated in the submission as outlined in the RPGs. It is considered important that the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 is consistent with the RPG settlement hierarchy.

Focal areas for regional population growth should be considered in existing settlements in association with regional investments in transport infrastructure as promoted in the RPGs.

It is noted that careful consideration should be given to population distribution, housing land requirements, including a sequential approach to the build out of settlements and appropriate phasing of land ensuring settlements and towns grow at a sustainable rate appropriate to their position in the RPG settlement hierarchy. This process should be supported by an evidence based core strategy and complemented by the housing strategy for the County.

Economic Development

The RPGs identify a number of strategic employment centres within the County, including the Drogheda Core Economic Area and the Navan Core Economic Area. Within these areas there are primary economic growth towns which are designated population growth centres served by multi modal transport corridors. The secondary economic growth towns of Ashbourne/ Dunboyne and Kells are considered to have supporting roles.

These areas are considered important centres to deliver balanced regional development and should assist in reducing the volume of unsustainable commuting patterns in Meath.

It is suggested that these identified economic core areas be considered as focal points for economic development and investment within the County. The RPGs recognise the importance of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and the South Drogheda Environs is identified as playing a key role in the future economic development of the corridor.

It is important that the retail policies and retail development within the county support the policies and recommendations of the regional retail strategy and economic growth areas identified within the RPGs. It is indicated that this can be achieved by directing new retail development into



existing settlements with significant population bases and centres designated for population growth and which are served by high quality transport links.

The RPGs recognise the requirement for sufficient port capacity and related services to serve the long terms needs of the region and wider State and they play an important role in export led growth. "The RPGs support an examination of expanded port facilities within the GDA as per strategic recommendation PIR8, in line with the Indecon report."

Infrastructure

There is a need to implement land use policies that support and protect investments currently being made in all elements of transportation infrastructure and consistency between transport planning, spatial planning and land use management, which should reduce travel demand and distances between jobs, housing and community facilities. Sustainable rural transport and freight transport issues should be considered.

The Navan Rail Line (Phase 2), Leinster Outer Orbital Route Corridor and new cycling and walking routes are transport investments that are supported in the RPGs (however this may need to be revised following the completion of the NTA strategy).

The RPGs establish a number of investment needs for energy, water and waste water which are considered important for the delivery of the RPGs but also may assist in infrastructure provisions within Meath.

Rural Development

It is recognised that for the continued vitality of rural communities and rural villages within the Greater Dublin Area, access to a range of services is vital. Policies that can enhance the rural economy such as agriculture, rural tourism, forestry and horticulture are supported at regional level. However enterprises with no specific location requirements to the rural areas should be directed to existing employment centres within existing settlements to support their economic status.

Community

The necessary infrastructure, both social and recreation to serve communities, in terms of education, health care, housing accommodation, support networks and leisure should be supported by the Local Authority through the planning process. Policies within the Development Plan should advocate these issues also.

Environment and Heritage

It is important that all plans and infrastructure projects which have the potential to impact on Natura 2000 sites are subject to relevant environmental assessment under the provision of the Habitats Assessment Directive. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process is critical to the plan making process. The Development Plan policies should be shaped by environmental directives and take into consideration issues of flood risk, river basin management plans, climate change, impacts on water quality and integrated coastal zone management (where relevant).

A strategy for green infrastructure within Meath would be beneficial to enhancing the environment of the County. A green infrastructure strategy would raise awareness of issues such as biodiversity and green spaces.

Manager's Opinion on Main Issues Raised

General

The Planning and Development Act 2000-2010 placed renewed emphasis on the importance of the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines in preparing Development Plans. The core strategy to be contained within the plan will be the primary means of demonstrating how the said plan is consistent with the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022.

Settlement, Population and Housing

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 set out the framework for a settlement hierarchy for the County Development Plan 2013-2019 and in particular identify the centres at the upper levels of the hierarchy. It is acknowledged that the key principle underlying the successful implementation of the settlement strategy of the Guidelines is the focusing of growth towards a) the metropolitan area of the county, b) settlements at the higher end of the hierarchy and c) areas best served by public transport. It is considered that in order to create sustainable settlements an integrated approach should be taken to settlement, employment and transport as advocated in the RPGs. An updated housing strategy will be prepared for the county as part of the development plan review which will be based on the population projections set out in the RPGs. Thereafter the assessment of the requirement for residential zoned land will consider where phasing is necessary and the manner of implementing such phasing in accordance with the sequential approach.



Economic Development

The promotion of economic development in Meath is a corporate goal of Meath County Council. The support in the RPGs for sustainable economic development across the Greater Dublin Area is welcomed and it is considered important to realise this in order to reduce unsustainable outward commuting patterns from Meath. The economic strategy in the RPGs will be a key consideration in formulating a framework for economic development in the Development Plan which will support investment in the county and the growth of appropriate industrial, services and commercial development. It is intended to prepare an updated retail strategy for Meath as part of the Development Plan review which will be informed by the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008, as endorsed in the current RPGs.

Bremore Port

The Regional Planning Guidelines support the examination of the expansion of Dublin Port and / or a new Port facility on the East Coast of the Greater Dublin Area through the environmental and planning processes to make provision for envisaged long term needs in capacity, to clarify viable options available and to address the impact of future development on Natura 2000 sites, landscapes and biodiversity impacts. Drogheda Port Company proposes to develop a world class deepwater port, logistics centre and business park at Gormonston, Co. Meath (Bremore Port). The proposed site is within the Greater Dublin Area, is rail linked, adjacent to the M1 motorway and is approximately 15 minutes from the M50 motorway. The proposed new deepwater port would have the deepest berths on the east coast of Ireland which would provide 24 hour marine access with facilities to accommodate new short sea shipping services to the United Kingdom, Europe, Scandinavia and the Baltic states. At present, the Government approved Joint Venture comprising Drogheda Port and Castle Market Holdings is considering different options to advance the project through the statutory planning consent process and a series of studies have been commissioned by the Joint Venture to advise on this process. It is proposed to provide the necessary supportive policy framework in the County Development Plan, subject to certain critical incremental thresholds being reached in the intervening period. The development of such a policy framework would require the undertaking of the necessary strategic environmental and appropriate assessments regarding the potential impact of development activity on the area and in particular on any Natura 2000 sites in proximity to the site.

The development of the deepwater port would allow Meath County Council to facilitate the development of certain economic sectors such as organic chemicals, pharmaceuticals, LPG and domestic fuel terminals, logistics, etc. at this strategic location and thereby transform the economic and employment prospects of the entire East Meath – North Fingal area.



Based on the foregoing, it is the intention that the Development Plan would contain a policy context sufficient to assess any applications that may be forthcoming. This policy context would be developed in line with the Strategic Environmental Assessment process and assessment under the Habitats Directive.

Infrastructure

It is acknowledged that an integrated approach needs to be taken to land use and transportation in the Development Plan that will promote compact and mixed use settlements to reduce both the need to travel and the distances travelled. Growth should be targeted towards centres served by high quality public transport in order to maximise the investment made. The need to serve rural areas with public transport as set out in the RPGs is noted and the means of promoting this in the Development Plan can be explored in the preparation of the draft Plan. Similarly freight transport issues need to be considered, particularly in light of developing proposals for a port in the County and the need to facilitate industry and consequent employment generation in the county.

Meath County Council are supportive of the delivery of the Navan Rail Line (Phase 2) and Leinster Outer Orbital Route and intend to make provision for delivery of same within the next Development Plan.

The need to facilitate and support cycling and walking in order to increase modal share of these modes is recognised. This includes the provision of footpaths and cycleways along new roads and through new development and examining how to make existing settlements more pedestrian and cycle friendly.

The specific infrastructural projects listed in the RPGs which would be relevant to Meath are noted. In particular, the identification of a new future long term water supply for the Dublin Water Region; the upgrade and expansion of abstraction of Navan Water Treatment Plant; East Meath, Drogheda and South Louth Water Supply Scheme; expansion of the Ringsend waste water treatment system; identification of suitable site for the new Greater Dublin Regional Drainage Project; improvement of 9B and 9C sewers; and upgrading of sewer systems are recognised as being key to provide capacity in infrastructure in Meath and the GDA in the long term. It is intended that the Development Plan would be supportive of such projects.

Rural Development

It is recognised that access to services for rural communities is required and the network of villages and small settlements in the county has the potential to deliver these. The agricultural sector plays a key role in sustaining rural areas. However a wider range of employment



opportunities are required. The support in the RPGs for the continued viability of agriculture, horticulture and other rural based enterprises is noted and such support should be transferred to Development Plan policy formation.

Community

The approach to community development as set out in the RPGs is supported by Meath County Council and it is intended that the Development Plan would promote the provision of social infrastructure necessary to serve the residents of the county through the inclusion of appropriate policies and objectives.

Environment and Heritage

Strategic Environmental Assessment, assessment under the Habitats Directive (AA) and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment are all to be prepared as part of the Development Plan review process and will feed into the development of policies in the plan. The River Basin Management Plans which have been adopted can also be used to formulate appropriate Development Plan policies and objectives. The issue of climate change is required to be addressed in the Development Plan and will influence the strategic settlement, land use and transport policies for the County.

A green infrastructure strategy is being prepared with the project being led by the Heritage Office of Meath County Council. It is anticipated that this strategy can add significant value to the preparation of the Development Plan.

3.4 STRATEGIC PLANNING

Main Issues Raised

General

It is stated that the vision for Meath set out in the current County Development Plan 2007-2013 as 'an excellent place to invest in, to visit and to live in' with an emphasis on sustainable development is a vision that should be carried forward into the new Core Strategy and the County Development Plan. It is submitted that it is not possible to monitor the effectiveness of the policies and objectives of the Core Strategy and the Development Plan without the inclusion of quantifiable targets. Therefore, it is stated that the Core Strategy and the County Development Plan must contain robust policies and objectives that are judged against verifiable and implementable criteria which are subject to ongoing monitoring.



Core Strategy – Retail

It is stated in various submissions that the Core Strategy and County Development Plan must seek to address the issue of trade leakage from the County. The Core Strategy should be supportive of retail developments within 'Large Growth Towns I' (including Navan and Drogheda Environs) and 'Large Growth Towns II' (Dunboyne). The Council should also support retail developments in 'Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns' (Ashbourne, Kells, Trim and Dunshaughlin). It is important that the Core Strategy recognises the contribution that retailing makes to the County's economy and an appropriate policy response should be formulated to stimulate further investment and economic growth in this sector.

Core Strategy – Bremore Port

It is stated that the Core Strategy must recognise Drogheda as a significant port. Submissions request that the new Development Plan should encourage the identification of a Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) for the proposed Bremore Port to facilitate the development of a modern, deepwater port and associated landside and hinterland development. It is argued that the designation of a SDZ for the area will help generate significant new port capacity and will have implications for the development of trade, land transport, economic development, employment and land use in County Meath.

Core Strategy – Employment Creation

It is stated that clarity needs to be provided in the new Development Plan, on the policies relating to "employment generating objective framework plans" as the processes in the current County Development Plan are more applicable to residential zonings. Various submissions requested that the Core Strategy seek to address securing and protecting employment in the County. In order to create further employment in the extractive industry, the Core Strategy should support existing extractive development and the future development of an enterprise, innovation and industrial development cluster, centred on Killaskillen. It is also stated that a "Thematic Spatial Strategy for Industrial Development and Enterprise" must be devised for the County and that the existing Lagan Cement Landholding could be cited as an example of a suitable area for industrial development and enterprise in order to stimulate economic growth in the sector.

Core Strategy – Tourism

The new Core Strategy should acknowledge the important roles that new and diverse tourism and visitor attractions can play in enhancing Meath's tourism sector. Appropriate strategic policies and objectives should be included in the new Development Plan to consolidate and encourage the development of the County's tourism sector.



Core Strategy – Energy

It is stated that it is important that the Core Strategy and the Meath County Development Plan recognise the established relationship between economic growth and electricity consumption. In this context, it is important that strategic documents ensure adequate priority for key electricity transmission projects that are critical to the future development of the region. It is further stated that the Core strategy should seek to encourage the development of renewable energy sources, together with measures aimed at reducing energy demand and encouraging the more efficient use of energy, which are priorities, at national and European level.

Core Strategy - National Road Network

It is essential to ensure that the Core Strategy ensures that existing and planned investment in the national road network is capitalised upon to maximise the potential of the most suitable landbanks, from the perspective of both viability and sustainability, to be brought forward for development in these uncertain times.

Rural Areas and Rural Based Employment

The Core Strategy should aim to reinforce the vitality and future of smaller towns, villages and Graigs as nodes for rural development and ensuring functional relationships between housing and the rural area in which it is located. The Core Strategy must stress that rural development should be consolidated within existing villages and settlements that can achieve sustainable rural communities as set out within the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 (RPGs). Various submissions also recommend that the Core Strategy provides evidence based objectives in relation to the planning and management of villages, particularly ones which are rich in cultural heritage and community assets. Appropriate policies should also be put in place to ensure that the local entrepreneurship and creation of viable local employment through the expansion of established enterprise nodes in rural areas should be acknowledged and their future consolidation protected.

Core Strategy - Land Use Policies

It is suggested that an integrated and sustainable approach is taken to settlement, employment and transport landuse policies, as advocated throughout the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. The core strategy should place emphasis on directing development to areas with existing/planned transport corridors appropriate to the type of development envisaged.

Policies promoting the principles of sustainability for land use and transport should be integrated into all land use objectives particularly those that relate to employment generation to promote sustainable modes of transport and reduction in the requirement to travel. It is stated that this

should be highlighted in the text relating to land use zoning objectives particularly employment zones such as E1 and E2.

Manager's Opinion on Main Issues Raised

General

The vision statement for the Development Plan should represent the over-arching aspiration for the county over the lifetime of the Plan. It is considered that sustainability should feature strongly in the vision statement, which should also reflect the need to protect the natural environment, natural resources and the heritage of Meath; represent the need for the county to be an excellent place to live and work in; and which is supportive of communities.

The comments in respect of the need for quantifiable targets to facilitate monitoring of the Development Plan are noted and it is agreed that such targets should be clear and unambiguous. By their nature, some policies may be general in form but it is considered that the development of policies and objectives should generally endeavour to phrase them as clear, succinct and measurable.

Core Strategy

The core strategy will be an important component of the next Development Plan. The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government 'Guidance Note on Core Strategies' outline the information which should be contained in the core strategy and will strongly influence the format of the core strategy in the Development Plan. There is an emphasis in the Act on the inclusion of issues relating to the settlement strategy and retail policy, rural areas and transport links must also be addressed. It is also envisaged that the core strategy would include key elements of the economic strategy given the need to ensure integration between settlement policy and economic development. Similarly, there is a need to ensure that spatial policy in settlement and economic development supports sustainable transport patterns and consequently there is merit in identifying strategic transport objectives in the core strategy and key strategic objectives in other policy areas. However, notwithstanding the above, it is considered that the core strategy should endeavour to remain a concise and succinct document illustrating the consistency between the Development Plan objectives and the development objectives of the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines. It is also envisaged that the core strategy would generally take a broad thematic approach.



The extent of information considered appropriate to be contained in the core strategy in relation to issues such as village management and planning will be considered during the preparation of the draft plan. However it should be noted that the core strategy will be complementary to the remainder of the Development Plan which may also address such issues.

3.5 POPULATION, SETTLEMENT AND HOUSING

Main Issues Raised

General

The settlement strategy must be responsive to issues such as sustainable development, efficient transport, labour force, employment projections and balanced regional development (as per the "Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities", 2007). Regional population growth should be considered in association with regional investments in transport infrastructure as promoted within Strategic Policy 'SP1' of the RPGs. A sequential approach should be taken to the development of settlements and appropriate phasing of land to ensure a sustainable growth rate for towns and settlements that are in line with the RPG settlement hierarchy. This process should then be supported by an evidence based Core Strategy in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act, as amended, and complemented by the housing strategy for the County.

Accommodating Growth

It is stated that the consolidation of towns, including brownfield sites and extension of services should be considered before zoning further land on the edge of towns in order to counteract urban sprawl. The Council needs to ensure that sufficient housing is built to cater for increased population. Higher population densities should be accommodated at transport nodes.

One submission questions the population projections that are quoted in the Strategic Issues Paper and states that there is already sufficient land zoned to cater for the housing needs of County Meath. The submission also postulates that there is a large quantum of unsold housing stock on the market in addition to unfinished developments and therefore the Council should consider de-zoning lands. It is also recommended that inventories should be compiled of all unfinished commercial and residential properties and all planning permissions that have been granted but not yet commenced.



Housing Policies

Housing plays an important role in helping to create socially inclusive and sustainable communities. There is a need to assess new social and affordable housing needs to ascertain what facilities are required and where they are required. The Council should support well designed, higher densities and critical mass at strategic lands located in close proximity to transport nodes.

*Settlement Strategy, Settlement Hierarchies and Population Growth:**Drogheda*

Related to Drogheda's designation as 'Large Growth Town I', it is stated that the new Settlement Strategy should encourage population expansion of Drogheda to 50,000 by 2022. It is also stated that the forthcoming Core Strategy and County Development Plan should continue to promote the Drogheda Environs as one of the county's 'Strategic Development' Centres. The new Development Plan should prioritise development on lands with potential for good access to Drogheda railway station and expansion of the station itself. A consistent theme throughout the RPG's is that of linking employment, housing and public transport. This theme also permeates into the South Drogheda Environs LAP and the Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan. It is suggested that the Southern Environs of Drogheda offer the most sustainable development area for the future growth of Drogheda in keeping with the policy objectives of the RPG's. It is stated that the Development Plan should identify existing lands that provide opportunities for additional transport connectivity between Park and Ride facilities in Drogheda and the M1 motorway in order to facilitate better access to strategically important transport facilities.

