

Meath County
Development Plan
2013–2019

Volume 1
Written Statement



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council



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Development Plan
2013–2019

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Volume 1 – Written Statement

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County Meath



Foreword

A Note from the County Manager & An Cathaoirleach

The Development Plan is the key corporate policy document which will guide the future development of our county and will influence the lives and prospects of our citizens and their families in the years ahead. This Plan is being brought forward at a time of great economic challenge following the greatest years of economic growth and prosperity in the modern history of County Meath. The phenomenal rate of population increase resulting from the rapid expansion of the Celtic Tiger years has been maintained. With this expansion comes the need for a new economic configuration of the county to create the necessary conditions for significant generation of high quality employment to sustain our existing and new communities.

Therefore, the challenges being posed for this Plan, and indeed for the county and its citizens, are all the greater. The Elected Members and Executive of Meath County Council are resolutely determined to give the leadership and commitment necessary to enable us to meet the challenges together.

We believe that the citizens of Meath possess the capacity and strength of character to build a new vision of what our county can and will become through the creative engagement involved in this Development Plan process.

This vision will build on the enduring attributes, capacities and unparalleled natural resources of County Meath. These include our dynamic economy, our unique cultural and natural heritage and our vibrant communities.

The promotion of economic growth and the economic rebalancing of Meath is a priority of the Plan and this can be positively advanced by harnessing its abundant natural and human resources, location and connectivity to build strong national and international strategic competitiveness in the years ahead.

Meath occupies a highly strategic location in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) and this locational advantage has a major part to play in the future development of the National Gateway, the most economically dynamic and progressive area in the country. As a key constituent part of Ireland's capital city region, Meath benefits from being at the centre of Ireland's primary economic hub and the largest market in the State.

The first rate, multi-modal transport infrastructure which provides easy access to Dublin Airport and Dublin Port also delivers strong connectivity throughout the county with no less than five national primary routes. Developing rail services give easy access to all areas. Meath also benefits strongly from its strategic location on the E1 Dublin-Belfast international corridor linking both capital cities and international airports.

The rich array of cultural and heritage assets of Meath, 'The Heritage Capital' of Ireland, represent a unique opportunity to develop cultural tourism as a significant driver of the county's modern economy. In this regard Meath is proud to have the internationally renowned World Heritage Site of Bru Na Boinne, as well as Tara, the Ancient Capital of Ireland and seat of the High Kings. The sustainable development of green infrastructure, our natural heritage and the maintenance and improvement of our unique rural and urban built heritage present both strong attractions and a focus for community identity and pride.

The historic landscapes of Meath link our past, our present and our future and their fertile soils provide the pastoral backdrop for a thriving and resilient agricultural economy and food sector. Here there is the potential for significant diversification and added value. The location of this rich resource at the gateway of the metropolitan area, adjacent to third level institutions of education, creates the potential for the development of the knowledge economy and for new directions, synergy and re-imagining of our economic future, based on the traditional strengths of the past and the science based opportunities to come.

It is broadly acknowledged that Meath managed the Celtic Tiger years well. The rapid acceleration of economic activity was not allowed to damage the central core of our large towns by the proliferation of out of town shopping. Our smaller market towns and unique villages have been largely spared the excesses of suburbanisation. The high vacancy rates and ghost estates evident elsewhere have not been visited on Meath. On the plus side, the quantum leaps achieved in the delivery and advancement of physical and social infrastructure during these years of unprecedented growth has the county well prepared for rapid and sustained advancement as the national economy recovers.

The people and communities of Meath are its richest resource and this Development Plan sets out a new approach to meet their needs and aspirations not only for the six year life of the plan but also for the decades ahead. To this end, and for the first time, the Meath County Development Plan must contain as a central building block an evidence-based and robustly tested 'Core Strategy'. This Core Strategy will guide the Plan's goals, policies and objectives and provide the blue-print for the sustainable future we wish for all our citizens. The Plan provides innovative and creative solutions to build resilient new urban and rural communities and to enable critical economic reconfiguration of the county which they and their families deserve while protecting the unique heritage we all cherish.

Essential elements of this strategy will involve policies on climate change, green infrastructure, and sustainable transport to reflect the modern planning policy requirements for global sustainability. The successful development and ultimate realisation of these policies present both challenges and opportunities for our county now and into the future. They will only be truly embedded if supported by the requisite goodwill and active participation from all sectors of our culturally diverse modern society.

To this end, Meath County Council will proactively drive and foster this leadership role through positive engagement in the implementation of the Plan.


Tré Neart le Chéile



Brendáin MacCraith
Bainisteoir an Chontae



Niamh McGowan
An Cathaoirleach

- 
- A photograph of a large, multi-story stone ruin, possibly a castle or monastery, situated on a grassy bank next to a calm river. The sky is blue with some clouds. The water reflects the sky and the ruins. A large white number '1' is overlaid on the right side of the image.
- 1.1 Introduction
 - 1.2 Background to County Development Plan
 - 1.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment
 - 1.4 Appropriate Assessment
 - 1.5 Planning Policy Context
 - 1.6 Environmental Considerations
 - 1.7 MyPlan.ie

Introduction

Introduction

1



Introduction

1.1

Introduction

County Meath is situated in north Leinster, along the east coast of Ireland. The county occupies a land area of over 230,000 hectares and is the second largest county in Leinster. It adjoins Dublin to the south and this geographical proximity and the strong functional relationship between the two counties results in Meath being a vital component of the Greater Dublin Area.

