

Meath County Development Plan 2013–2019

**Proposed Draft Variation No. 1 to
Volume 1
Written Statement**



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council



Proposal

It is proposed to vary the text of a number of the objectives of the Core Strategy of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019 with some minor textual changes to the narrative also being required.

Purpose of the Proposed Variation

The Core Strategy of the County Development Plan requires the realisation of a number of stated objectives within specified periods, mainly within one year of adoption of the County Development Plan. The stated objectives seek to ensure that the development frameworks and land use zoning objectives of individual centres adhere to the Settlement Strategy and Core Strategy, particularly Table 2.4, of the Development Plan. This requires a review of all existing land use zoning objectives to ensure compliance with the new land use zoning objectives contained in the County Development Plan and to ensure that the quantum of lands identified for residential development adheres to the household allocation for each centre. The Planning Authority is at an advanced stage of preparing a significant draft variation which would give effect to these stated objectives. However, as work progresses on this variation, it has been considered necessary to publish an “*Enabling Variation*” firstly to more clearly define the manner in which this process was envisaged and presented in the adopted County Development Plan. The primary purpose is to provide clarity with regard to the intentions of the Planning Authority in their subsequent work programme to give effect to the new County Development Plan.

The Planning Authority is prohibited from permitting multiple residential developments on greenfield lands which have the benefit of a residential land use zoning objective until the respective land use strategy for each centre has been varied or amended to make it consistent with the Settlement Strategy and Core Strategy, particularly Table 2.4, of the Development Plan (CS OBJ 1 refers). This process is currently underway. As part of the subsequent variation / amendment processes, it is considered prudent to clarify the relationship between CS OBJ 1 and CS OBJ 3 which seeks to incorporate development objectives and land use zoning objectives for a large number of centres into the County Development Plan.

The second element of the variation seeks to incorporate land use zoning objectives inclusive of an Order of Priority for those centres (5 no.) which will retain their individual Local Area Plans (CS OBJ 2 refers). This step was considered necessary in advance of amending the Local Area Plans to ensure consistency between the County Development Plan Core Strategy and the land use zoning objectives contained in the individual Local Area Plans which give effect to, inter alia, the household allocation and employment role of each centre. This will also ensure the primacy of the County Development Plan as the primary statutory land use framework in the County.

It is also proposed to clarify as part of CS OBJ 3 that following the making of the variation which will incorporate development and land use zoning objectives for the 29 no. specified centres which currently have Local Area Plans in place that the revocation process of their respective Local Area Plans will then commenced.

The Core Strategy of the County Development Plan seeks to ensure that the individual town development plans of Navan, Kells & Trim are consistent with the settlement hierarchy and population projections set out in this Development Plan (CS OBJ 4 refers). It then states that these plans would be varied within one year of the adoption of the County Development to ensure such consistency. As the Planning Authority is now at an advanced stage of completing the 2013 – 2019 Kells Development Plan (material alterations have completed their public display period and Manager’s Report on the submissions is being prepared) and the draft Trim Development Plan 2014 – 2020 will be on public display in early September, it is considered necessary to clarify the wording of CS OBJ 4. The revised text will make it clear

that the Planning Authority will prepare a variation only to the Navan Development Plan 2009 - 2015.

As part of the preparation of new development and land use zoning objectives for individual centres being incorporated into the County Development Plan, it was considered necessary to provide greater certainty with regard to the sites within development centres across the county with the benefit of planning permission for multiple residential units. This certainty relates to the retention of the land use zoning objective applicable to such sites and the manner in which applications seeking to extend the appropriate period under Section 42 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 – 2013 shall be dealt with. This element of the variation seeks to limit the period for which such extension of durations can be considered to be contemporaneous to the timeframe of the County Development Plan.