Dunshaughlin

It is stated that Dunshaughlin is appropriately placed to accommodate a significant share of the County allocation of housing for the Hinterland Area as advocated by the RPG's. It is submitted that the significance of the strategic location of Dunshaughlin has been specifically singled out and acknowledged in the RPG's with its full potential to further expand as a 'Sustainable Moderate Growth Town' to be realised once the Railway Order for the Phase II Navan Railway Line has been granted. Therefore, it is considered that the Council should revisit the quantum and scale of additional residential households allocated to Dunshaughlin. The unrivalled transport links now afforded to Dunshaughlin, combined with the RPG's recognition of Dunshaughlin's status as a growth town, should dictate that increased residential allocation for the town is now a sustainable priority. It is stated the County Plan should also include a revised land use study to make more sensible and sustainable use of lands within the current development boundary of Dunshaughlin.

Enfield

It is requested that the forthcoming Development Plan and Core Strategy should retain Enfield's 'Small Town' status. It is stated that consideration should be given to distributing a greater share of the 'Small Town' housing allocation to Enfield in light of its rail and public transport connections. Therefore, existing zonings in the current Development Plan pertaining to Enfield should be retained and development prioritised and phased in an appropriate manner. Various submissions also stated that the population threshold of Enfield should be increased to a target of 5,000 for 2019. It is submitted that this target is considered reasonable having regard to the rate of population increase experienced in Enfield thus far.

Gormanston

The new Development Plan should provide a robust planning context for the development of Gormanston as a key settlement to support the development of the port at Bremore providing land based commerce, accommodation, urban services and education opportunities. It is submitted that Gormanston should be designated as a 'Key Village' in the settlement hierarchy with a population target of over 1,340 persons reinstated in the new Development Plan.

Julianstown

It is submitted that the Development Plan should follow the RPG's guidance and direct residential development towards Drogheda and the M1 corridor. The Settlement Strategy should provide for sufficient residential and commercial development at the heart of Julianstown village to consolidate the village form. It is submitted that if the commercial development of the village centre is not facilitated by the Core Strategy and the County Development Plan, then the objectives of the current Julianstown Village Design Statement will remain entirely aspirational with no conceivable delivery mechanism. It is further argued that the County Plan should separate Julianstown from the rest of the East Meath Local Area Plan to allow for a range of specific development objectives for Julianstown. Consideration must be given to preparing Julianstown's own, stand alone statutory plan, with policies specifically designed to facilitate the vision as outlined in the Village Design Statement. It is also submitted that the designation of Julianstown as merely a commuter village or 'dormitory' village should be resolved.

Kells

Specific submissions requested that appropriate policies and objectives are incorporated into the new Development Plan that seek to develop a proper public park and sports amenities for the town of Kells on 11 acres of lands currently designated for the provision of social and affordable housing. It is further stated that plans for the proposed link road from N52 to R163 should be



eradicated (it is argued that there is no longer a need for this new road due to the opening of the M3 motorway and the Kells bypass).

Kilcock

The RPG's for the GDA identify Kilcock as a 'Moderate Sustainable Growth Town' within the Metropolitan area. It is submitted that the Core Strategy and associated Settlement Hierarchy within the forthcoming County Development Plan 2013-2019 acknowledges this designation and the strategic role of the Kilcock Environs area in accommodating new residential development over the period to 2019. The application of the sequential approach to the location of new residential development should also be emphasised in the new Development Plan.

It is submitted that the delivery of phased residential development of lands to deliver an identified quantum of housing in accordance with the Development Plan 2007-2013: Order of Priority – Variation No. 2 should be carried forward to the forthcoming County Development Plan 2013-2019. Furthermore, it is imperative that the Core Strategy provides for an allocation of housing units to Kilcock which is consistent with, and ensures the full implementation of, the agreed Joint Implementation Strategy and Protocol for the Kilcock Environs Local Area Plan (KELAP) 2009-2015. It is submitted that all pre-requisites of the Council and the Board are now in place to commence the roll out of development within the KELAP lands and the Core Strategy and the Draft Development Plan should appropriately provide for the implementation of the KELAP over the lifetime of the plan. It is further suggested that the Council should seek to ensure that the KELAP lands remain within the first phase of release of development lands in County Meath

Laytown

It is stated that the Core Strategy and the forthcoming Development Plan should build upon the concepts of the 'Smarter Travel' policy document and sustainable development concepts and therefore should include reference to the enhancement and future development of Laytown.

Maynooth

It is stated that the current dynamic clusters at Dunboyne-Clonee-Pace (near Carton and Maynooth) and the cluster of Ashbourne-Dunshaughlin-Ratoath should be retained in the new Development Plan which will help achieve the objectives of the RPG's and deliver sustainable development. Furthermore, it is submitted that the development of a hi-tech / bio-tech cluster at Carton will greatly enhance employment in this part of the County and therefore should be supported in the forthcoming plan.



Navan

The Settlement Strategy for Meath should be based on the key principle of consolidating the growth of the Metropolitan Area and concentrating future development of the Hinterland Area into a number of selected major centres, particularly 'Large Growth Towns' of Navan and Drogheda Environs. It is stated that if the Council is to realise its vision of a sustainable and competitive county, the majority of future development in Meath should be channelled into Navan. Navan is located at the heart of Meath's Hinterland Area and its future development should be centred on the premise of creating a self sustaining town. Given Navan's designation as a 'Primary Growth Centre' and 'Large Growth Town I', it is stated that Navan Retail Park offers a practical and realistic opportunity to implement a masterplanned sustainable development approach which is consistent with the NSS, RPG's and Retail Strategy for the GDA and will provide jobs and services to Navan and its local hinterland. The provision of high quality mixed-use, employment-based development, on this site can assist in reducing commuting distances, whilst also promoting sustainable travel patterns in the town.

Pace

The status of Pace and its designated role in delivering regional development objectives must be appropriately acknowledged and supported in the Draft Development Plan and Core Strategy. The provision of highly accessible employment lands at Pace will facilitate and encourage the development of a designated dynamic cluster which will allow for the creation of critical mass in terms of residential population and economic activities, sufficient to sustain the proposed expanded economic sector of the area. Therefore, it is submitted that the Council should consider designating the Pace area as a Strategic Development Zone. The status of Pace and its acknowledged role in achieving national and regional sustainable development objectives should be considered of strategic importance to warrant consideration for the designation of a SDZ.

The Integrated Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation (IFPLUT) establishes a framework for the accommodation of significant growth within the Dunboyne-Clonee-Pace Rail Corridor. It is recommended that the IFPLUT is completed and refined and should therefore subsequently inform the preparation of the County Development Plan.

Ratoath

Various submissions highlighted the extent of population growth in Ratoath over the last few years. It is stated that the population of Ratoath has grown by 91% between 2001 and 2006. The 2006 census indicated that 34% of the population is under 14 years of age and as such this needs to be accounted for in the next development plan in terms of future provision of housing, schools and employment. The Core Strategy should recognise the important role Ratoath has to



play in the economic recovery of the County (due to its large, well educated labour force). It was suggested that the Core Strategy and forthcoming Development Plan should envisage a strategic vision for Ratoath to help develop high end / high quality local employment in the area.

Stamullen

It is submitted that the forthcoming Development Plan should acknowledge Stamullen's potential and strategic importance for economic development and employment generation which will contribute to balanced regional development and the achievement of the strategies, policies and objectives of the Plan. The current County Development Plan designations should be retained in their entirety and should be carried forward in the Core Strategy for the new Development Plan (i.e. advocate the retention of the housing numbers and as set out in Table 6 of the County Development Plan 2007-2013 - Variation Number 2). It is stated that these figures are considered to be in accordance with the provisions of the RPG's.

The Council should seek to recognise the strategic 'gateway' location of Stamullen on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. Furthermore, the Council should retain the current designation of Stamullen as a 'Small Town' and include an objective in the Core Strategy and County Settlement Hierarchy which promotes its potential to grow to 'Moderate Sustainable Growth Town' status, pending recognition in the Regional Planning Guidelines. Various submissions specifically request that the new Development Plan should amend the permitted uses under the E2 objective (or alternatively include a new zoning objective) which acknowledges the regional significance and strategic potential of the Stamullen E2 zoned lands (in particular the City North campus).

Trim

It is stated that the Core Strategy and forthcoming Development Plan should include a specific tract of land, referred to in a specific submission, into the 'Order of Priority Phasing Plan' for Trim.

Manager's Opinion on Main Issues Raised

General

It is agreed that the settlement strategy for the County Development Plan must be responsive to a number of issues to order to provide a robust, sustainable and appropriate strategy. In accordance with legislation, the Development Plan must be consistent with Regional Planning Guidelines and the core strategy of the Plan will be the primary means of demonstrating this consistency. A new housing strategy will be prepared for the Development Plan which will also be relevant in addressing population growth for the county. Strategic Policy SP1 of the Regional

Planning Guidelines identifies the policy considerations for future housing and will be taken into consideration in devising the settlement strategy.

Accommodating Growth

A number of policy documents at regional and national level advocate adopting a sequential approach to the expansion of urban settlements, which focuses on consolidating towns and villages in the first instance through targeting brownfield and town/village centre development in the first instance and following that, extending outwards in a sequential basis. This approach fosters a compact urban and the efficient use of infrastructure and it is considered appropriate that the next Development Plan endorse it.

Population projections have been provided for Meath in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area and these will form the basis for the next Development Plan in accordance with Government guidance. The approach to the zoning of housing land must ensure that land required to meet the population targets as set out in the Development Plan is released over the lifetime of the Plan. This should take into account units granted permission and which have not yet been built.

The “Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas” guidelines (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009) identify that higher residential densities should be provided in areas adjacent to public transport corridors and it is recommended that the Development Plan policies are in accordance with this.

Housing Policies

It is agreed that housing plays a critical role in helping to create socially inclusive and sustainable communities and the policies of the Development Plan should seek to facilitate this. A new housing strategy will be prepared as part of the Development Plan review and this will examine the issues of social and affordable housing and the likely demand for same over the lifetime of the Plan. As stated previously, it is recommended that the Development Plan recognised the suitability of sites adjacent to public transport corridors and nodes as suitable locations for well designed, higher density housing.

Settlement Strategy, Settlement Hierarchies and Population Growth

A number of submissions make reference to individual settlements in the county and make recommendations regarding the growth strategy for these.



The County Development Plan 2013-2019 will include a settlement hierarchy for the county indicating the function and role of towns at the various levels of the hierarchy. This will be strongly influenced by the settlement strategy proposed in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. For Meath, this indicates an urban hierarchy of five levels: Large Growth Town I, Large Growth Town II, Moderate Sustainable Growth Town, Small Town and Village. Centres in the upper three levels have been identified in the Regional Planning Guidelines and these designations will be carried through to the Development Plan. Small Towns and Villages will be identified in the draft Development Plan.

As stated previously, the Regional Planning Guidelines provide population projections and household allocations for Meath which will be applicable to the Development Plan period. In addition, they identify a number of principles which will guide the distribution of future population growth which include the direction of the majority of future growth to the Large Growth Towns I and a specified percentage of growth to the metropolitan area of the county. Towns at other tiers should have a particular focus on sustainable levels of growth. All towns and villages should endeavour to provide the full range of services and employment opportunities locally to serve their population and catchment area, commensurate with the placement of the settlement in the urban hierarchy. These principles should be adhered to in the draft Development Plan.

The environmental assessment, including strategic environmental assessment, appropriate assessment and flood risk assessment, which will be carried out as part of the Development Plan review will be key to ascertaining an appropriate growth strategy for the county and appropriate sites for intensive development. The availability of services will also inform decisions regarding housing allocations and growth scenarios.

With reference to Table 6 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013 and the order of priority previously adopted under Variation number 2 to that Development Plan, it should be noted that these were based on housing projections and household allocations that have been superseded by the adoption of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022. Consequently, updated household allocations and appropriate mechanisms and policy approaches to resolve issues of overzoning will need to be provided as part of the next County Development Plan.



3.6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

Main Issues Raised

Enterprise and Commercial Development

It is indicated that there is an inherent contradiction between the current model of economic growth and environmental and resource sustainability. In this context it is stated that society is locked into an economic system that has a gross domestic product growth imperative and as a consequence, increased energy demand and increased greenhouse gas emissions. A key factor put forward for the future economic social and environmental prosperity of Meath is the creation of a critical mass of population in the key urban centres of the County.

The submission from An Taisce supports local and rural enterprise which serves local population catchments. The horticultural sector needs to be developed within the county given its strategic location and further emphasis should be placed on attracting the equine industry to the County.

A number of submissions refer to specific centres within the county. A submission refers to lands which it is stated are strategically positioned and employment designated at Clonee and would support sustainable development. Another submission relates specifically to Stamullen also recommending policy provision for same with regard to strategic objectives - particularly related to economic development, settlement strategy, population growth and 'E2' zoning objective. It is noted that the attractiveness of Stamullen has been demonstrated through the siting of a number of uses, namely the City North Hotel and existing and proposed employment lands.

Ratoath Chamber of Commerce notes that a high percentage of their workforce commutes to the city daily for work and that a strong commercial base in high end local employment needs to be developed. It details the transport links that are available to Ratoath and its strategic location.

It is acknowledged that Policies ED POL 19 and ED POL 20 in the current Development Plan are appropriate in terms of protecting the countryside from inappropriate development. It is however considered that there is a requirement to protect developments which have evolved from rural resource based enterprises to industries of significant scale in terms of employment provision, on-site development and diversification into ancillary and complementary uses. Largo Foods Ltd is stated to be an example of this type of development. It is considered that there is a requirement to support the ongoing operation and expansion of other diverse and innovative tourist/visitor

attractions such as the Tayto Park at Kilbrew and that there be a specific economic objective included in the County Development Plan in relation to Tayto Park.

It is considered critical to the rural economy that opportunities for rural diversification and employment creation in rural resources based enterprises are continued to be supported and facilitated in the County Development Plan. The current policy fails to provide a satisfactory framework for the assessment of established rural resource based enterprise and industry which seek to expand beyond their existing capacity.

The "Thematic Spatial Strategy for Meath" (2009) recognises the Navan-Trim-Kells cluster as the primary dynamic cluster within the county offering significant potential to become a highly viable and vibrant core for commercial, retail and employment. Navan is identified as the anchor and key driver of this cluster.

Lagan Cement request that ECON DEVT SOC1 is retained within the County Development Plan 2013-2019 and continue to support the existing quarrying and extractive/cement manufacturing operations at Killaskillen.

It is submitted that the owners of Carton House are committed to the delivery of the technology park as part of one of the economic development clusters in the county and wish to support same.

One submission refers to the Dunboyne/Clonee/Pace Local Area Plan 2009-2015, and specifically reflects the status of Pace proposing an economic strategy for the area. It is submitted that lands at Pace enjoy unique locational and infrastructural assets within the County which can be leveraged to redress the significant jobs to labour force ratio imbalance within the County. It is requested that the Development Plan and amended Local Area Plan facilitates the provision of adequate land for employment uses, particularly high quality employment intensive office, retail and other business uses which can benefit from the established road, rail and telecommunications infrastructure in the area and its proximity to the Central Business District in Dublin and IFSC and the main international airport. The provision of highly accessible employment lands at Pace will facilitate and encourage the development of a designated dynamic cluster which will allow the creation of a critical mass in terms of economic activities.

Tourism

There are suggestions made for changes to policies in relation to economic development including tourism, and to include bridleways to walking and cycling routes within the chapter.



In terms of economic issues, submissions raised other economic incentives such as the tourism potential of the county given the unrivalled historic and cultural heritage. It is submitted that walking and cycling tours and activity centres are lacking and disused quarries could be landscaped to include some activities.

It is suggested that Section 3.3.10 Festivals is renamed 'Festivals and Outdoor Sports/Recreation Events' to promote more events and festivals.

Meath Local Sports Partnership advocates inclusion of the many 'Sli na Slainte' walking routes in County Meath which are recognisable routes both in Ireland and Europe.

It is also argued that the continued proliferation of one-off rural housing will result in an erosion of the rural and natural environment and directly threatens the future viability of the Irish tourism sector.

Proposed Port at Bremore

There were opposing views expressed in terms of support for the proposed port at Bremore.

One set of arguments proposed that the County Development Plan should resist the relocation of Dublin Port to Bremore/Gormonston which is an important Neolithic site. The proposed port is considered unnecessary and unsustainable especially in the current economic situation. It is suggested that the proposal is based on a flawed economic growth model and it is also located on a very sensitive coastline and adjacent to one of the most important archaeological complexes in Ireland. It is noted that Bremore is a rich archaeological complex with a passage tomb. It is suggested that there is no national or regional policy that supports this proposal. There is concern over the proposed port and if any Irish employment would emanate from it. It is stated that development of the port would encourage HGVs through the surrounding towns and villages.

One submission concentrated heavily on the benefits of the location of the proposed port at Bremore with its rail and road links into Co. Meath and the Metropolitan Area. It is submitted that the proposed port has potential to be a significant generator of benefits for the county, and as such consideration should be given for attaining Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) status from the Minister. The basis for the argument for the proposed port is based on the Regional Planning Guidelines for Greater Dublin Area. It is also stated that there is support for the range of uses and activities required at the port within the economic strategy of sectoral convergence, noting that logistics is supported in the area of the port.