The 2011 Census of Population indicated that Laytown – Bettystown – Mornington had a recorded population of 10,889 persons. The Core Strategy (CS OBJ 8 refers) required the preparation of a new Local Area Plan for Laytown – Bettystown – Mornington within one year of the adoption of the County Development Plan. However, when SAPMAP (Small Area Population Statistics Maps) was published, Laytown – Bettystown – Mornington (East) also included the settlements of Donacarney and Mornington. The new Local Area Plan for this defined Census Town must therefore extend to the full geographical area contained within the Census of Population defined Census town. As a result, the Core Strategy Objectives (CS OBJ 3 and CS OBJ 8) will have to be varied to reflect the manner in which development and land use zoning objectives for Donacarney and Mornington are now being prepared.

How to Read the Proposed Amendments

1. The existing text of the County Development Plan 2013 – 2019 is shown in normal font.
2. Deletions are shown as strikethrough text which has also been highlighted in yellow to assist the reader.
3. Amendments / Additions are shown as red text.

This is shown in the following example:

CS OBJ 4	To ensure that the Navan, Trim and Kells Development Plans are consistent with the settlement hierarchy and population projections set out in this Development Plan. These In this regard, a variation to the Navan Development Plans will be varied published, if necessary, to ensure that they are it is consistent, within one year of the adoption of with the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 within one year of its adoption.
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Strategic Environmental Appraisal

The Planning Authority determined, using the screening criteria set out in Schedule 2A Planning & Development Regulations 2001 – 2004, the DoEHLG SEA Guidelines and Annex 2 of Directive 2001/42/EC, that Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required for the proposed draft variation to the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019. A copy of this Screening Report is available for inspection and accompanies the proposed draft variation.

Appropriate Assessment Screening

An Appropriate Assessment Screening was undertaken of the proposed draft variation to the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019, in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The draft variation is not predicted to have a likely impact on the key features or the qualifying interests of any Natura 2000 sites. A copy of this Screening Report is available for inspection and accompanies the proposed draft variation.

Text of Proposed Variation – Subset of Chapter 2 - Core Strategy

2.3.3 Residential Zoned Land Provision

Table 2.4 details the requirement for residential zoned land requirements in each of the designated settlement centres in Meath, based on the projected household allocations. The zoned land requirements have been based on land use zoning objectives that relate solely to residential use and on mixed use zoning objectives which permit residential use. The density assigned to each centre has had regard to the place of the settlement in the county settlement hierarchy, existing and planned public transport investment in each centre and the 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009). Based on this information, the shortfall or excess in zoning is also indicated.

Town Development Plans are in place for Navan, Kells and Trim while Local Area Plans have been prepared for the remaining towns and villages listed in the county settlement hierarchy. These individual Development Plans and Local Area Plans detail the land use zoning, including that for residential use, in each settlement.

It is clear from Table 2.4 that at a countywide level, there are generally adequate lands, if released and serviced, to cater for the projected growth in households and population for the plan period. ~~It should be noted that the overall excess of land will increase as a result of the assumption that 30% of committed units will not be built. This could potentially amount to an additional 94 hectares becoming available based on 3,299 committed units not being built and assuming an average density of 35 units per hectare.~~

In order to ensure towns and villages grow at a suitable and sustainable scale, appropriate to their position in the settlement hierarchy and this core strategy, measures must be put in place to ensure that the quantum and scale of residential development that will take place in urban centres complies with that shown in Table 2.4.

In total, Local Area Plans are in place for 40 individual urban centres across the County. The

vast majority of these Local Area Plans are not required by statute as Section 19(1)(b) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011 requires that a Local Area Plan must be made in respect of an area which:

- is designated as a town in the most recent census of population, other than a town designated as a suburb or environs in that census,
- has a population in excess of 5,000, and
- is situated within the functional area of a planning authority which is a county council.

In addition, according to Section 19 (1)(bb) of the Acts, notwithstanding paragraph (b) quoted above, a local area plan shall be made in respect of a town with a population that exceeded 1,500 persons (in the census of population most recently published before a planning authority makes its decision under subparagraph

- (a) except where the planning authority decides to indicate objectives for the area of the town in its development plan, or
- (b) a local area plan has already been made in respect of the area of the town or objectives for that area have already been indicated in the development plan.

In order to streamline the process of reviewing LAPs, Meath County Council intends to reduce the number of standalone LAPs and to incorporate objectives for the remainder of the urban centres into the County Development Plan. Local Area Plans are mandatory for Drogheda Environs, Dunboyne, Ashbourne, Laytown / Bettystown / Mornington East¹ and Ratoath as their respective populations all exceeded 5,000 at the 2011 Census of Population. It is now proposed to retain LAPs for these centres and for Dunshaughlin. A new LAP is required for Laytown/Bettystown/ Mornington East / **Mornington / Donacarny which is identified as a Census Town in the 2011 Census of Population.** The existing process of having a joint LAP for Dunboyne/Clonee/Pace will be maintained.

¹ The defined census town of Laytown – Bettystown – Mornington includes the urban centres of Laytown, Bettystown, Mornington East, Donacarny & Mornington.

For all other centres, it is proposed to include objectives in the County Development Plan, i.e. Athboy, Gibbstown, Ballivor, Carlanstown, Carnaross, Clonard, Crossakiel, Donore, **Donacorney/Mornington**, Drumconrath, Duleek, Enfield, Gormonston, Julianstown, Kentstown, Kilbride, Kilcock Environs, Kildalkey, Kilmainhamwood, Kilmessan, Longwood, Maynooth Environs, Moynalty, Nobber, Oldcastle, Rathcairn, Rathmolyon, Slane, Stamullen and Summerhill.

Following the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019, the centres for which LAPs are being retained will be amended to ensure that they adhere to the provisions of the new County Development Plan (demonstrating consistency with the core strategy, economic strategy etc.). **To assist in this process, it is proposed to firstly introduce land use zoning objectives for these centres into the County Development Plan by way of variation.** For the remaining centres **for which LAPs are not being retained for**, detailed objectives and land use zoning objectives will be incorporated into the County Development Plan by **way of variation**, **subject to the necessary amendments to ensuring** that **such objectives** they are consistent with the County Development Plan. Subsequently, the LAPs relating to these centres **for which objectives will be incorporated into the County Development Plan** will be revoked.

Planning legislation requires that a Local Area Plan is amended within one year of a new Development Plan being made, where the Local Area Plan is no longer consistent with the Development Plan. Meath County Council intends to publish the **amendments variations** to the **larger town** LAPS, a new LAP for Bettystown/Laytown/Mornington East/**Mornington/Donacorney** and a variation to the County Development Plan to include zoning and development objectives for the remaining centres within one year of the adoption of the County Development Plan.

Similarly, the Navan, Trim and Kells Development Plans need to be reviewed to be consistent with this Development Plan. The Kells Development Plan is currently under review and the next Kells Development Plan will be prepared in the context of the core strategy in the County Development Plan 2013-2019. **A similar approach will apply to the preparation of the new Trim Development Plan whose preparation has already begun.** Given the

timeframes for the **other Navan** Development Plans, **a variations** will be required to ensure that development occurs as set out in this core strategy and the settlement strategy of the Development Plan and that only those lands required to meet the household growth outlined in Table 2.4 are identified for release.

Any variation/amendment required as a result of this core strategy should be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment and under the requirements of the SEA Directive.

Applications for residential development on greenfield lands (i.e. 'A' zonings) in all centres listed in Table 2.1 shall be considered premature until such time as the variation/amendment of a Development Plan/Local Area Plan or adoption of a new plan required to ensure consistency with the settlement strategy and core strategy in this Plan is made. This shall not apply to applications which concern changes to the design or layout of a scheme provided that no additional increase in units results. Any such application will be required to be consistent with the lifespan of the parent application (see also section 11.2 Residential Development). Residential applications will be considered by Meath County Council for lands zoned for town/village centre sites, edge of centre sites and brownfield² lands in accordance with the zoning matrix³. This is consistent with the sequential approach and the principle of consolidation which support the development of centre sites prior to greenfield⁴ lands.