One submission relates to Gormanston, which is stated to be the closest settlement to the proposed port, and requests that the new Development Plan identifies the strategic opportunities for Gormanston and provides an appropriate planning framework for their realisation. The submission outlines the strategic advantages of Gormanston.

Drogheda Port Company welcomes the inclusion of the proposed port at Bremore and considers that the next Development Plan will need to provide a policy framework to facilitate and manage the proper development of this project in the context of its immediate vicinity as well as nationally.

It was also stated that the Regional Planning Guidelines for Greater Dublin Area recognise that ports have an important role in supporting export led growth and the requirement for sufficient port capacity and port related services to serve the long term needs of the region and wider state.

Retail Development

Recent analysis in Meath indicates that the County is presently underserved by competitive retail floorspace and as a result, there is sustained trade leakage to adjoining counties including Dublin and Louth. The review of the Meath County Development Plan represents an opportunity to amend/include new policies that facilitate development of further convenience retail floorspace on appropriately zoned sites.

Retailing provides new employment opportunities and contributes to the economy at County level. It is considered imperative that the County Development Plan sets down specific policies and identifies appropriate sites that will deliver a more balanced distribution of retail floor space and in particular food store developments.

It is submitted that at present shoppers in Meath have to travel long distances with the use of the private car to access competitive food stores which is unsustainable and may give rise to traffic, environmental, social and economic issues.

In order to encourage retailers seeking to invest in the County to provide new floorspace, it will be necessary to provide targeted policies and objectives within the adopted Meath County Development Plan 2013 and to amend policy objectives/urban design frameworks provided in the Trim and Kells Development Plans and Local Area Plans including Dunshaughlin.

It is the view that the Meath County Development Plan 2013 should be supportive of retail developments within the Large Growth Towns (including Navan) and the moderate sustainable



growth towns (including Kells, Trim and Dunshaughlin). It is viewed that there is a need to allow for more general land use zonings and matrices that are flexible and can adapt to the evolving retail sector. It is critical that the potential impact of any proposed retail scheme and retail capacity assessments are carried out on a case by case basis having regard to the nature of the floor space proposed and the assessment of 'need' as provided by the applicant. Relevant plans should give cognisance to the current economic climate.

It is submitted that car parking standards for food retailing should be separated from 'Shops/Shopping Centres and Retail Warehousing'. The region wide parking standards referred to in the National Transport Authority's 2030 vision document should be incorporated into the County Development Plan 2013.

There is concern over town centre vacancy rates and the loss of many long established retailers due to the recession and the conveniently accessed out of town retailers. The Development Plan must include strong measures to prohibit out-of-town retailing and promote town centres.

The 'Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008-2016' highlights Navan as major centre for comparison shopping within the Greater Dublin Area hierarchy and it is suggested that the County Development Plan takes advantage of the potential for greater intensification of development on opportunity sites in Navan.

One submission relates to a proposal for a factory outlet centre at Stamullen and the basis for same, including a review of existing factory outlet centres in Ireland.

The existing policy provisions in the County Development Plan in relation to discount foodstores were noted. However it is submitted that a more detailed policy framework is appropriate given the expansion of discount food stores since the adoption of the current County Development Plan. With regard to the location of retail development and specifically discount foodstores, it is noted that the sequential approach is not always feasible and therefore the forthcoming County Development Plan should acknowledge this. It is suggested that 'discount food store' should be a specific use listed in the zoning matrix of the new County Development Plan and also open for consideration in areas zoned for industrial use.

Manager's Opinion on Main Issues Raised*Enterprise and Commercial Development*

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 economic spatial strategy as it applies to Meath is focused upon two designated primary economic growth centres for the county (Navan and the Drogheda Environs), a number of supporting secondary economic growth centres (Kells, Ashbourne and Dunboyne) and the M1 economic corridor with a particular focus on the Drogheda environs. The preparation of the draft Development Plan will explore the best means of promoting these centres to achieve the regional and county wide roles assigned by the RPGs. Achieving a critical mass of population in primary economic centres is important from an economic perspective. Therefore there will have to be a strong link between the economic and settlement strategies of the next County Development Plan.

The assessment of the economic potential of other centres will take cognisance of the policy context set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines and the role of the centre in the settlement hierarchy for the county. A number of towns in Meath such as Ratoath experience significant outward commuting for employment and it would be desirable to encourage economic development commensurate with the size and role of such towns in order to redress this negative pattern of development.

It is important that a Development Plan prepared for a county with a significant rural base such as Meath considers and supports appropriate and sustainable forms of economic development in rural areas to serve the rural community. These include agriculture, equine industry, horticulture and other rural based enterprises and rural innovation and enterprise particularly the green economy.

The determination of policies, objectives and spatial strategy for economic development cannot be considered in isolation as they will have significant effects on other issues such as services, advanced educational attainment, infrastructure, transport, environmental resources and social inclusion. It is important to ensure that economic policy contributes to promoting sustainable development as a whole and that that land zoned for such purposes is appropriately located such that it does not generate negative impacts, for example development that cannot be easily served by public transport and hence relies on private transport; can result in inefficiencies in service provision or the misuse or underutilisation of resources. It is further critical that the educational and skill resource base of the county is fully harnessed to drive an improved future employment share for County Meath in the Greater Dublin Area combined region.



Tourism

County Meath is marketed for tourism purposes as Ireland's heritage capital; a reflection of the wealth of built and natural heritage in the county that lends itself to the development of a varied, high quality and truly unique tourist offer. While tourism is a successful enterprise in the county, it is arguable that the full potential of the sector has not been achieved to date.

The promotion of the county as a high quality tourist destination has implications for the manner in which the county develops as a whole and the type and form of new development which should be supported by the Development Plan. Maintaining and improving the quality of the existing built and natural environment must be a priority while ensuring that new development integrates satisfactorily with and positively contributes to enhancing the landscape, both urban and rural is of critical importance. There is also a need to add to the range of facilities available in the county. The manner in which tourism is addressed in the next County Development Plan should therefore be reflected in terms of economic policy but also needs to be considered in terms of other issues such as urban and architectural design, heritage and conservation, environmental and rural development.

Proposed Port at Bremore

The 'Dublin Port National Development Plan Study' (2009) prepared for the Department of Transport by Indecon Consultants found that *"additional port capacity will be required in Ireland and it is likely that this would require the expansion of Dublin Port or the proposed development of Bremore or an equivalent alternative. Given the uncertainty concerning both these projects, nothing should be done at a policy level to block these projects at this stage, as there is a significant cost for Ireland if neither of these projects develop."*

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (RPGs) acknowledge this and *"support the examination of the expansion of Dublin Port and/or a new Port facility on the East coast of the GDA through the environmental and planning processes (i) in line with the above to make provision for envisaged long term needs in capacity, (ii) clarify viable options available and (iii) address the impact of future development on Natura 2000 sites, landscapes and biodiversity impacts."* The RPGs also state that *"The potential for a new facility for port development along the east coast, would require a [sic] environmental & habitat impact feasibility study and would be subject to relevant statutory requirements including Environmental Impact Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment"*.

The support of the Department of Transport for the further exploration and advancement of this project is also acknowledged. The Ministerial Brief (9th March 2011) outlines that in terms of



Maritime Transport *“the most strategically significant project is the proposed new deep water port at Bremore north of Dublin”*. It states that *‘the project is proposed to be developed as part of a Strategic Development Zone which will encompass both core port area and associated hinterland development*. It also states that *“the Department is in the process of analysing it with a view to putting a recommendation to the Minister”*.

Drogheda Port Company proposes to develop a new deepwater port, logistics centre and business park at Gormonston, Co. Meath. In light of this proposal and taking into account the contents of the Regional Planning Guidelines, it is considered appropriate that the preparation of the County Development Plan should include the examination of the port proposals and the type of Development Plan policy context that would be required to assess any application made for such development. It should be noted that flood risk assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and assessment under the Habitats Directive will be carried out as part of the County Development Plan review. These processes will strongly influence the development of policies and objectives for the plan and will guide the identification of appropriate locations for major developments such as the proposed port.

Retail

The current County Development Plan acknowledges that the retail sector provides an important social and economic function within the county. It also recognises that retail development can be associated with some disadvantages when located inappropriately including having an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of established town centres, detracting from the environmental quality of a town centre and under-utilising investment in existing services and infrastructure, excessive traffic and car-parking generation. The current retail strategy in the Development Plan outlines a detailed range of policies seeking to enhance the retail offer in the county, direct new development into appropriate locations in accordance with the county retail hierarchy and guided by the sequential approach and guidance on retail forms such as retail warehousing, discount foodstores and the assessment of retail development.

The current retail strategy was prepared for Meath in 2003 and it is intended to prepare an updated strategy which will provide the context for retail policy in the County Development Plan 2013-2019. This will be guided by the ‘Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (DoEHLG, 2005) and informed by the ‘Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008-2014’. It is envisaged that many of the issues raised in the submissions would be addressed in the updated strategy including the significant leakage of comparison shopping out of the County and in particular the need for further key investment in (a) the comparison retail offer in Navan (the administrative Capital of the County and Level 2 Major Town Centre & County Town Centre) and

(b) in Dunboyne (Level 2 Major Town Centre over the longer term i.e. '*Dunboyne will gradually develop over the next 20 years towards level 2 status*').

3.7 URBAN AND ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Main Issues Raised

Village Design Statements

It has been highlighted that the Julianstown Village Design Statement (VDS), which is the national pilot for Village Design Statement Programme II, has been produced in collaboration with Meath County Council, the Heritage Council and local representatives.

A Village Design Statement is a simple but effective design guidance tool which aims to reflect the shared vision of the local people. A draft national pilot VDS Geographic Information System (GIS) has been developed for County Meath and it is hoped this process will help identify villages within County Meath which are suitable for community led village design statements in the future.

A copy of the Julianstown Village Design Statement was submitted to reflect the community led project that describes the distinctive features Julianstown possess and outlining the design principles to guide future development within and surrounding the village.

Design in Rural Areas

It is submitted that wind generators of more than 15KW generating capacity should not be allowed in the landscape.

Applicants requiring planning permission in rural areas in particular should be required to employ fully qualified registered architects to undertake the design work contained in their proposals.

The Planning Authority should require the preparation of detailed rural housing design guidelines and include a requirement that all houses are fully energy neutral. Planning applications which do not comply should be refused.

Manager's Opinion on Main Issues Raised

Village Design Statements

It is acknowledged that Village Design Statements are a useful means of setting out, through community involvement, how the distinctive local character of villages can be protected and how



new development can integrate with existing village form. Meath County Council was delighted to take part in the pilot for the Village Design Statement Programme II in Julianstown. Within Meath, Village Design Statements could be particularly beneficial in supplementing the policy of local area plans in respect of design and related issues or in providing useful guidance for development where there are no local area plans prepared. In this regard, the work done on the draft national 'Pilot' VDS GIS in Meath would be useful in establishing future VDS projects.

Design in Rural Areas

Meath County Council adopted a variation to the County Development Plan 2007 (variation no. 10) which related to design guidelines for rural houses. The guidelines are a stand alone document which provides comprehensive advice to applicants in the siting and design of rural dwellings. It is envisaged that the guidelines would be relevant in the preparation of the next Development Plan and that design principles for other types of development in the rural area could be explored. The key focus for development in the rural area is ensuring that the design is appropriate to both the landscape and functionality of the building and that best practice is complied with in terms of siting, access, water supply and waste water treatment and disposal.

3.8 PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Main Issues Raised

General

It should be a requirement for new development to be channelled to targeted development centres where the appropriate physical infrastructure is planned or present.

There is a suggestion that one-off rural dwellings are subject to a significantly lower Section 48 levy and frequently levies are not applied with respect to wastewater and water supply. The Section 48 development contribution levy scheme should be revisited to ensure the applicants incur the full costs of the development.

A number of submissions refer to specific settlements in the county. It is suggested that Dunshaughlin is well served to meet its future needs in terms of water supply and foul drainage along with the potential to incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems with respect to surface water drainage. The town is also adequately supplied in terms of public utilities including ESB, Eircom, Bord Gais and NTL as well as broadband. The provision of infrastructure in Stamullen is dependent on the funding generated by the development of the zoned land banks. One submission specifically recommends that Meath County Council includes and promotes proactive

measures and policies to address the infrastructural deficit to improve wastewater and water quality in Bohermeen. It also states that Bohermeen meets the criteria of a Wet Graig and should be reclassified under the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 recognising its important status.

In considering the County's infrastructural requirements in water, waste and energy terms the new Development Plan should seek to accommodate the development of the proposed port at Bremore. While the port will incorporate eco-port principles of development, the development envisaged will necessitate investment in the County's infrastructure in terms of wastewater, potable water, gas, electricity, telecommunications etc.

Renewable energy development is a vital part of Ireland's strategy to tackle two major challenges facing us today: ensuring a secure supply of energy and combating climate change. Having regard to the current economic downturn, the Government's recent 'Framework for Sustainable Economic Revival' acknowledges the need to put the energy/climate change agenda at the heart of Ireland's economic renewal.

There are numerous suggestions in relation to policies and objectives for energy and telecommunications antennae.

Water Supply and Surface Water

It is apparent that there are significant deficiencies in water services available.

There are suggestions that there is no issue in principle with water supply as regards any of the Meath settlements within the metropolitan area. However notwithstanding this it is noted that at a local level, a comprehensive plan is being developed for the Environs of Kilcock and the necessary planning consents are currently being sought.

It is submitted that water supply for Maynooth and Dunboyne is derived from the Leixlip water treatment plant.

Wastewater Treatment

It is stated that a new pumping station for Kilcock is currently under construction and this will carry foul water to the Leixlip plant in County Kildare. It is suggested that the Kilcock Environs is well placed in terms of being a Meath settlement within the metropolitan area which will have a foul sewer infrastructure from strategic level to local level.

It is noted that the required upgrade to the foul sewer system for Dunboyne is dependent on the upgrade to the Ringsend Treatment Plan.

One submission raises concern over the number of private wastewater treatment systems and the fact that there is no regulation over the maintenance and functioning of same. Another submission makes reference to the soil conditions in Meath and states that they are unsuited to private on-site waste water disposal. It is submitted that the Planning Authority must implement a very stringent compliance regime with respect to all on site private wastewater treatment systems, and the EPA 'Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems for Single Houses (P.E 10 or less) 2009' should be adhered to.

One submission relates to a feasibility study that was carried out which identifies Gormanston as the best location for sub-regional foul drainage collection and processing before discharge to sea. A further submission supports this view.

Energy

There is a need to provide for high quality, reliable sources of power which are capable of meeting the required energy demands of the County whilst also reducing demand for fossil fuels as an energy source. It is suggested that there is a need for new power and grid connections throughout the County. The County Development Plan should introduce policies that seek to undertake an 'Oil Vulnerability and Carbon Price Impact Assessment' that explores the threats to our future from inflated and volatile oil prices together with the future price of carbon. Meath County Council must provide a strategy for alternative energy sources and encourage renewable energy from natural resources.

If Ireland is to meet its national targets and obligations, it is argued that the Council needs to develop a well designed 'Wind Energy Strategy' with defined zonings as part of the new County Development Plan. A 500 metre separation distance between proposed wind farm developments and nearby residential development should be a critical factor in any investigation into the zoning of areas in the County for future wind farm developments. Environmentally friendly renewable energy should be encouraged at appropriate locations, with a number of specific sites suggested for such purposes. The new Development Plan needs to seriously consider the optimum sites for wind farm developments in the County on their individual merits rather than with a presumption of incompatibility with designated areas of protection. Aesthetics must be considered with respect to wind farm developments and their proposed location on land, with a preference given to the coastal locations. It is suggested that the Council should also seek to engage the electricity system operators in the planning process to help ensure that any future wind farm development

proposals are the most environmentally friendly and technically advanced solutions for connecting wind farms to the national grid.

Alternative views with regards to wind energy were expressed. One submission suggests there should be a policy against industrial type wind farms in Meath as the only significant hills are Tara, Slane and Lough Crew and wind turbines cannot be sited on these historic sites. Domestic wind turbines are acceptable. It was also suggested that wind generating turbines of more than 15 KW capacity should not be allowed in the landscape.

The wind energy industry would like each application to be assessed on its own merits having regard to the Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities to ensure there is no prescribed direction to place the lines required to connect farms to the electricity network underground. If Ireland is to meet its national and international obligations it is essential that all regions develop a well designed wind development strategy with defined zoning as part of county development plans. It is submitted that wind projects can and do coexist successfully with a variety of other land uses including but not limited to forestry, food production and livestock grazing.

It is suggested that geothermal combined heat and power should be given a better status in the Development Plan and the geothermal potential in the county should be investigated and evaluated with a view to identifying hotspots suitable for future utilisation as a heat source. The production of geothermal energy is environmentally friendly in that there are no emissions and it is carbon neutral. Research has been ongoing for deep bore geothermal both for power and for hot water production in Meath and a number of sites have been deemed suitable subject to further investigation.

It is noted that bio-fuel production could create jobs and utilise locally grown crops.

The Development Plan should support the development of renewable energy resources in rural areas where proposals are consistent with the landscape objectives of the Plan, along with the protection of the natural and built environment and the visual and residential amenities of the area.