² Brownfield lands may be defined as any land which has been subjected to building, engineering or other operations, excluding temporary uses or urban green spaces (Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, DoEHLG, 2009).

³ This Development Plan contains details of a revised zoning matrix to be put in place in the county. According to the revised matrix, the applicable town/village centre and edge of centre zonings are B1 and C1. The relevant zonings from the previous matrix at B1, B2 and C1.

⁴ Greenfield lands may be defined as open lands on the periphery of towns whose development will require the provision of new infrastructure such as roads, sewers, ancillary social and commercial facilities, schools, shops, employment and community facilities (Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, DoEHLG, 2009).

2.3.4 Guidelines for the Review of Local Area Plans/Development Plans

A number of options are available when addressing excess zoning in the **preparation of new** Local Area Plans/Development Plans **or in the varying of Development Plans / amending of Local Area Plans** in order to ensure consistency with this Development Plan and its core strategy:

1. **Prioritising/Phasing of Development:** establishing a phasing programme for the release of lands which is linked to household allocations and capacity in infrastructure and indicating which lands will be considered for development purposes during the Plan period;
2. **Alternative Land Use Zoning Objectives:** identifying alternative, appropriate uses within the Plan period such as employment, amenity or community uses. The need and justification for such uses shall be taken into account and, in the case of employment uses, shall be consistent with the Development Plan and RPG economic strategy. Any proposed alternative zoning must be clearly justifiable and realistic in terms of the timeframe in which the zoning objective will be achieved.
3. **Discontinuing the Land Use Zoning Objective:** deleting the zoning objective and related lands from the written statement and maps of the Plan.

The appropriateness of each option shall be considered on an individual basis in each settlement. This shall take into account the position of the town/village in the settlement hierarchy which will influence the likely future demand for residential zoned land outside of this Development Plan period, the outcome of the county strategic flood risk assessment and the adequacy of facilities in the centre.

Given the extent of overzoning in some centres and in light of the assessment of employment zoned land in Section 4.3 of this Plan which identified over provision in some centres, it is likely that an approach combining phasing with de-zoning will be required in some centres. There should be an evidence based rationale for the replacement of a residential zoning with an alternative zoning objective e.g. proposals to change a residential zoning to an employment zoning should be consistent with the economic strategy of this Plan

while proposals to change a residential zoning to community use should be based on an identified requirement for additional social facilities such as providing a school site required by the Department of Education and Skills.

Where a phasing approach is being used, the timeframe for the release of lands shall specify the first phase of development as corresponding to the period of this Development Plan, i.e. 2013-2019. This phase shall only identify the quantity of land indicated in Table 2.4. This is critical given that headroom has already been included in the household allocations and, therefore, there is no justification for the release of any additional lands over and above those specified in Table 2.4 during the period of this Development Plan.

In the case of all towns and villages in the County, the release and development of residential lands shall take account of the following criteria:

- *where land is to be phased in a settlement, a sequential approach should be applied, as set out in the 'Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2007) and emphasised in the 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' guidelines (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009).*

Under this approach, the first priority will be town/village centre sites and infill or brownfield sites within the existing built up area. Following that, undeveloped lands closest to the core and public transport routes will be given preference.

- *the efficient use of land by consolidating existing settlements and promoting a compact urban form.*

The focus will be on development capacity within central urban areas through the re-use of under utilised lands and buildings as a priority, rather than extending green field development. This should also ensure that development is concentrated at locations where it is possible to integrate employment, supporting community facilities, retailing and public transport. A sequential approach to development will also be promoted in which lands adjoining the built up area of the town

and close to public transport routes will be prioritised ahead of lands at a remove from the town/village.

- *the provision of necessary physical infrastructure, primarily the availability of capacity in water and wastewater infrastructure.*

The urban context must be capable of absorbing the scale and quantum of development that is envisaged. In considering the zoning at LAP/ Town Plan stage and in the preparation of development and zoning objectives for urban centres to be subsumed into the County Development Plan, any potential issue between zoning and the flood risk assessment will be required to be addressed to minimise and/ or mitigate the potential conflict, by means of alternative land use zoning objectives, phasing (pending mitigation) or discontinuing the land use zoning objective.

- *spare capacity in existing (and anticipated) social infrastructure, primarily national and second level educational facilities.*

The future planning of the Department of Education and Science of primary and post primary schools shall also be taken into account. The development of additional residential lands shall leverage the necessary recreational and amenity infrastructure commensurate with the needs of the resident population. The proposed scale and quantum of development must reinforce the integrity and vitality of the local community and services that can be provided.

- *a more sustainable economic base whereby a greater percentage of the population are employed locally.*

This will require closer liaison between the County Enterprise Board, County Development Board, Economic Development and Promotion Officer and the Planning Department.

- *The location and scale of existing permissions in the particular town or village.*

- *Flood risk assessment and the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.* In particular, the recommendations of the Fingal East Meath Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study and the approved Eastern, North West and Neagh Bann Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study shall be adhered to. The flood risk assessment carried out as part of the County Development Plan preparation shall also be complied with.
- *Potential environmental impacts including those relating to the Habitats Directive, strategic environmental assessment and environmental impact assessment.*

2.3.5 Extant Planning Permissions

Given the slow down in construction of recent years and consequent substantial number of committed units yet to be built, applications for the extension of duration of permissions will need to be carefully considered to ensure that population growth in Meath is in accordance with the urban hierarchy and with the role and function of towns and villages set out in this settlement hierarchy. This occurs particularly in respect of the role of centres in accommodating local or regional growth and the need for towns and villages to grow in a self sufficient manner and not on the basis of commuter development.

In this regard, it should be noted that the current Regional Planning Guidelines were adopted in 2010, while a substantial number of residential units were permitted prior to that date. Consequently, significant changes have occurred since many of the committed units were granted permission in terms of regional and local policy. In situations where an application for residential development no longer complies with the policy of either document such that it would no longer be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, it may not be appropriate to extend the life of that permission.

The need to review the appropriateness of applications for extension of duration of planning permission will be particularly relevant within the East Meath area where the level of residential development has now outstripped the type of growth envisaged for Small Towns in the RPG's and in other Small Towns and Villages which accommodate primarily commuter led development.

There are a substantial number of extant planning permissions for multiple unit residential developments in various urban centres across the County. These are identified on Table 2.5. It is likely that some of these extant planning permissions will wither over the life of this plan or that some which will receive extension of durations pursuant to Section 42 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 – 2013 may also not be constructed. The Core Strategy of this County Development Plan was developed on the basis that all of the 10,998 units which had the benefit of planning permission would be constructed over the life of this Development Plan. It is the intention of this Planning Authority therefore to include all lands which have the benefit of an extant planning permission for multiple unit residential developments as part of the lands identified for release for residential purposes within the life of this County Development Plan. For clarity, this shall apply to such sites with extant planning permission from the date of publication of the relevant variation (CS OBJ 2, 3 & 4 refer). Applications which seek an extension to the appropriate period of planning permission pursuant to Section 42 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 – 2013 shall be considered on this basis. No extension of duration permitted in relation to multiple residential unit developments shall extend the life of a planning permission beyond the 6 year period of this Development Plan.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

CS OBJ 1 To ensure that planning applications for residential development on greenfield lands (i.e. 'A' zonings) in the urban centres detailed in Table 2.1 will be considered premature until such time as the relevant Town Development Plan or Local Area Plan has been made, varied or amended or development objectives for the particular centre incorporated into the development plan by way of variation (CS OBJ 3 refers) to make ~~it~~ each statutory land use strategy consistent with the settlement strategy and core strategy, particularly Table 2.4, of this Development Plan.