It is requested that a policy be included which prohibits any renewable energy structures if they would impact on public rights of way, walking routes or impact on public access to the countryside.

Industrial estates should be harvesting wind and solar energy and all new domestic developments should be built to a minimum of passive solar standards with solar water heating as standard. Requirements should be introduced that demand the highest energy savings in planning permissions and new buildings should incorporate design measures/features to improve energy efficiency, maximise daylight and require the use of renewable energy sources (minimum requirement to provide 10kWh/m²) of the heating requirements is from renewable sources.

It is considered that it is important that the County Development Plan should support the provision for new high voltage electrical infrastructure, including high voltage transformer stations and new overhead transmission power lines. Such infrastructure will be required for reinforcement of the transmission network related to growing electricity demand from existing customers, as well as connection of new generation. It is suggested that the concept of corridor development is applied to facilitate the important county wide national electrical grid and grid connections. In particular a 'Strategic Corridor' is proposed to be reserved in the county which would facilitate the necessary provision of overhead electrical supply and distribution infrastructure. Overhead transmission is suggested as more favoured than underground lines.

It is submitted that a roll out of alternative energy facilities is required and in particular provision of recharge stations to aid the market of and encourage the electric car. This should be considered in the next Meath County Development Plan where future developments within the jurisdiction should allow for the provision of electric vehicle (EV) charging at key publicly accessible locations such as retail parks, car parks, park and ride etc. This provision should also include the allocation of car spaces to EV's and the allocation of civil works and wiring to allow for the installation of charging infrastructure by ESB at such locations in anticipation of, and in response to, EV demand.

Waste Management

It is considered that there is not enough emphasis placed on recycling and there is no return and refund on bottles, as is commonplace on the Continent.

Telecommunications

A couple of submissions indicated that there should be investment in broadband and it should be available in all parts of the County.

There is a lack of adequate high speed broadband provision undermining Ireland's objective to become a 'smart' economy. It is stated in Census 2006 that just 45,000 households in aggregate rural areas of Ireland have a broadband connection as compared with 250,000 in aggregate town



areas and this is because the provision of broadband in rural areas is more expensive to private companies.

Submissions promote and encourage the development of the County's broadband infrastructure and wireless (i.e. WiMax) and other smart technology. The future trends of smart business economy will veer away from commuting to work and favour work from home which would require reliable high speed broadband.

A policy should be included which prohibits any telecommunications antennae if same would impact on public rights of way, walking routes or impact on public access to the countryside.

There is a suggestion that mobile masts are obsolete, according to Irish research and that miniaturised LightRadio antennas, amplifiers and processors eliminate the need to standalone mobile masts. The hatbox-sized units can be discreetly mounted on streetlamps, buildings, telephone poles or bus shelters, and that this should be enshrined in the development plan to ensure no more masts are constructed save in exceptional circumstances.

It is stated that Ratoath has access to T-50 global communication technology.

Manager's Opinion on Main Issues Raised

General, Water Supply and Surface Water, Wastewater Treatment

The availability of infrastructure will be one of the key considerations in realising the full potential of the designated growth centres in Meath in the next Development Plan. Consequently there must be a key focus on centres where capacity is available or likely to be available over the lifetime of the Plan with appropriate policies and objectives to support this. Schemes such as the Water Services Investment Programme will guide future investment in water services in the county. Development Plan policy should have a predominated focus on strategic investments in order to gain maximum return from public funds. The RPG's advocate the establishment of an agreed protocol to be put in place between local authorities in the GDA to ensure the optimum allocation of sanitary and other services for priority investments. This approach is strongly supported by Meath County Council who will operate in partnership with relevant Authorities towards its effective implementation.

A Development Contributions Scheme was recently adopted by Meath County Council in 2010 and is applicable until 2015. Charges for water services in the scheme are applied where developers are accessing public schemes.



There is increasing awareness of the challenges to energy supply and climate change and how the planning system can best respond to them. The optimum response should have a holistic focus involving land use, settlement and transport policies and selecting a development strategy is based on sustainability principles.

The ruling of the European Court of Justice on septic tanks and other waste water treatment systems has highlighted the need for a system for performance standards, monitoring and inspection of private waste water treatment systems. Full details of government proposals to deal with this are still awaited at the time of writing. The Planning Authority currently requires applicants to submit details for waste water treatment systems as per the EPA "Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems for Single Houses (P.E 10 or less)" (2009) document and will continue to implement the most up to date guidelines and standards in this area; reinforced by appropriate Development Plan policies and objectives.

Energy

There was a strong focus in submissions on renewable energy. It is desirable that developers should incorporate measures such as solar energy into new building and high standards of insulation to encourage heat retention and energy conservation and encouragement for same should be provided in the Development Plan with particular reference to development management standards and guidelines.

The potential for ground water reserves to serve both local and district heating systems is worthy of further exploration, which will be considered in the context of the preparation of the Development Plan.

The agreed Programme for National Government 2011 – 2016 "Towards Recovery" seeks, as a central tenet, the development of a strategy that will allow job growth and sustainable enterprise. The programme seeks to establish Ireland as a renewable manufacturing hub to attract international and domestic investment, to position Ireland as a leading player in the global carbon market and as a centre of excellence in the management of carbon. The core of this strategy is a move away from fossil-fuel based energy production through investment in renewable energy and increased energy efficiency to reduce demand, wastage and costs.

The Government has committed to put in place a parallel, commercially-financed investment programme in key networks of the economy to support demand and employment in the short-term, and to provide the basis for sustainable, export-led jobs and growth for the next generation.

Under the NewERA plan, it is intended that streamlined and restructured semi-state bodies will make significant additional investments, transcending current plans, over the next four years in “next generation” infrastructures in energy, broadband, forestry and water. The juxtaposition of the geographical location of Meath adjacent to the national Gateway and the proximity of the routes, through which significant energy transmission networks (electricity and gas) traverse, present key potentials and synergies for future economic development in County Meath.

Green energy has considerable potential for enhancing commercial development opportunities in rural areas. The implementation of policies in support of green energy requires consideration of other inter-related issues such as landscape impacts for wind energy and the impact on food supply of the production of bio fuels. It is considered that the Development Plan should promote a balanced approach in this area.

The provision of the hard infrastructure to cater for electricity transmission similarly requires consideration of associated impacts particularly on landscape. It is recognised that having an adequate supply at appropriate voltage is a prerequisite for development in the county and especially so for industrial and commercial development. Therefore appropriate provision must be made to in order to ensure that a lack of supply does not hinder development in the county.

Waste Management

There is a requirement to include objectives for waste management in the Development Plan. In order to promote sustainability an emphasis should be placed on the re-use and recycling waste products and in ensuring that facilities for recycling are available locally to communities and businesses. There are policies in the current Development Plan regarding the provision of recycling receptacles and these will be examined and strengthened if necessary in the review process following due consideration of the policies of the North East Regional Management Plan.

Telecommunications

It is recognised that there are gaps in the telecommunications infrastructure including the provision of broadband across the county. Having access to these facilities is a necessity in maximising communication and putting in place an environment conducive to business development and economic activity in both urban and rural areas. The appropriate siting of masts and associated infrastructure is a consideration and it is envisaged that Development Plan policies will address this.



3.9 TRANSPORTATION

Main Issues Raised

General

The Council should support the overall policy for a reduction in car-based travel. The new plan should promote a sustainable transport network, incorporating multiple uses within developments and linkages between lands to deliver smarter travel and reduce longer distance commuting in the County. It was suggested that the Council should also encourage an integrated sustainable plan-led mixed-use development strategy which combines living, working and leisure thereby reducing travel distances. Despite the economic downturn the Council should seek to implement land use policies that support and protect investments currently being made in all elements of transportation infrastructure, particularly public transport projects.

Rural Transport

The Council needs to seek to expand existing rural transport service provision throughout the County. Strong rural transport policy is essential to help sustain employment and enhance social inclusion in rural areas of County Meath.

Cycling and Walking

Meath County Council should encourage walking and cycling as healthy and sustainable modes of transport by providing the required infrastructure, with the development of a comprehensive system of safe and secure cycle paths and walkways throughout the County. These sustainable transport principles should underpin the County Development Plan and the Council could ensure the creation of 'walkable neighbourhoods' with better provision of pedestrian and cycle facilities (such as secure bicycle lock-up facilities, improved road surfaces, and improved lighting). Furthermore, the Council should incorporate footpaths and cycle paths into new and existing roads. It was also suggested that the Council could place obligations on developers of housing and commercial schemes to provide cycling and pedestrian facilities within these new developments. Meath Local Sports Partnership request the provision of safe and night lit running/walking loops in towns of certain population thresholds to provide safe places for the community to walk and run.

Public Transport

The provision of better public transport throughout the County is considered essential in order to achieve modal shift away from the private car. Public transport needs to be promoted and accessible. The new Development Plan must promote significantly enhanced public transport



service provision, connectivity and accessibility as well as more sustainable usage of various transport modes with appropriate policies and objectives. It was put forward that the Council should promote the re-opening of rail services to Navan and the new Dunboyne/MS Park and Ride to Dublin rail service and promote the proposed extension of the railway from M3 Parkway to Navan. Meath will benefit significantly from these proposed investments in rail and it is likely that these rail improvements will contribute to a reduction in car based travel in the County.

Residential and commercial development needs to be located within easy access of public transport routes. Therefore, the County Development Plan should advocate a 'sequential' approach to development, as per the "Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy", whereby lands which are most accessible to public transport should be prioritised for growth. Mixed-use development needs to be focused on areas near public transport hubs and interchanges thereby offering the greatest opportunity to promote multi-modal, sustainable transport patterns which will help achieve a considerable shift towards the use of public transport, walking and cycling.

Roads and Traffic

Lands should not be developed for residential purposes until the required road infrastructure is in place. Various measures need to be taken to improve traffic safety and encourage road improvements. It is submitted that the Council should seek to protect the capacity, safety and efficiency of national road corridors. Long-term junction capacity must not be adversely affected by inappropriate and dispersed development. It was also noted however, that the Council must be cognisant of the impact that further investment in new large-scale road projects can have on reinforcing unsustainable car-based travel patterns throughout the County.

Parking

Park and Ride facilities should be universally accessible and encouraged and developed at appropriate locations around the County, particularly at locations on the M3. Furthermore, the Council should also seek to maximise the use of existing Park and Ride facilities around the County.

Car parking facilities within towns, villages and at other acceptable locations should be assessed to ensure that adequate off-street parking is provided and that various town centres are business friendly. The existing car parking standards should be revised as per the requirements set out in the National Transport Agency's draft "2030 Vision" policy document. It was also suggested that the future provision of parking facilities should allow for the installation of electrical vehicle charging points at key publicly accessible locations as well as the provision of dedicated and potentially free-of-charge parking spaces for electrical vehicles in urban centres. Furthermore, a

requirement for office and commercial developments to incorporate civil and wiring works for charging infrastructure should be introduced in the new County Development Plan. Any future parking policy implement must take the needs of residential areas into consideration.

Bremore Port

The development of a deepwater sea port in Stamullen is seen as having the potential to act as an economic driver for the County. There is a need to discuss the design proposal for the construction of the new M1 access route for the port with local residents.

Airports

The County Development Plan should adopt policies within the county as is required under the 'International Standards and Recommended Practices' within Annex 14 of 'The Convention of International Civil Aviation' which is published by the International Civil Aviation Organisation. All Development Plan maps could possibly represent Public Safety Zone designations around Dublin Airport that extend into County Meath (specifically Clonee). Regard should be given to the impacts of noise for the future development of lands that fall within these zones.

Manager's Opinion on Main Issues Raised

Transport including Public Transport, Roads and Traffic

The mandatory objectives for Development Plans include objectives which promote sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas including the promotion of measures to reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and reduce energy demand in response to the likelihood of increases in energy and other costs due to long-term decline in non-renewable resources.

The 'Smarter Travel' transport policy document for 2009-2020 (Department of Transport, 2009) sets out five key goals: (i) to reduce overall travel demand, (ii) to maximise the efficiency of the transport network, (iii) to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, (iv) to reduce transport emissions and (v) to improve accessibility to transport. To achieve these goals will require action in a number of areas. In particular, it is desirable that future population and employment growth will predominantly take place in sustainable compact forms. This outcome will reduce the need to travel for employment and services and also changes in modal share will result in a reduction in car based commuting and a substantial increase in trips made by public transport, walking and cycling. Consequently, it is considered critical to improve the alignment between spatial and transport planning to significantly reduce the incidence of urban sprawl and urban-generated one-off housing in peri-urban areas.



It is clear therefore that the interdependence between transport and planning, as alluded to in a number of submissions, and, which requires a comprehensive response to comply with statutory obligations and government policy is reflected adequately in the next Development Plan. In particular, it is a requirement that the Plan takes a strong focus on integrating land use and transportation; promotes mixed use development; and sets out a spatial approach to development on a county wide basis together with requirements for individual developments at a local level that will support sustainable modes of transport. Adherence to the foregoing will facilitate travel by walking, cycling and public transport as the easiest and most convenient modes. This includes directing development to centres and areas well served by public transport, ensuring that the critical mass of population is achieved to maximise the return on public transport investment. It is desirable that road schemes in towns and new developments can facilitate bus routes, promoting a compact urban form and sequential approach to development. Furthermore this necessitates providing cycle parking as part of new developments and the provision of safe and direct cycle and pedestrian routes and examination of how same can be retrofitted into existing built up areas where appropriate. The provision of park and ride facilities is a means of increasing the attractiveness of public transport and such facilities are in place at a number of locations in Meath, most recently at the Pace station as part of Phase I of the Navan-Dublin rail line. The inclusion of objectives which promote specific locations warrants consideration. However it is important that such facilities do not result in an increase in road congestion or an increase in travel by car. The provision and improvement of public transport services to serve rural areas also needs positive consideration with particular reference to isolated rural areas.

Meath County Council recognises the importance of the re-opening of the rail line to Navan in terms of the benefits to the local population in providing public transport and in enhancing accessibility to the county as a whole. Consequently the project has been fully supported by the Council on an ongoing basis through its actions and in terms of ensuring that an appropriate policy basis is in place to facilitate the delivery of the scheme. The improvements made in road transport in the county in recent years have similarly served to improve accessibility for residents and visitors to Meath and increased the attractiveness of the county as a location for industry. It is important that the road connectivity to Dublin, as the capital city, and the remainder of the country are maximised. However, the principal functions of the national road network as strategic routes and the need to retain adequate capacity to carry out this primary function should also be a key consideration.

Parking

The preparation of car parking standards must serve to strike a balance between providing an adequate number of spaces to cater for likely traffic generation without resulting in making private

transport the most attractive option for journeys, particularly short journeys within urban areas which could be done by cycling or walking. The impact of car parking standards on urban design and the urban realm also needs to be taken into account. The possibility of making provision for electric vehicles and the most appropriate manner in which to do this warrants further consideration.

Bremore Port

As referenced in Section 3.6, the preparation of the draft Development Plan will consider the policy context for port development. This could include potential access arrangements with particular reference to the delivery of port related traffic onto the national route system.

Airports

The information provided in respect of public safety zones and standards and practices for airports is noted. The inclusion of details of the public safety zones could potentially be included on the relevant maps associated with the Development Plan.

3.10 RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Main Issues Raised

General

Policies to promote sustainable living and energy efficiency within rural areas should be incorporated into the new Development Plan. An advice service could be set up to inform farmers of their environmental responsibilities and farmers should also be encouraged to see themselves as custodians of the countryside.

Maintenance of Landscapes

The protection of the rural area as an asset, with support for the maintenance of both sensitive and established high amenity areas and green belts located between towns and villages is suggested. A green belt policy zoning objective should be universally implemented between urban and rural settlements to prohibit urban sprawl. On the other hand, some submissions questioned the future role of green belts whereby green belts are considered excessively restrictive on development and could be replaced by buffer zones.

Forestry

The Council should seek to initiate incentives to maintain agricultural land, hedgerows and woodlands and to promote and protect agricultural, horticultural and forestry activity. The



Development Plan should encourage access to forestry for recreational and tourism purposes. It was suggested that forestry development must not be visually intrusive or obstruct rights of way. Planting and felling of trees should be conducted in a manner which takes account of best practice guidelines on forestry planting. Furthermore, a list of recreational forests could be included in the new Development Plan. The Council should seek to ensure that rural fencing is undertaken in a manner that will meet European requirements without impinging on hill walking, tourism and local access.

Rural Villages and Rural Clusters

The Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 should make provision for the consolidation and expansion of established rural communities, established villages and ensure that key assets in rural areas such as water quality are protected to support quality of life and economic vitality. Policies must seek to address infrastructural deficits and support health care, local retail provision, childcare, day care and public transport provision to ensure the continued viability of rural living.

Housing should be permitted within the boundaries of rural villages rather than encroaching on adjoining agricultural land. Proactive measures must be included in the Development Plan to promote nucleation in rural villages which will ultimately help reduce sprawl and allow for more efficient and sustainable use of resources (particularly waste-water treatment). Consideration must be given to the development of robust and implementable policies which attract population to serviced settlements where employment, housing (including affordable housing) and other facilities can be provided in close proximity in an economical and sustainable manner.

The Council should seek to retain the character of local villages with the implementation of Village Design Statements (VDS) as a method of enhancing the village environment. The new County Development plan must contain a strong commitment to supporting the roll-out of The Heritage Council's 'Village Design Statement Programme II'. It was suggested that a recent Heritage Council "VDS Geographical Information Systems Report", which identified a number of villages in County Meath that are suitable for the roll-out of a VDS, should be taken into account during the review process of the new Development Plan.

Rural Housing and The Settlement Strategy

It is submitted that the Council's rural housing policy should allow rural people to live near their family home. On the other hand, some submissions suggested that one-off rural housing is proliferating, and there is support for a complete ban on one-off housing. It is considered that the County Development Plan needs to set a 'high bar' of requirement criteria for assessing rural

need and this criteria must be consistently implemented with regard to rural generated housing. It was also suggested that the Council could seek to compulsorily acquire land, where necessary, to cater for local housing needs at serviced rural locations.

Agricultural Development and Rural Enterprise

It is considered critical to the rural economy that opportunities for rural diversification and employment creation in rural resource-based enterprises are supported in the Development Plan. Policies and objectives should seek to consolidate and facilitate the expansion of existing rural-based enterprises to enable the creation of locally generated employment. It was also suggested that enterprises with no location specific requirements to rural areas are directed to existing employment centres within existing settlements to support their economic status and optimise investments. Rural enterprises, in particular enterprises which are involved in food production, should to be supported by the Council. It was also suggested that the Council could seek to exempt from commercial and development levies, soft and fresh produce farming, in order to encourage small-to-medium growers.

"Amenity" Use of the Countryside

The Development Plan must emphasise the use of the countryside for amenity use. It should provide for improved provision for the use of bicycles and walking within the rural area. Access to the countryside both for walkers and cyclists must be protected. It is submitted that the new Development Plan should support existing rights of way and facilitate their expansion. The County Development Plan needs to include up-to-date maps detailing all the uncontested rights of way in the County. The new Development Plan should also seek to reiterate the recreational and amenity value of rivers and waterways throughout the County. Access to waterways should therefore be assured and a 30 meter riparian corridor provided on both sides of waterways in the County.

Provision of Allotments

It is stated that the County Development Plan should incorporate the new definition of allotments (as per the 2010 Planning Act) and make provisions allowing for the future development of further allotments.

Lack of Rural Transportation and Service Provision

There is a lack of adequate rural transportation provision in the County and the Council must seek to stem the decline of rural communities by improving accessibility for rural dwellers (with a specific focus on targeted service provision for marginalised populations). Maintaining rural

communities is essential and therefore the Development Plan should make sufficient services available for rural communities.

Manager's Opinion on Main Issues Raised

The forthcoming County Development Plan will include policies which will encourage sustainable rural development in the county. The Plan will need to acknowledge the issues emerging from a changing rural economy and the means necessary to support sustainable rural economies.

It is acknowledged that no one economic sector offers all of the solutions to the challenges facing rural areas. The optimal response most likely lies in different packages of measures to tap into the potential that individual rural areas undoubtedly possess. Advancing technology and farm consolidation will result in increased output but will also continue to reduce agriculturally based employment. The agricultural sector which has been traditionally critical for the economic prospects of County Meath must now 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, sustainable exploitation of natural resources and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, are essential components of the development of the new rural economy.

Given Meath's rich agricultural tradition and resources, the review of the plan will promote an environmentally sustainable, well managed agricultural, horticultural, forestry and woodland development. It is important that diversification of agricultural development in rural areas and expanding agricultural activity is encouraged, whilst having due regard to environmental considerations and planning considerations as appropriate.

New enterprises with no clearly demonstrable rural specific location requirements should be directed to existing employment centres within existing settlements to support their economic status.

It is envisaged that the economic development objectives of the Development Plan will seek to facilitate the provision of adequate land for employment uses, including sites at suitable locations for industrial, enterprise, retail and other small business uses having regard to spatial planning, infrastructural, environmental and transportation requirements and compatibility with adjoining land uses. In addition, policies will be included that seek to support and protect the existing economic base and seek to diversify the economy through both inward investments at key growth areas and promotion of agriculture, forestry and tourism-related industries in the rural areas.



The Planning Authority need to support rural villages and communities and facilitate the improvement, as far as possible, of the services required to sustain the vitality of same including infrastructure, rural transport, health services etc.

Appropriate and balanced consideration of rural housing needs poses a number of challenges for the Planning Authority. It is imperative that the review of the County Development Plan comprehensively addresses the rural settlement policy, ensuring that persons with genuine rural housing needs who are an intrinsic part of the rural community are accommodated. Occupancy conditions are considered an important element in reinforcing this policy.

The 'Meath Rural House Design Guide' provides guidance to applicants on good design for new dwellings in the countryside. Policies within the plan will protect landscapes and high amenity areas within the county.

Allotments are becoming increasingly popular and there is a demand for them both in rural and urban areas. This Development Plan will acknowledge their function and identify the private landowner's role in providing this resource and service which promotes sustainable living.

Village Design Statements (VDS) are considered important tools for guiding future development in rural villages and will be supported as far as possible within the County Development Plan.

The rural area/ countryside offer a vast amenity and recreational area that can be utilised more favourably by walkers and cyclists and encouraged through policies in the Development Plan.

3.11 COMMUNITY, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Main Issues Raised

Community

All new development should be community focused and development should be predicated on the principle of building sustainable communities. Community facilities including schools and shops have to be provided in conjunction with development. Community development needs to be carried out in an integrated manner. Community centres should be located in close proximity to those who use them. A specific zoning for community development could be inserted into the new Development Plan. It is stated that such a zoning would protect exiting facilities and reserve land for the future provision of additional facilities.



The new Development Plan should seek to coordinate a multi-agency implementation plan, as per the recommendations of the "National Taskforce on Obesity Report" (2005), which stipulates that Local Authorities promote sports/leisure/recreational opportunities, provide facilities, develop cycle routes, green spaces etc. on a cross-sectoral basis. A study should be prepared for parts of the County to determine the types of community facilities, types of schools and types of health facilities that are needed in these areas. Specific zonings and objectives should be introduced to guide the provision of these facilities. It was also suggested that the new Development Plan should seek to prioritise the location of community facilities in the Meath East area in particular.

It is submitted that additional housing, libraries and other community facilities for the elderly are required throughout the County. The County Development Plan should seek to locate these enhanced community facilities in village and town centres. Furthermore, multi-functional facilities could also be developed to provide a range of services such as childcare, training, health care etc. in communities. Co-location of recreational and leisure facilities within retail and business parks are required to minimise travel. It is outlined that there are established retail and business parks considered ideal locations for new cinema and leisure facilities and it is proposed that the zoning matrix facilitate a more diverse range of uses within mixed use development area.

The provision of door-to-door transport is considered essential for those with special needs. New planning applications for developments should be 'disability proofed'. Mobility audits of open spaces and recreational areas should be undertaken to ascertain the types of mobility-related issues that need to be addressed in these areas.

Submissions note that the development of new schools and the provision of childcare places have not kept pace with development in the County over the last number of years. Specific submissions argued that due to a large cohort of young population in Ratoath (34% of population are under 14 years of age) there will be a need for more primary and secondary schools facilities in this area. In future, it is stated that schools should be provided in conjunction with the development of housing. Site reservations for schools must be made as close as possible to community facilities (such as sports facilities, libraries etc.) so that these facilities can be shared between the school and the community. Multi-campus school arrangements (i.e. 2-3 primary schools side-by-side or a primary and a post-primary school sharing the same site) will be looked upon favourably in the new Development Plan. No significant development should take place without an assessment on the impact of school provision. Submissions also highlighted the need for the Council to abide by the "Code of Practice for Planning Authorities" in relation to the provision of schools – in particular the need to consult with the Department of Education and Science with regard to the assessment and selection of new school sites.

Recreation

Submissions highlight that sport has significant health and social benefits for the community. There is a need to encourage and develop additional multi-use games facilities throughout the County. The Council should seek to work in partnership with community groups to actively promote sporting and leisure opportunities that support active living in the County.

It is submitted that the County Development Plan should ensure the more flexible consideration of commercial development proposals on lands zoned sporting, recreational, community and educational whereby they provide for the wider community benefit and guarantee the long term retention of such facilities in the interests of the greater good. The Council should also seek to improve existing facilities rather than investing in new facilities. Merging community facilities and service provision can help guarantee the long-term viability of these services.

The Council must seek to promote walking and cycling as simple, inexpensive ways to increase participation levels in physical activity. The council should seek to co-ordinate the implementation of Health Impact Assessments for policy programmes and proposed developments to measure potential impacts on population health. There is also a need to develop linear walkways along coastal areas and rivers. These walkways need to be properly maintained on a continuing basis. The County Development Plan must seek to preserve and protect walking routes by prohibiting the intrusion of development along public routes, particularly those in scenic areas and along inland waterways. The Council must take appropriate action to prevent attempts to close off these public walkways. Provisions for the development of walking routes along the River Boyne should be included in the Development Plan. Also, linkages could be developed with walking and cycling trails in adjoining counties, including established national routes, in partnership with adjoining Local Authorities. Sli-na-Slainte routes should be expanded in consultation with community groups.

Policies and objectives of the Development Plan should create a network of cycling and walking routes until a critical mass is achieved by utilising existing links through parks and open spaces to facilitate secure, safe and attractive connections for leisure and tourism purposes. The Council could seek to develop an overall 'Walking and Cycling Policy'. Existing cycle routes should be improved by sign posting, better road surfaces and greater road traffic safety measures. The Council could establish a register identifying National Trails Networks, Sli-na-Slainte and other defined walking trails and cycle routes throughout the County.

It is considered that the County Development Plan should positively support and promote the on-going operation and expansion of already established recreational, community, social and tourism



facilities in order to sustain investment in tourism infrastructure and to continually enhance the County's tourism, leisure and recreational profile.

Open Space

It is submitted that the County Development Plan should seek to enhance the provision of new and existing civic open spaces (particularly in Navan). There is a need for the greater enforcement of open space standards in residential developments. All residential developments should have an appropriate amount of open space. Development needs to be phased with the proper provision of playing fields and public open space. Furthermore the allocation of open space in new developments should be provided adjacent to the development that it is intended to serve.

Existing amenity lands must be protected from future residential developments. The County Development Plan should incorporate policies to preserve and maintain public open spaces that are not being maintained at a local level. County Development Plan policies could be drafted to facilitate the 'clean-up' of existing unusable open spaces within recently constructed residential developments. It is stated that most of the current open spaces in the County are not useable and attract anti-social behaviour. Where instances of anti-social behaviour becomes evident on space that is left over after planning and on lands that are not sufficiently overlooked, scope must be provided to build new homes on these tracts of land in order to provide passive surveillance and security for local residents.

Manager's Opinion on Main Issues Raised

Community

Social infrastructure, including community and recreational facilities and open space, needs to be provided in an integrated manner and in tandem with residential development. Community facilities should be located in close proximity to those who use them and facilitate easy access for all members of society particularly those who do not have access to a car. There should be a strong commitment in the next Development Plan to measures which would provide community facilities in accordance with these principles. This will influence the future location of social infrastructure and whether areas such business parks would be appropriate locations for such development.

The land use zoning category for community facilities set out in the current County Development Plan, and generally used in the Town Development Plans and Local Area Plans, is 'G1' which has an objective "to provide for necessary community, recreational and educational facilities". The



continued use of a zoning category specifically for community facilities is an important means of recognising such uses and reserving lands for such purposes. Existing recreational facilities in central and highly accessible areas are particularly valuable and policy support for such facilities should be provided. The development of appropriately located and scaled new recreational facilities, whether by public or private sector or voluntary bodies is to be encouraged.

There is a need to establish if there are gaps in the provision of community services in different parts of the county and the general public consultation process should be supplemented with specific consultation with the major service providers in this area such as the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Health and Children to establish their requirements. The delivery of such infrastructure is in many cases outside of the statutory remit of Meath County Council. However it is important that the County Development Plan provides an appropriate policy context for their provision.

The planning of future social infrastructure will be strongly guided by government policy in this area. The "Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2001), "Provision of Schools and the Planning System" (the Department of Education and Science and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2008) and "Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas" (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009) all emphasise the need for a planned approach to providing social infrastructure.

Recreation and Open Space

There is an increasing awareness of the role that planning can play in promoting health which extends beyond making provision for recreational facilities. The design and layout of individual developments and the planned expansion of towns and villages can proactively encourage and facilitate people being able to walk and cycle to access services through well designed, direct and safe routes or alternatively it can discourage such means of transport by being solely focused on accommodating cars and neglecting consideration of the needs of more sustainable modes of transport. It is considered that the Development Plan should address these matters and strongly support an emphasis on creating a built environment that can make a contribution to facilitating a healthy lifestyle. Open space should be provided in residential schemes in tandem with the occupation of units to ensure that the necessary facilities are in place at an early stage.

3.12 ENVIRONMENT

Main Issues Raised

Climate Change

It is essential that a planned and sustainable approach to development is adopted in the new County Development Plan to ensure a future balance of economic development and employment creation in tandem with the continued protection of the environment. It is submitted that the County Development Plan must now respond to future challenges of climate change through development which reduces the need for unsustainable energy use, supports sustainable modes of transport and which reduces Meath's carbon footprint in order to minimise the County's contribution to climate change.

The Council must help contribute to a national reduction of 26%-30% in greenhouse gas emissions in order to comply with EU 2020 targets. This can be achieved through policies and objectives in the Development Plan that take into account sustainable travel patterns and integrated land use. Integrated land use planning and transport policies must be implemented in the new plan to achieve more sustainable travel patterns, reduce car-dependency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to combat climate change. An integrated cross-sectoral approach is also considered vital for ensuring reduced carbon emissions throughout the county.

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directive (Appropriate Assessment)

It is vitally important that Meath County Council, through the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) process ensures a high level of protection of the environment and contributes to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation of the Development Plan with a view to promoting sustainable development. The County Development Plan must reinforce the strong presumption against development on or near lands with a potential direct/indirect impact on Natura 2000 sites.

It is submitted that the new Draft Development Plan must ensure that areas protected under the EU 'Habitats and Birds Directive' are subject to strict protection, both in relation to activities occurring within these sites and in relation to any activities beyond these sites which could threaten their ecological integrity.

Flooding

Flood risk assessment will be a key consideration of the Development Plan to ensure that floodplains and areas vulnerable to flooding remain free from development. The forthcoming



County Development Plan must have regard to the outcomes and proposals of the 'Fingal East Meath Flood Risk and Management Study' (FEM-FRAMS) and incorporate its recommendations into the relevant aspects of the plan.

The Council should map existing and potential future flood risk areas within the County and develop a long term strategy of identifying and managing flood risk in an integrated and sustainable manner. The Council must ensure the 'EU Floods Directive', The FEM-FRAM Study and the draft 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines' are complied with. Specifically, submissions also suggested that the new County Development Plan ensures that all development within the area of the Kilcock Environs Local Area Plan 2009-2015 (KELAP) complies with the guidance and recommendations contained in the approved River Rye Water Flood Risk and Management Study (FRAMS) to ensure the delivery of flood mitigation and protection measures to both the KELAP lands and Kilcock Town Centre.

Water Framework Directive

Submissions make reference to the 'Water Framework Directive' and state that the County Development Plan needs to ensure that all water bodies are managed and protected to ensure compliance with the Directive. A system to measure water usage is required. The need to maintain water quality and to manage surface water run-off into rivers and streams is crucial. The Council must strive to achieve "good status" in all water bodies. The protection of water quality is considered to be of paramount importance and the Development Plan should introduce appropriate measures that seek to map out areas through the 'Groundwater Protection Scheme' where private wastewater treatment schemes are unacceptable due to subsoil conditions. It is suggested that Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICW) provide a proven and innovative mechanism to address water-water capacity issues.

Seveso Sites

The need for appropriate policies on Major Accident sites was highlighted. Such policies should include a list of establishments, land use compatibility issues, the application of best practice and the requirements for Seveso sites to submit a PADHI (Planning Advice for Developments near Hazardous Installations) assessment report with planning applications. The Council should clearly identify all Major Accidents Directive land uses in the Draft Plan and include appropriate policies for such uses.



Manager's Opinion on Main Issues Raised

The submissions made in relation to environmental issues highlight the need for environmental considerations to be integrated with and influence Development Plan strategy, policies and objectives.

The mandatory objectives for Development Plans include objectives for the promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas including the promotion of measures to address the necessity of adaptation to climate change. Consequently the Development Plan will have to have a strong focus on climate change. It is agreed that this will require integrated land use planning and transport policies and an integrated cross-sectoral approach which should be reflected across the various strands of the Development Plan.

Meath County Council are engaging consultants to carry out Strategic Environmental Assessment and assessment under the Habitats Directive for the Development Plan review. Environmental assessment shall be an iterative process with Development Plan preparation and it is expected that the aforementioned studies will significantly influence the development strategy, policies and objectives of the Plan.

A strategic flood risk assessment and management study will also be carried out in conjunction with the Development Plan review. As with the environmental assessment, it is expected that this will influence the development strategy of the plan. The 'Fingal East Meath Flood Risk and Management Study' will be a valuable resource in this area and it is intended to incorporate the findings of the study into the Development Plan.

The mandatory objectives for Development Plans include objectives for the promotion of compliance with environmental standards and objectives established for bodies of surface water by the European Communities (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 and for groundwater by the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010, which standards and objectives are included in river basin management plans (within the meaning of Regulation 13 of the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003). Therefore the Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plans will be key inputs into the Plan.

The possibility of using Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICW) in place of conventional treatment systems has been raised. The review of the Development Plan provides an opportunity to examine the potential for a policy basis for the use of such alternative drainage systems within



County Meath. Monitoring of such systems will form a key consideration in the formulation of any related policies.