CS OBJ 2 To publish a variation to the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019 within one year of the adoption of the Development Plan to introduce land use zoning objectives and an order of priority for the release of lands for Ashbourne, Drogheda Environs, Dunboyne/Clonee/Pace, Dunshaughlin and Ratoath. Following the making of this variation, the Planning Authority shall ~~To publish variations~~ amendments to the Local Area Plans of Ashbourne, Drogheda Environs, Dunboyne/Clonee/Pace, Dunshaughlin and Ratoath ~~within one year of the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019~~ to ensure that they are consistent with the Development Plan, as varied, and particularly the settlement strategy, core strategy and household allocations outlined in Table 2.4.

CS OBJ 3 To publish a variation to the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 within one year of the adoption of the Development Plan to contain development and zoning objectives for the following centres: Athboy, Gibbstown, Ballivor, Carlanstown, Carnaross, Clonard, Crossakiel, Donore, ~~Donacorney/Mornington~~, Drumconrath, Duleek, Enfield, Gormonston, Julianstown, Kentstown, Kilbride, Kilcock Environs, Kildalkey, Kilmainhamwood, Kilmessan, Longwood, Maynooth Environs, Moynalty, Nobber, Oldcastle, Rathcairn, Rathmolyon, Slane, Stamullen and Summerhill. These objectives shall give effect to and be consistent with the core strategy, policies and objectives of the Development Plan. Following the making of this variation, the Planning Authority shall commence the revocation process of the Local Area Plans for which detailed development and zoning objectives have been incorporated into the County Development Plan.

CS OBJ 4 To ensure that the Navan, Trim and Kells Development Plans are consistent with the settlement hierarchy and population projections set out in this Development Plan. ~~These~~ In this regard, a variation to the Navan Development Plans will be ~~varied published, if necessary,~~ to ensure that ~~they are it is~~ consistent, ~~within one year of the adoption of~~ with the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 ~~within one year of its adoption.~~

CS OBJ 5 To ensure that the review of Town Plans and Local Area Plans ~~to~~ achieve consistency with the core strategy of the Meath County Development Plan 2013–2019 ~~will~~ ~~by~~ only identifying for release during the lifetime of the Meath County Development Plan 2013–2019 the quantity of land required to meet household projections as set out in Table 2.4.

- CS OBJ 6
- (a) To ensure that planning applications for residential development adhere to the requirements of Table 2.4 of this Development Plan.
 - (b) The inclusion of an Order of Priority for lands with a residential land use zoning objective pursuant to CS OBJ 2, 3 & 4 shall include all lands which have the benefit of an extant planning permission for multiple unit residential developments as part of the lands identified for release within the life of this County Development Plan. For clarity, this shall apply to sites with extant planning permission from the date of publication of the relevant variation (CS OBJ 2, 3 & 4 refer).
 - (c) No extension of duration permitted for multiple unit residential developments pursuant to Section 42 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 – 2011 shall extend the life of a planning permission beyond the 6 year period of this Development Plan.

CS OBJ 7 To promote and facilitate the development of sustainable communities through land use planning, by providing for land uses capable of accommodating employment, community, leisure, recreational and cultural facilities having regard to the quality of the environment, including the natural environment, landscape character and the archaeological and architectural heritage.

CS OBJ 8 To prepare a new Local Area Plan for Bettystown/Laytown/Mornington East/~~Donacrney/Mornington~~ within one year of the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2013- 2019. The new LAP shall be consistent with the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 and its core strategy.

CS OBJ 9 To include in the progress report to be prepared two years after the adoption of the County Development Plan, details of the units permitted to date in comparison with the household allocations detailed in Table 2.4.