Appropriate policies and objectives in relation to Seveso sites in and abutting County Meath will be included in the Development Plan, as required by legislation.

3.13 HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION

Main Issues Raised

General

It is submitted that a policy needs to be included in the new County Development Plan to ensure that the current Heritage Plan is updated upon its expiration. The Council should ensure the preservation and protection of vital archaeological monuments and natural landscapes by way of incorporating appropriate policies and objectives in the new County Development Plan. The preservation and promotion of cultural heritage in Meath should be a central part of the overall vision of the new Development Plan and the practical implementation of this vision should be set out in clear and well-defined objectives. Strong policies and firm, clear objectives are needed to ensure the robust protection of the County's heritage and landscapes; the proper conservation and management of the County's heritage and landscapes; and the promotion of a greater awareness and deeper understanding and appreciation of the County's heritage and landscapes.

Natural Heritage – Biodiversity, Geology and Landscape

Many submissions raised issues relating to natural heritage and conservation including biodiversity, landscape and geological heritage. It is stated that the new Development Plan should include an all-encompassing and holistic definition of 'landscape' as per the new legislative requirements of the Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2010. Landscape character assessments and historic landscape characterisation should be used in tandem with each other as a mechanism for strategic landscape protection in order to protect designated nature conservation sites throughout the County. The new Development Plan should make provisions for seascape assessments in order to protect and manage the rich and natural heritage of Meath's coastline.

The importance of biodiversity conservation was highlighted, with particular emphasis on the need to protect trees, hedgerows, wetlands and rivers together with their corridors. The new County Development Plan needs to commit to halting any further reduction in biological diversity. The Council must have very strong policies and objectives which support forestry in the County



and should encourage the replanting and maintaining of hazel and willow groves along the River Boyne in particular. It is requested that the Council manages the spread of invasive alien species and promotes ecological connectivity. The new plan also needs to acknowledge that even minor development on peatlands can have significant ecological impacts on sensitive habitats in peatland areas. The Council must also protect important geological heritage sites.

In relation to natural heritage, generally, greater efforts are needed to increase awareness and improve opportunities to access the County's rich and natural heritage. This includes the provision of facilities such as interpretative and conservation centres, as well as amenities such as walkways and trails as a mechanism of improving accessibility to important sites. Meath's landscapes and natural heritage are vitally important for the tourist industry.

The County's green infrastructure is considered important and there is a need to develop a green infrastructure approach to planning and green space. The Council should develop a plan to maintain, reclaim and invest in green infrastructure (wetlands, hedgerows, forests etc.) to support and enhance local biodiversity. The Council should ensure the conservation and preservation of Newcastle Lough Wildfire Sanctuary (National Heritage Area) and should be cognisant of baseline studies carried out on the area regarding its flora and fauna (which are of national significance).

Built Heritage and Archaeology

Designed landscapes, demesnes and historic garden areas are a notable part of Meath's heritage and require robust protection, better promotion and better access. It is requested that the intensification of use (other than agricultural use) in and around the County's historic demesnes must be discouraged and clear guidance in this regard given in the new plan. The Council must protect the archaeology and older building stock of the County through various mechanisms. There should be a presumption against demolition, rebuild, especially in relation to vernacular buildings. Specific archaeological monuments are of importance and access to archaeological sites is an issue. A National Monuments Advisory Council for the County could be established in order to provide consultation services for the Council.

It is submitted that the character of the rural villages and the historic towns of County Meath should be protected. Awareness could be raised of the value of the County's built heritage by engaging the public with their local heritage by encouraging local libraries to display their heritage collections/archives. The important role tourism plays in the promotion of specific sites, as well as heritage in general was highlighted. Various submissions highlighted the need to upkeep and restore specific architectural and archaeological monuments throughout the County. It was

suggested that archaeological reports should be carried out by statutory authorities and not developers. The new Development Plan could make provisions to appoint a county-based archaeologist who would assist the heritage officer in his/her role.

Tara-Skryne

It is submitted that the Development Plan should augment the status of the Tara-Skryne Landscape Conservation Area (LCA) and prioritise the roll-out of the objectives of the project. As part of the Tara-Skryne LCA, practical objectives should be incorporated into the new plan for the protection, management, promotion and the study of areas with rich heritage which will attract, inform and manage greater visitor numbers all year round.

Brú na Boinne

It is considered imperative that Meath County Council seek to finalise the Management Plan for the Brú na Boinne World Heritage Site in an expedient manner. The County Development Plan should incorporate the objectives contained in the new management plan for the World Heritage Site in order to foster tourism in the County. Concerns were expressed about the proposed N2 Slane by-pass and the potential for cumulative developments inside and outside the boundaries of the World Heritage Site.

The Council should help local Brú na Bóinne Heritage Societies to set up and maintain local walking routes along the canal system in the County, which would incorporate interesting viewpoints and vistas of the local historical elements of the World Heritage Site

Lough Crew

It is stated that Lough Crew should be considered for inclusion as a cultural and archaeological landscape in the new Development Plan and should be designated and protected as appropriate.

Manager's Opinion on Main Issues Raised

General

The submissions have identified the need to have a strong policy base for the management, promotion, protection and conservation of heritage in Meath. The preparation of a Heritage Plan for the county represents a targeted approach to heritage management and the implementation of the measures identified in the Plan is encouraged by Meath County Council, as is the continuation of the process of having such plan. It is agreed that heritage should feature strongly in the vision for the Development Plan and its strategic policies.



Natural Heritage – Biodiversity, Geology and Landscape

It is agreed that there is a need to increase awareness and improve opportunities to access the County's rich natural heritage. However any proposals to improve access must be respectful of the need to protect natural heritage, particularly designated sites and vulnerable species. Cognisance must also be taken of the fact that many lands are in private ownership.

The existing Development Plan and the landscape character assessment therein give recognition to the varying landscapes present in Meath. The inclusion of landscape protection as a mandatory objective for Development Plan emphasises the increased importance of landscape as a concept and in the relationship it signifies between people, place and nature. As recognised in the European Landscape Convention, landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. Landscape protection means actions to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, justified by its heritage value derived from its natural configuration and/or from human activity while landscape management means action, from a perspective of sustainable development, to ensure the regular upkeep of a landscape, so as to guide and harmonise changes which are brought about by social, economic and environmental processes. These various definitions acknowledge the interaction between people and nature and the changing nature of landscape. The concepts of protecting the significant features of landscape while managing change within landscape are considered to be key challenges for the next Development Plan.

The importance of heritage to the tourist industry is recognised and it is considered that there is potential to further exploit opportunities for cultural tourism. However this must be done in a sensitive manner to ensure that no negative impacts upon heritage assets result.

A green infrastructure strategy for the County is being prepared by the Council and it is hoped that this can feed into the development of appropriate policies and objectives for the next Development Plan. The "County Meath Biodiversity Action Plan: 2008 – 2012" was adopted in April 2010. It is considered that the policies and objectives of the draft Development Plan should support the implementation of this plan and any updated plan.

Built Heritage and Archaeology

It is agreed that the built heritage including vernacular architecture, archaeological features, demesnes and historic garden areas represent a valuable part of Meath's heritage and require robust protection. While noting that greater access to these features is encouraged in some



submissions, it should be acknowledged that the majority of these features are in private ownership and therefore Meath County Council is limited in the actions it can take in this regard.

It is considered that there is a need to protect the character of the rural villages and the historic towns of County Meath and the policies and objectives of the Development Plan should reflect this.

Similar to natural heritage, the importance of built heritage to the tourist industry is recognised and it is considered that there is potential in this area. However this must be done in a sensitive manner to ensure that no negative impacts upon heritage attractions occur.

Tara-Skryne

The Tara-Skryne landscape is of major cultural and historical significance in Ireland and was included in 2010 on the list of tentative sites for UNESCO World Heritage designation as part of the royal sites of Ireland. The Meath County Development Plan 2007 identified the designation of a Landscape Conservation Area for Tara-Skryne as an appropriate means of protecting the rural character, setting, historic context and archaeological heritage of the landscape. Significant and comprehensive work has already been carried out on the implementation of this project which is a national pilot by Meath County Council in conjunction with the Heritage Council and the Department.

Brú na Boinne

At the time of writing, public consultation for the Management Plan for Brú na Bóinne is ongoing involving representatives from the Louth and Meath Local Authorities, State Authority and the local community. It is considered to be of benefit to Development Plan policy development process if the completion of the Management Plan could facilitate its consideration in conjunction with the Development Plan review process.

Brú na Bóinne is one of only three World Heritage Sites in Ireland. The importance of Brú na Bóinne as an archaeological complex is recognised internationally and the significance of the landscape requires appropriately detailed measures and policies are included in the Development Plan to protect the special character and features of the area.

Lough Crew

The submission in relation to an appropriate designation for Lough Crew is noted and will be considered in the process of preparing the draft Plan.



3.14 MISCELLANEOUS

Main Issues Raised

The submission made by the Co-ordination Unit at the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources advised that the Department had no comment/observation to make at this time.

Manager's Opinion on Main Issues Raised

The submission is noted.



SECTION 4 MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON POLICIES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This part of the report outlines the broad recommendations of the Manager on policies to be included in the draft plan. The recommendations have been cognisant of the contents of the National Spatial Strategy and in particular, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010. As required by legislation, the recommendations take account of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, statutory obligations of the local authority and relevant policies and objectives of the Government. The Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010 also list a number of mandatory issues which must be addressed in the objectives of the Development Plan. The Manager's recommendations have taken cognisance of these and they will be fully addressed in the draft Development Plan.

The recommendations are discussed under the following headings:

1. Strategic aims and development plan vision
2. Population and settlement
3. Economic development
4. Housing and sustainable communities
5. Transportation and movement
6. Infrastructure
7. Environment
8. Rural development
9. Heritage and landscape
10. Development management standards and guidelines

In accordance with Section 11(4)(bb) and (bc) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 -2010 recommendations to address the issues raised in the submissions made by the Dublin Transport Authority (submission received from the National Transport Authority) and the Dublin and Mid East Regional Authorities are dealt with separately.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS SUBMISSION BY THE NATIONAL TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

With reference to the submission made by the National Transport Authority, it is recommended that the following policies are included in the draft Development Plan:

- Policies to support the implementation of the draft "Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2011-2030" (or the adopted strategy when it becomes available).
- To support the adoption of a hierarchy of transport users, with pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users at the top of the hierarchy, followed by freight, delivery and waste vehicles and finally private vehicle users. In all cases, provision will be made for emergency vehicle access as required and the needs of disabled people should be fully taken into account.
- To support the consolidation of development into areas that can enable development to be well served by non-car modes of travel and particularly within existing built up areas.
- To implement sustainable mixed use development as the primary pattern of growth.
- To promote developments which support public transport, walking and cycling providing well designed neighbourhoods of high architectural quality with dwelling sizes and layouts which provide good quality liveable homes in attractive residential environments, where open space, health and recreation needs are met.
- To ensure that new development likely to attract large numbers of people need to be generally located in town centres in order to support public transport use, cycling and walking as transport choices. Intensive development should also take place in areas well served by rail.
- To support the preparation of local transport plans to guide the preparation of development plans and local area plans for the larger towns in Meath.
- To ensure that new developments are permeable for walking and cycling and that parking or servicing arrangements do not compromise walking, cycling and public transport use.
- Car parking standards should be examined with more restrictive standards in those areas which have higher accessibility to public transport.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS SUBMISSION BY DUBLIN AND MID EAST REGIONAL AUTHORITY

Settlement

- To support an integrated approach to settlement, transport and employment which promotes mixed use settlements that integrate land-use and transportation and facilitate the creation of a critical mass of population in identified growth centres.
- To apply the population and household targets as set out in the RPGs in the settlement and housing strategies of the Development Plan.
- To develop an urban settlement hierarchy for Meath which builds upon the hierarchy set out in the RPGs, using the typology of Large Growth Towns I, Large Growth Towns II, Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns, Small Towns and Villages. In this regard, as per the RPGs the Large Growth Towns I shall be Navan and the Drogheda Environs, the Large Growth Town II shall be Dunboyne, and the Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns shall be Ashbourne, Kells, Trim and Dunshaughlin (following the granting of a railway order for Phase II of the Dublin-Navan rail line including a station to serve the town).
- To ensure that the growth of towns shall be appropriately based on the sequential approach and the phased development of land to ensure that towns grow at a sustainable rate and in accordance with their role and function in the settlement hierarchy.
- To prepare a core strategy in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government "Guidance Note on Core Strategies" which demonstrates using use of an evidence based approach towards the application of NSS and RPGs policies in the formulation of the Development Plan.

Economic Development

- To support Navan and Drogheda Environs as primary economic growth centres in Meath.
- To ensure that the development of the Drogheda Environs shall support the M1 economic corridor.
- To support the secondary economic growth centres Kells, Ashbourne and Dunboyne and their complementary role to the primary economic growth centres.



- To prepare an updated retail strategy which will be informed by the Retail Planning Guidelines (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2005) and the 'Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008-2014.
- To support town centres as the first choice for new retail development where appropriate.
- To support an examination of expanded port facilities within the GDA.
- To establish planning policy framework and assessment criteria for port development in the county, including an analysis of land based and maritime land use requirements.

Infrastructure

- To support the integration of land use and transport.
- To support improvements in public transport that serve rural areas.
- To support the delivery of Phase 2 of the Navan to Dublin rail line.
- To support the delivery of the Leinster Orbital Route.
- To support the timely delivery of the infrastructural projects outlined in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010 required for the sustainable development of Meath.

Rural Development

- To support the provision of services and facilities to serve rural communities and the role that rural villages and settlements can play in facilitating them.
- To support the continuing viability of agriculture, horticulture and other rural based enterprises within rural areas and to promote investment in facilities supporting rural innovation and enterprise with special emphasis on the green economy, within the context of sustainable development, appropriateness and the management of environmental resources.

Community

- To support the delivery, through the planning process, of social and recreational infrastructure which is necessary to serve communities.



Environment and Heritage

- To ensure alignment between the core objectives of the Water Framework Directive, (including River Basin Management Plans and Programmes of Measures) and the County Development Plans and related Local Area Plans; Habitat and Species Protection Plans under the Habitats Directive, Water Services Investment Programme, Nitrates Action Programme; and Flood Management Plans.
- To ensure that climate change considerations inform future development in Meath.
- To identify green infrastructure at the initial stages of all planning processes and to include it as a material consideration in order to inform future development.
- To ensure the protection, enhancement and maintenance of the natural environment and recognise the health benefits as well as the economic, social, environmental and physical value of green spaces through the development of and integration of Green Infrastructure (GI) planning and development in the planning process.
- To apply the principles of green infrastructure development and use county green infrastructure strategies to inform the development management process in terms of the design and layout of new residential areas, business/industrial development and other relevant projects.
- To recognise the importance and contribution of green infrastructure for the maintenance of biodiversity and ensuring that the county will be able to, or be ecologically robust enough to, adapt and respond to climate change issues.

4.4 STRATEGIC AIMS AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN VISION

The strategic aims of the plan and the plan vision should set out the overarching themes to be addressed throughout the Development Plan. It is recommended that these should include policies:

- To encourage mixed use settlement forms and sustainable centres, in which employment, housing and community services are located in close proximity to each other and to strategic public transport corridors.

- To support the creation of a compact urban form in all settlements in Meath including the development of town/village centre and brownfield lands in the first instance and the sequential expansion of the settlement thereafter in accordance with the 'Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2007) and the "Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas" (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009).
- To consolidate population growth and employment in areas best served by public transport and a range of transport modes which support the transport initiatives indicated within 'Transport 21' and the Draft National Transport Authority Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area and to promote higher densities/trip intensive uses in such areas, subject to normal planning criteria.
- To ensure that settlements develop in an integrated manner, with a mix of uses to support the resident community.
- To support the continued vitality and viability of rural areas, environmentally, socially and economically.
- To support the implementation of the County Development Board policy "Le Cheile – An Integrated Strategy for Meath to 2012" and any such new strategy prepared by the County Development Board.
- To ensure that the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and relevant River Basin Management Plans guide future development patterns in Meath.
- To recognise that the built environment can impact on health of the population particularly through enhancing or restricting, directly or indirectly, opportunities for physical activity and to promote forms of development which will facilitate physical activity, ranging from increasing the attractiveness of walking and cycling as means of transport to enabling the delivery of leisure and recreational facilities.
- To protect, conserve and enhance the built and natural heritage in Meath, including historic towns, villages and landscapes and to ensure that new development in the county is complementary to the heritage of the county.

- To ensure that plans and projects in Meath that have the potential to negatively impact on Natura 2000 sites will be subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and in accordance with best practice and guidance.

4.5 POPULATION AND SETTLEMENT

The Development Plan must outline a settlement strategy for the county, which focuses on the lifespan of the plan but which also takes a long term view for the optimum and sustainable development of the county. The “National Spatial Strategy”, “Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022”, “Smarter Travel”, the “Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2011-2030”, “Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities”, “Sustainable Residential Development in Rural Areas” guidelines and the “National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012” will be important considerations in this regard. It is recommended that the policies in this area address the following:

- To ensure that new housing in Meath shall support the National Spatial Strategy, Smarter Travel, the DoEHLG “Guidelines on Sustainable Urban Residential Development” and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area settlement strategy. New housing shall be concentrated in the first instance within the existing built footprint; support the achievement of sustainable towns; support national investment in public transport services by focusing new development areas to key locations to achieve the integration of land use and high quality public transport provision; and build up economics of scale for services in identified growth towns.
- To incorporate the settlement hierarchy and population and household projections of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area into the Development Plan.
- To ensure that only those lands required to support the population and household projections of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010 (and any such updates as may be provided) are identified for development over the life of the Development Plan.
- To ensure that future expansion in housing land areas in all towns should follow a clear sequential approach in accordance with the “Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2007) and the “Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Area Guidelines” (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009).

- To ensure that the majority of new housing in Meath shall be directed to the Large Growth Towns I identified in the settlement hierarchy, i.e. Navan and the Drogheda environs. These towns shall be the major growth towns in the county, accommodating regionally derived population growth.
- To support the directing of 11% of the household allocation to the Metropolitan Area of County Meath, focusing on Dunboyne which is well served by high quality public transport, as capacity in services permits.
- To promote the development of Dunboyne as a Large Growth Town II.
- To support the development of Kells, Trim, Ashbourne and Dunshaughlin (following the granting of permission for a railway order for Phase II of the Navan rail line to include a station at Dunshaughlin) as Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns. These towns should develop in an integrated and sustainable manner with an emphasis on ensuring that population growth caters more for local growth rather than regional growth and that economic development are provided locally to cater for the resident populations.
- To ensure that the expansion of towns and villages in County Meath is predicated on the availability of necessary infrastructure, including social infrastructure.
- To ensure that the development of small towns and villages will be linked to locally derived growth and takes place in an orderly and planned fashion in line with availability and delivery of infrastructure, both social and physical.
- To ensure that towns and villages in Meath become more self sustaining in terms of local employment with the level of economic development in centres being in accordance with the town/village's position in the settlement hierarchy and economic strategy of the Development Plan and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area and commensurate with the size of the town.
- To ensure that plans and projects associated with residential development that have the potential to negatively impact on Natura 2000 sites will be subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and in accordance with best practice and guidance.

4.6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As previously identified, the promotion of economic development in Meath is a key corporate goal for Meath County Council given the historic pattern of outward commuting from the county for employment and the level of unemployment in the county, which is the highest in the GDA, at time of writing. However this must take place in a planned and sustainable manner. The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 set out a detailed economic strategy for the region. County Meath has also participated in the preparation of an economic strategy specifically addressing the economic needs of the individual and collective counties in the Mid East region. It is recommended that the next Development Plan include policies which:

- To promote sustainable economic development across County Meath through the promotion of identified strategic linked economic growth areas and centres to provide employment opportunities locally and reduce the volume of long distance commuting.
- To enhance the strong strategic competitiveness and attractiveness of County Meath within the GDA in order to enhance its viability as a prime location for indigenous and foreign direct investment (F.D.I).
- To promote Navan and the Drogheda Environs as primary economic growth centres accommodating regional scale industry and enterprise and generating a critical mass of population in order to promote and sustain economic activity.
- To promote Kells and Ashbourne-Dunboyne as secondary economic growth centres to accommodate large scale industry and enterprise and act as complementary and supporting centres to Navan and the Drogheda Environs.
- To support entrepreneurship and enterprise at appropriate locations which incorporate best practices in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and which endorse responsible environmental and social practices.
- To facilitate the provision of adequate land for employment uses having regard to spatial planning, infrastructural, environmental and transportation requirements (of customers, suppliers and employees) and compatibility of adjoining uses.
- To support the development of linkages between strategic urban employment centres and rural based settlements in terms of skills, promotion of business links, communications

infrastructure and transport corridors to ensure balanced regional development and employment opportunities for dispersed settlements.

- To develop a policy framework for the assessment of a port developments, taking into account, in particular the environmental and ecological impacts, and the integration of landuse and transportation in particular access arrangements with consideration given to access off the National Route System. The development of such a policy framework would require the undertaking of the necessary strategic environmental and appropriate assessments regarding the potential impact of development activity on the area and in particular on any Natura 2000 sites in proximity to the site.
- To take a targeted and differentiated approach to encouraging investment in and supporting industrial and commercial development in the areas of foreign direct investment, indigenous industry and small and medium enterprises.
- To support opportunities associated with the green economy, consistent with best planning practices and sustainable management of environmental resources.
- To work with employment and enterprise agencies to identify and deliver strategic employment sites for development at suitably identified locations primarily the primary and secondary economic growth centres.
- To support the development of economic clusters and sectoral opportunities in strategic economic growth towns and linked economic growth areas and support policies which facilitate opportunities for clustering activities which have a tangible locational requirement outside these centres including those relating to green economy projects such as renewable energies – e.g. wind energy and bio fuel crop production; innovation and eco parks; food production and agri-business; horticulture and rural based tourism.
- To support the social economy in the areas of arts, culture and tourism, together with community enterprise.
- To maximise potential and opportunities in the retail sector to address significant comparison retail leakage while ensuring that policy is in accordance with the “Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2005) and in particular that the primacy of town centres as the first choice location for retail development is protected.

- To ensure that the retail hierarchy for the county has regard to the “Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008” (Dublin and Mid East Regional Authorities) and is consistent with the settlement hierarchy for the county.
- To direct new retail floor space into existing towns with significant population bases and those centres selected for additional population growth in the core strategy and housing strategy.
- To promote sustainable tourism practices and leisure activities at appropriate locations in Meath and to facilitate the conservation, protection and enhancement of the built and natural heritage, the protection of sensitive landscapes, cultural and community environments in order to maximise the economic benefits arising from the tourism industry.
- To support the delivery of a high quality built environment to enhance the attractiveness of the County Meath for commercial activity.
- To promote the timely delivery of infrastructure required to serve economic development including sustainable water supply, waste water treatment and waste management infrastructure; telecommunications and broadband infrastructure.
- To encourage and facilitate new employment opportunities in towns in Meath commensurate with the size of the town and its role in the settlement hierarchy for the county.
- To support the work of the Economic Development and Innovation Unit of Meath County Council in facilitating and encouraging business investment in County Meath with a focus on assisting core business and economic sectors and in creating the right environment for new business in Meath.
- To explore supporting the designation of Pace as a Strategic Development Zone owing to the unparalleled economic development opportunities which exist adjacent to M3 Parkway. Potential exists to develop a synergy between this area of Dunboyne and Maynooth Environs in relation to complementary Life Science / SMART Park campuses in partnership and collaboration with established third level institutes;

- To ensure that plans and projects associated with commercial, industrial or economic development that have the potential to negatively impact on Natura 2000 sites will be subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and in accordance with best practice and guidance.

4.7 HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

In order to create sustainable communities, the development of new housing areas must occur in tandem with delivery of social infrastructure. In addition, supporting facilities to serve existing communities such as open space and recreational amenities must be provided. The development of such facilities has lagged behind the rate of population growth in many parts of Meath in the last number of years owing to the rapid increase in population. The focus of the next Development Plan must therefore be on creating communities rather than just residential areas and ensuring that settlements and rural areas develop in a holistic manner. It is recommended that policies be included:

- To promote high quality living environments for enhancing the quality of life of the resident population.
- To promote social inclusion and take account of the needs of older people and people with disabilities.
- To promote the provision of services and facilities that are compatible with housing development and that are required for sustainable and balanced communities.
- To actively encourage participation in the housing sector through partnership arrangements and the provision of infrastructure and serviced land for social, voluntary and private housing, where possible.
- To ensure that the delivery of housing follows sustainable models through avoiding low density car based development forms and focusing on medium densities which will support and be integrated with a range of community facilities within accessible walking distances. Where lands are close to public transport nodes/stations or QBC corridors the density and connectivity of developments should directly support increased population being able to benefit from good transport links.

- To require that all residential development be of high quality in design, layout and space provision, and create a mix of typologies and tenure within residential areas.
- To ensure that where significant new housing is proposed in an area or community, an assessment of need regarding schools provision should take place; and local area plans (or Development Plans for Navan, Trim and Kells) should designate new school sites at accessible, pedestrian friendly locations.
- To secure the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme for the county.
- To provide for the future well being of the residents of the county by ensuring the provision of necessary services and facilities and the retention of existing community facilities particularly those which are centrally located in towns and villages or located within/ adjoining residential areas.
- To strengthen the fabric of towns and villages through the promotion of adequate provision of integrated community services and facilities of high standard, age appropriateness and accessible to all age groups and sectors of society in the most appropriate locations in partnership with all relevant bodies and groups.
- To support the provision of an even distribution of the full range of social infrastructure facilities to meet the needs of the County's population in liaison with other statutory, voluntary and community groups.
- To ensure that, where practicable, community, recreational and open space facilities are clustered, with the community facilities being situated 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.
- To facilitate liaison with the health services with regard to provision for community based primary care centres and hospital care in key population centres, supporting their integration into new and existing communities.
- To promote the integration of quality childcare facilities in newer communities, in line with the "Guidelines on Childcare Facilities" (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government).

- To require as part of all new residential and commercial developments, and in existing developments, where appropriate, provision to be made for facilities including local/ neighbourhood shops, childcare facilities, schools and recreational facilities and to seek their provision concurrent with development.
- To recognise the importance of the development of recreational and leisure programmes and facilities in a balanced fashion, where facilities are planned and provided for appropriate to the local community needs.
- To secure the development of a hierarchy of multifunctional active and passive recreational open spaces and facilities to serve all age cohorts.
- To facilitate the sustainable use for recreational purposes of the Meath coastline, including its harbours, beaches and associated waterways, while safeguarding the County's natural heritage.
- To support the development of appropriately located allotment development to serve urban communities. Such development should be conveniently located to residential areas.
- To recognise the role of arts and culture in supporting sustainable and multi-faceted communities and that arts and culture facilities in the county are promoted and are accessible to the communities they serve. Proposals will be encouraged for the provision of public art works including sculptures in tandem with appropriate public and private development proposals.
- To ensure that plans and projects associated with the provision of social infrastructure, recreation and leisure activities that have the potential to negatively impact on Natura 2000 sites will be subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and in accordance with best practice and guidance.

4.8 TRANSPORTATION AND MOVEMENT

The availability of a sustainable, reliable, efficient and safe transport network is crucial for promoting Meath as an attractive location for investment, achieving compliance with environmental targets, improving social inclusion and enhancing quality of life. The "Smarter

Travel” policy document (Department of Transport) illustrates the move in transport policy away from a dependence and facilitation of private transport towards more sustainable modes, particularly walking and cycling. The successful implementation of this policy shift requires a strong basis in planning policy and the promotion of development that can facilitate sustainable transport. The next Development Plan must respond to this challenge, at the strategic level of settlement and economic strategy and at the level of individual developments in ensuring that both can promote and facilitate sustainable transport. It is recommended that policies be included:

- To facilitate the development of a transport system in the county that enables the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in a manner which is environmentally sound.
- To support projects which are consistent with and facilitate the implementation of the Smarter Travel Documents ‘A Sustainable Transport Future A - New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009–2020’ and ‘National Cycle Policy Framework 2009 –2020’.
- To promote land use planning measures which facilitate transportation efficiency, economic returns on transport investment, minimisation of environmental impacts and a general shift towards the use of public transportation throughout the county.
- To support the development of a policy framework for the assessment of rural based development proposals of strategic importance where access is proposed onto national route system.
- To protect strategic road corridors and their principle function as arterial routes for the movement of goods, services and people between settlement areas within and outside the county. Long term junction capacity and carrying capacity should not be adversely affected by inappropriate and dispersed development.
- To restrict (and where appropriate, prohibit) development in public safety zones and approach zones of airports and airfields, and in noise zones associated with airport flight operations.
- To support and facilitate the completion of Phase II of the Navan-Dublin rail line with stations serving Dunshaughlin, Kilmessan and Navan.
- To support the retention and improvement of bus services in Meath.

- To support a culture for walking and cycling through a series of proactive, sustainable, ecologically conscious measures including infrastructure and design provisions which support and encourage walking and cycling, priority provisions within urban areas and education programmes.
- To support the national target of 10% of all trips by bicycle by 2020 within the National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF) 2009 –2020.
- To ensure that plans and projects associated with the provision of transport, airport or port development that have the potential to negatively impact on Natura 2000 sites will be subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and in accordance with best practice and guidance.

4.9 INFRASTRUCTURE

The availability of infrastructure is a prerequisite to ensuring that Meath can continue to grow and that the objectives in the Development Plan can be realised. The provision of infrastructure must be rolled out in a manner that delivers the capacity required while protecting the natural environment, landscape and communities from adverse negative impacts.

It is recommended that policies be included:

- To recognise that securing an adequate water supply is a critical issue for the Greater Dublin Area in being able to support commercial, industry and residential development.
- To promote and facilitate the provision of the necessary infrastructure to accommodate the demand for development and future population increases in an environmentally sustainable manner.
- To ensure that availability of capacity in water services infrastructure is a key consideration in determining the future growth of settlements in Meath.
- To secure the provision of water, wastewater and waste management initiatives to accommodate the future sustainable economic and residential growth of the county, where necessary in conjunction with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and adjoining Local Authorities, as provided for in the adopted RPGs in which it is stated that *'an agreed protocol should be put in place between local*

authorities in the GDA to ensure the optimum allocation of sanitary and other services for priority investments.' (p.127)

- To encourage liaison with Greater Dublin Area Local Authorities and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in the identification of a sustainable major new long term source of water for the Greater Dublin Area, and planning and development for the required infrastructure to store and distribute large volumes of water in the Dublin Water Region continues.
- To support water conservation and demand management so that short term needs can be met through better use of existing resources and to sustain a continuing policy of achieving long term goals of water conservation and environmental good practice.
- To support investment in improving water storage, distribution, supply and quality in all locations where required to ensure that public health is maintained and that lack of water does not restrict the expansion and development of identified growth towns, particularly the Large Growth Towns I and II, and so that the future needs of industry can be met.
- To ensure that plans and projects associated with the provision of water supply, waste water treatment, waste management and surface water drainage that have the potential to negatively impact on Natura 2000 sites will be subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and in accordance with best practice and guidance.
- To seek continued investment in waste water treatment facilities and networks to meet the needs of the River Basin Management Plans and to achieve the targets for good water status for river, coastal and transitional waters in the Water Framework Directive.
- To ensure that future capacity in waste water treatment facilities is provided in growth towns through expansion and upgrading of facilities where necessary and/or exploration of alternatives such as connecting to adjoining drainage systems or changes to catchments to enable growth towns to provide for the population growth envisaged in the settlement strategy and thus enable a more sustainable settlement pattern to be supported.
- To proactively collaborate in the identification and development of a suitable site for the Greater Dublin Regional Drainage Project – Regional Waste Water Treatment, Marine Outfall and Orbital Drainage System in the north coast of the GDA to enable the

continued population and economic growth and the physical consolidation of the metropolitan area, by reducing the catchment size for Ringsend and providing new treatment capacity through network connections.

- To ensure that the management of land use and policies of the development plan and development management decisions shall ensure that the scale of development is managed to achieve compliance with the waste water discharge licences of waste water treatment facilities.
- To facilitate and support the full implementation of new development and environmental management policies developed in the GDSDS project, including Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
- To address the relationship between significant land, arterial drainage and navigation and other works or changes in use and the possible impact to protect and where appropriate, minimise possible impact on both large scale flood risk, aquatic habitats and Natura 2000 sites from individual works and also cumulative effects from a number of developments within a river catchment.
- To ensure that all water management plans should take account of the possible impact of climate change in the future in relation to changes to volumes of rainfall, river flows, sea level rise, drought events and frequency of storm events.
- To facilitate the delivery of ICT and energy needs in Meath, including the development of renewable energy sources at suitable locations, in order to ensure that economic and community needs can be met particularly within the designated economic and larger towns which will accommodate large scale population and regional scale employment.
- To support the targets for renewable generation so that renewable energy targets for 2020, and any further targets beyond 2020 which become applicable over the lifetime of the Development Plan, are met.
- To implement the principles and planning guidance set out within Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government publications relating to '*Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures*', '*Wind Energy Development*' and any other relevant guidance which may be issued in relation to communications and sustainable energy provisions.

- To ensure that future corridors for energy transmission or pipelines should avoid creating sterile lands proximate to key public transport corridors, particularly rail routes.
- 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 to support energy conservation and renewable energy.
- To ensure that plans and projects associated with the generation or supply of energy or telecommunication networks that have the potential to negatively impact on Natura 2000 sites will be subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and in accordance with best practice and guidance.
- To maximise the potential of the ICT sector, provision should be made in new developments for such infrastructure including that open access fibre connections are included; that carrier neutral ducting is installed during significant public infrastructure works such as roads, water and sewerage and that all ductings are recorded and mapped.
- To promote and facilitate reuse and recycling by residential and commercial sources.
- To encourage the expansion of increased levels of diversion of biodegradable waste from landfill through provision of or support for biological treatment facilities and home composting.
- To ensure that developments include adequate space for domestic and commercial recyclable waste storage both within and outside buildings; and ensure that larger development proposals, masterplans and local area plans incorporate bring banks to facilitate sustainable development and optimal rates of recycling.
- To support the development of recycling sites/waste disposal sites or transfer stations and associated developments in appropriate locations, subject to normal planning and environmental sustainability considerations.
- To ensure that waste management facilities are appropriately managed and monitored according to best practice to maximise efficiencies and to protect human health and the natural environment.

- To ensure that Plans and projects associated with waste management that have the potential to negatively impact on Natura 2000 sites will be subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and in accordance with best practice and guidance.

4.10 ENVIRONMENT

The cross cutting nature of recent environmental legislation requires that environmental issues are considered throughout the Development Plan and iteratively determine policies and objectives particularly of a strategic nature. It is recommended that policies in the draft Development Plan should seek:

- To ensure alignment between the core objectives of the Water Framework Directive, (including River Basin Management Plans and Programmes of Measures) and the County Development Plan and related Local Area Plans; Habitat and Species Protection Plans under the Habitats Directive, Water Services Investment Programme, Nitrates Action Programme; and Flood Management Plans.
- To incorporate the objectives from River Basin Management Plans into the plan making process in order that the implications of development on water quality is a key driver in identification of suitable locations for new development.
- To place a strong emphasis on the need for sustainable drainage systems and water management to reduce both flood risk, overflows and the washing of pollutants from surface areas into receiving waters and to support ecological processes.
- To ensure that areas of high ecological status in the relevant River Basin Management Plans are identified in the Development Plan and specific policies to protect their status are incorporated in the Plan, including restrictions on types of development which impact on water quality.
- To promote awareness and protection of, shellfish and non invasive molluscs, including their breeding and feeding areas (Shellfish Growing Areas), from on-site and external sources of pollution, referencing Pollution Reduction Programmes.

- To ensure that plans and projects that have the potential to negatively impact on Natura 2000 sites will be subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and in accordance with best practice and guidance.
- To consider the concept of coastal parks in future planning in East Meath as a means of enhancing coastal habitats marine protection and sustainable marine based tourism and of integrating coastal (blue) infrastructure with green infrastructure.
- To recognise the function and role of carbon sinks/sequestration, heat sinks and soil management in landscape management.
- To expand the use of geological and soil mapping to inform planning decisions relating to settlement, flooding, food production value and carbon sequestration, to identify prime agricultural lands (for food production), degraded/ contaminated lands (which may have implications for water quality, health, fauna), and those which are essential for habitat protection, or have geological significance.
- To ensure that flood risk be managed pro-actively at all stages in the planning process avoiding development in flood risk areas where possible and by reducing the risks of flooding to and from existing and future development.
- To ensure that the guidelines “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management” (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government) are fully implemented by Meath County Council.
- To identify all Seveso sites within the county and those sites outside of the county but whose consultation distance extends into Meath and include policies for development with Seveso site consultation zones and Seveso site developments.
- To ensure that plans and projects associated with flood risk management that have the potential to negatively impact on Natura 2000 sites will be subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and in accordance with best practice and guidance.

4.11 RURAL DEVELOPMENT

County Meath is a predominantly rural county in terms of land mass, with a large rural population. How to ensure the continued vitality and viability of the rural area is a significant issue for the county, particularly in terms of how best to manage sometimes competing social, economic and environmental considerations. The challenge for the draft Development Plan will be to develop an integrated strategy for rural areas which can effectively respond to these considerations. In this regard, it is recommended that policies be included:

- To encourage the continued sustainable development of rural communities without compromising the physical, environmental, natural and heritage resources of the County.
- To protect and support rural villages and countryside through careful management of physical and environmental resources and appropriate sustainable development.
- To reinforce the vitality and future of smaller rural towns, villages and settlements as nodes for rural development and ensuring a functional relationship exists between housing and the rural area in which it is located.
- To support the continuing viability of agriculture, horticulture and other rural based enterprises within rural areas and to promote investment in facilities supporting rural innovation and enterprise with special emphasis on the green economy, within the context of sustainable development and the management of environmental resources.
- To support the extractive industry where it would not compromise the environmental quality of the county and where detailed rehabilitation proposals are provided.
- To develop 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.
- To adopt a tailored approach to rural housing within County Meath as a whole distinguishing between rural generated housing and urban generated housing in rural areas recognising those areas under strong urban influence.
- To ensure that rural generated housing needs be accommodated in the areas they arise subject to satisfying good practice in relation to site location, access, drainage and design

requirements and that urban generated housing needs should take place within built up areas or land identified through the development plan process.

- To ensure the continued survival and development of the Gaeltachtaí as areas distinct in the linguistic and cultural life of the county.
- To require a high quality design and layout for development in rural areas.
- To support the provision of social infrastructure to serve rural areas.
- To support the development of appropriately located allotment development.
- To require that the EPA *Code Of Practice For Wastewater Treatment And Disposal Systems For Single Houses (P.E. 10 Or Less) 2009* [or any other updated code of practice/guidelines] should also be adhered to in order to safeguard individual and group water schemes.
- To ensure that plans and projects associated with rural development including but not limited to residential development, agriculture, forestry, the extractive industry and commercial development that have the potential to negatively impact on Natura 2000 sites will be subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and in accordance with best practice and guidance.
- To support and protect the existing economic base and seek to diversify the economy through both inward investments and the promotion of agriculture, forestry and tourism-related industries in the rural areas.
- To support the expansion of existing industrial or business enterprise in the countryside and new proposals where the proposed use has locational requirements which can only be accommodated in the countryside. Emphasis should be also placed on the development of industrial or business enterprises based on rural resources e.g. agricultural food processing or bio energy crop processing.

4.12 HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE

Meath benefits from tremendous variety in its built and natural heritage. This heritage contributes to the intrinsic character of the county helping to create a high quality living environment for its



residents but also representing a valuable resource to support biodiversity, agricultural and related industries and the tourism sector. It is therefore vital that the draft Development Plan provides an adequate policy context to protect and enhance the heritage and landscape features of Meath. In order to achieve this, it is recommended that policies be included:

- To ensure that all aspects of the built heritage including archaeological, industrial, and architectural heritage, and those building which are home to protected species are suitably protected, enhanced, sensitively reused/ integrated into new development works and incorporated in development plans, records of protected structures, heritage plans and site specific projects and developments.
- To protect all national sites and monuments identified on the national record and also other archaeological sites that emerge through investigative or construction works in cooperation with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
- To protect Architectural Conservation Areas, protected structures and vernacular buildings.
- To protect, conserve and enhance buildings, areas, structures, sites and features of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.
- To promote awareness and increased stewardship of built heritage within the community through actions such as school and education programmes, heritage plan actions, and interaction between statutory bodies, local authorities and local communities in the form of workshops and resource programmes.
- To promote, where appropriate, settlement identity through traditional plot sizes, street patterns, street furniture and building scales in the development of towns and villages.
- To continue to provide Local Authority grant assistance to individuals in relation to specific conservation projects, where practical and subject to funds being available.
- To promote the sensitive retrofitting of established building stock, where appropriate and the retention and refurbishment of vernacular and heritage buildings as opposed to their demolition.

- To improve the appearance and character of areas with particular townscape character by actively protecting their distinctive identities.
- To seek the protection, enhancement and sensitive integration/re-use, as may be appropriate, of heritage transport corridors, including rail, road and water corridors, to ensure their long term future and their role in relation to access provision, tourism development, biodiversity space and development buffers.
- To protect the intrinsic natural, built and cultural heritage of the County whilst ensuring that any future development of tourist and recreational uses are facilitated in a manner which complements and protects the intrinsic heritage features of the county.
- To acknowledge the contribution that Village Design Statements can make in identifying the distinctive local character of a village and in guiding the design of future development in such areas.
- To protect and conserve the natural environment and biodiversity in the county, in particular nationally important and EU designated sites such as Special Protection Areas, Candidate Special Areas of Conservation and proposed Natural Heritage Areas, protected habitats and species, and habitats and species of local biodiversity value. This policy also includes new or extended ecological sites that are notified or designated over the lifetime of the Development Plan. Appropriate measures to protect Natura 2000 sites should be identified at the initial stages of all planning processes and included as a material consideration in order to inform future development.
- To support the development, implementation and renewal of the Meath Heritage Plan and to work with all key stakeholders to identify and deliver a range of actions and programmes to support heritage in the Council area and to support the Heritage Plan through other plans and programmes operated by Meath County Council.
- To identify biodiversity resources at the initial stages of all planning processes and include them as a material consideration to inform future development.
- To support the implementation of the "County Meath Biodiversity Action Plan: 2008 – 2012" and any such updated plan that may be adopted by Meath County Council.

- To ensure that the unique features of Meath's natural heritage are protected, that biodiversity is conserved and where possible enhanced, that watercourses are safeguarded from pollution that landscapes are maintained and enriched and that tourism and recreational uses are facilitated in a sensitive manner.
- To develop a Green Infrastructure Strategy which will integrate the implementation of policy and objectives under a number of headings, including natural heritage, parks and open spaces, built heritage and archaeology and water management, through the development of a strategic approach to green space planning in the County.
- To promote the positive understanding of Meath's landscape in terms of its inherent and unique character and to recognise what elements should be preserved, conserved or enhanced.
- To promote a unified approach to landscape planning and management, linking policies and objectives for the preservation of the county's unique landscape character to all relevant planning policies and objectives throughout the plan.
- To support the protection, enhancement and management of the programme to protect important individual or groups of trees through greater use of tree protection orders through the undertaking of an inventory of the Council area where funding allows.
- To protect identified views and prospects which are deemed worthy of preservation.
- To support the protection, enhancement and management of the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Brú na Bóinne.
- To protect the vulnerable archaeological and cultural landscape and to enhance views within and adjacent to the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Brú na Bóinne.
- To support the protection, enhancement and management of the renowned and unique historic landscape at Tara/Skryne.

4.13 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The development management standards and guidelines in the draft Development Plan should foster a high standard of design and layout for new development in the county. This is compatible with other recommended policies to protect and enhance the character of urban and rural areas



of Meath and to promote sustainable energy sources. It is recommended that policies be included:

- To require a high standard of architectural design in urban and rural areas.
- To require that developments in urban areas positively contribute to the public urban realm and follow best practice principles of urban design.
- To ensure that appropriate landscaping is provided in developments where necessary.
- To promote the use of native species in all landscaping.
- To promote the incorporation of existing green infrastructure into the landscaping of developments.
- To set out requirements for the provision of open space to serve residential development which shall be delivered in tandem with the occupation of residential units.
- To set out general standards for the design of residential, commercial and industrial development.
- To require that the guidance contained in the “Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas” guidelines (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government), “Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Best Practice Urban Design Manual” (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government) and the “Manual for Streets” (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government/Department of Transport) is adhered to.
- To require that provision for bicycle parking is made in all commercial, industrial, educational, recreational and community developments with bicycle parking spaces to be securely and conveniently located close to building entrances.
- To promote the inclusion of renewable energy sources in new buildings such as solar energy and high standards of insulation to encourage heat retention and energy conservation.

- To promote and encourage the provision of art works including sculptures in tandem with appropriate public and private development proposals.



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Appendix 1



**APPENDIX 1 LIST OF PRESCRIBED AUTHORITIES NOTIFIED OF
COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW**

- An Bord Pleanála
- An Taisce
- Arts Council
- Bord Gáis
- Bus Éireann
- Cavan County Council
- Central Fisheries Board
- Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
- Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
- Department of Education and Skills
- Department of Finance
- Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- Drogheda Borough Council
- Dublin Airport Authority
- Dublin City Council
- Dublin Regional Authority
- Dundalk Town Council
- Environmental Protection Agency
- ESB
- Fáilte Ireland
- Fingal County Council
- Fisheries Ireland
- Forfas
- Health and Safety Authority
- Health Service Executive
- Heritage Council
- Iarnród Éireann
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Irish Rail
- Kildare County Council
- Louth County Council
- Meath East Business Owners



- Midlands Regional Authority
- Monaghan County Council
- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- National Roads Authority
- National Transport Authority
- Offaly County Council
- Office of Public Works
- South East Regional Authority
- Údaras na Gaeltachta
- Westmeath County Council

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Appendix 2



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

July 2011

**APPENDIX 2 LIST OF PERSONS ORGANISATIONS WHO MADE SUBMISSIONS
DURING THE PRE DRAFT PUBLIC CONSULTATION PHASE**

- 1 ESB
- 2 Meath Accessible Transport – Flexibus
- 3 Ben Developments Ltd.
- 4 NRA
- 5 Dublin Regional Authority
- 6 Dept. of Education and Skills
- 7 Irish Rail
- 8 Navan & District Historical Society
- 9 National Transport Authority
- 10 The Heritage Council
- 11 Tom Phillips & Associates on behalf of Lidl Ireland
- 12 Boyle Architects Ltd on behalf of Navan Chamber of Commerce
- 13 Boyne Currach Heritage Group
- 14 Smith Harrington on behalf of Vincent & Katherine O'Reilly
- 15 Dublin Airport Authority
- 16 Coordination Unit, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
- 17 James Morris
- 18 Kieran Cummins, Planning & Environmental Consultants on behalf of Meath
Environmental Protection Alliance
- 19 Irish Wind Energy Association
- 20 GVA on behalf of Tesco Ireland Ltd.
- 21 Treasury Holdings on behalf of Bremore Ireland Port
- 22 Tom Phillips and Associates on behalf of GAA County Committee
- 23 Ratoath Chamber of Commerce
- 24 Declan Clabby & Associates on behalf of Gerald Reilly
- 25 Drogheda Port Company
- 26 Keep Ireland Open
- 27 Martin Dier
- 28 Meath Archaeological and Historical Society
- 29 Julianstown & District Community Association
- 30 Irish Wildlife Trust
- 31 Menolly Developments
- 32 John Spain & Associates on behalf of Martin Kelly, Michael Doyle & Doyle Kelly &



	Company
33	Tom Phillips & Associates on behalf of Kingscroft Developments Ltd.
34	John Spain & Associates on behalf of Aldi Stores Ireland Ltd.
35	Declan Brassil & Company Ltd. on behalf of Largo Foods Exports Ltd.
36	Declan Brassil & Company Ltd. on behalf of Tayto Park Ltd.
37	Simon Clear & Associates on behalf of DDF Partnership
38	Meath Local Sports Partnership
39	Environment & Water Services, Meath County Council
40	Downey Hynes Partnership on behalf of Knockumber Property Developments
41	Stephen Little & Associates on behalf of Palladrone Development Partnership
42	Lagan Cement Ltd.
43	McGill Planning Ltd., on behalf of Carton Demesne
44	Ryan Nowlan Consulting on behalf of the Keating Family Clonee
45	Stephen Ward Consultants on behalf of Shannon Homes
46	Eirgrid
47	BMA Planning on behalf of Blackhall Green Homes Ltd.
48	Castlethorn Construction
49	An Taisce
50	Simon Clear & Associates on behalf DDF Partnership
51	The One–Off Ireland Campaign
52	McGill Planning on behalf of Liberty Homes
53	Downey Hynes Partnership on behalf of East Meath Developments Group
54	Kieran Campbell
55	Declan Brassil & Company Ltd. on behalf of McGarrell Reilly
56	Declan Brassil & Company Ltd. on behalf of McGarrell Reilly
57	Stephen Little & Associates on behalf of Dorville Homes & The Adroit Company
58	Declan Brassil & Company Ltd. on behalf of McGarrell Reilly
59	Joseph Corr, Corr & Associates
60	Brady Hughes Consultants on behalf of John Wogan
61	Brady Hughes Consultants on behalf of Berrill Family
62	Gearoid O' Gibne
63	Simon Clear & Associates on behalf of Noonan Construction
64	Martina Maguire on behalf of Meath East Community Assoc. Ltd.
65	Declan Brassil & Company Ltd. on behalf of McGarrell Reilly Group
66	Simon Clear & Associates on behalf of Christopher Rooney
67	HSE Health Promotion Department

Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019

Manager's Report on Pre Draft Public Consultation Stage

Appendix 3



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

July 2011

APPENDIX 3 REPORT ON PUBLIC CONSULTATION INFORMATION EVENINGS

As part of pre-draft consultation Meath County Council held a number of Information Evenings throughout the County, at the following locations:

- Kells Town Council – Tuesday 22nd March – 7pm to 9pm
- Duleek Area Office - Thursday 24th March – 7pm to 9pm
- Dunshaughlin Area Office - Monday 28th March – 7pm to 9pm
- Trim Library – Tuesday 29th March – 7pm to 9pm
- Planning Office, Abbey Road, Navan - Thursday 31st March – 7pm to 9pm

The Consultation Events were advertised widely and public notices were placed in the Meath Chronicle, Meath News and Sport, Drogheda Independent, Trim Focus and Meath Echo in March 2011. The events were also advertised on LMFM radio station.

Posters advertising the public consultations events were placed at the above locations. In addition, Meath County Councillors and Meath TDs were notified of the events.

Display boards were erected at the venues which outlined firstly the development plan review process, what a development plan is, and all issues relevant to the County. These boards were complemented by the strategic issues booklet, which were available to be viewed at the meeting.

The meetings were attended by two planners from the Planning Department and an administrator from the Planning Department. The planners were available to discuss the planning issues facing the county. Comment forms were provided to those who attended on which they could outline their views on how the County should develop into the future. A small number of comment cards were filled in and submitted to the Planning Authority.

Some of the issues raised by the general public at the public consultation events included:

- The need to promote tourism and encourage tourists to visit rural tourist sites and to improve and provide better signage.
- Issues with regard to rural transport and the need for integrated transport and a county wide transport plan.
- Rural housing and the local housing need criteria.



- The need to develop public walkways throughout the county and along the Boyne Navigational Canal.
- The need to integrate social criteria into a coherent measuring system outlining the importance of social capital.
- The need to promote and encourage the development of renewable energy sources.
- The advancement of the Navan Rail Line Phase II.