Meath has a population of over 184,000 people accommodated in a network of attractive towns, villages and countryside. It possesses a diverse range of landscapes, including 10 kilometres of coastline, the drumlin hills in North Meath, rich pastures, tracts of peatland and raised bog in the southwest and the central upland area that includes Tara - the ancient capital of Ireland. This landscape reflects the changing influences of its population over time; from the megalithic sites at Newgrange and Oldcastle, to the Norman castle ruins at Trim, the landed estates at Headfort and Summerhill, the historic and changing network of field boundaries to modern day dynamic settlements such as Navan.

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

The aim of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 is to drive the evolution of the county and to establish a framework for the coordinated and sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental development of County Meath. In terms of its planning purpose, the Plan plays a vital role in development promotion and regulation. It acts as a guide to the requirements and policies of Meath County Council for those interested in pursuing development as well as informing the general public on how these development proposals are likely to be assessed. As a corporate document, the Meath County Development Plan will detail the priorities and goals of the Council for the spatial and sectoral development of Meath over the lifetime of the Plan.

The Meath Local Authorities Corporate Plan 2009-2014 mission statement is "to drive the economic, social, cultural and environmental growth of our County in a balanced manner that is inclusive of all our citizens." The Corporate Plan sets out a vision for County Meath as "a County that is recognised locally, nationally and internationally as an excellent place to invest in, to visit and to live in, renowned for the quality of its employment opportunities, heritage, culture and the strength and viability of its communities." The mission statement of the Meath County Council Planning and Transportation Department is to provide "land-use and transport planning services to the community and other stakeholders in a way that supports wider organisational goals and promotes, facilitates and guides the development and use of land in the county."

1.2 Background to County Development Plan

1.2.1 Legislative Framework

Under the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011, Meath County Council is obliged to make a Development Plan every six years which comprises a written statement and accompanying maps that give a graphic representation of the objectives contained in the Plan. Planning legislation sets out a number of mandatory and discretionary objectives to be addressed in Development Plans. A list of mandatory objectives is outlined in Appendix 1.

It should be noted, however, that as the purpose of a Development Plan is to set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the preparation of the Plan requires consideration of the long term goals and aspirations of Meath. While this Plan therefore applies to the period 2013-2019, it endeavours to set the foundations for the long term sustainable growth of County Meath.

1.2.2 The Review Process

The review process of the 2007 Meath County Development Plan officially commenced on 2nd March 2011. The first stage in the review process was the pre draft consultation phase. A strategic issues paper was prepared for the purposes of raising awareness of the nature of both the Development Plan and the review process. Submissions were accepted from the public during the pre draft consultation phase. Preliminary consultations also took place with the main service providers (for example, providers of energy, telecommunications, transport, education, etc.), the Elected Members of Meath County Council, the Planning and Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee and all Meath County Council Departments.

A report by the County Manager was prepared detailing the outcome of the pre

draft consultation phase in accordance with Section 11(4) of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011. It was discussed with the councillors of Meath County Council at the council meeting of 3rd October 2011 where they issued directions to the Manager regarding the preparation of the draft Plan.

The public consultation stage for the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 took place from Friday 25th May 2012 to Friday 3rd August 2012 inclusive. Submissions were invited from the public during the consultation period and could be made electronically or sent via post. A total of 139 submissions were received.

A series of public information sessions were held to provide an opportunity for members of the public to learn about the Draft Plan. The events were held in each electoral area of the county. In addition, Meath County Council Planning Staff gave an information briefing to Comhairle na nÓg at its meeting on 31st May and to the Community Forum at their meeting on 30th May 2012.

Following completion of the public consultation period, a Manager's Report was prepared on the submissions summarising the issues raised, detailing the Manager's response to them and outlining recommended changes to the Draft Development Plan. The report was distributed to the members of Meath County Council on 14th September. The members discussed the report at a Special Meeting of the Council on 24th September where the Council formally resolved to place amendments to the Draft Development Plan on public display.

The proposed amendments to the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 were placed on public display from Friday 12th October 2012 to Thursday 8th November 2012. In total, 26 submissions were received. A Manager's Report was

prepared on the submissions made on the proposed amendments and was distributed to the members of Meath County Council on 3rd December. The report was discussed at a special planning meeting on 17th December. The members of Meath County Council formally adopted the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 on that date. In accordance with the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011, the Meath County Development Plan 2013–2019 comes into effect four weeks from the date that it is adopted, i.e. 22nd January 2013.

1.2.3 Format of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019

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

1. Volume 1 Written Statement
2. Volume 2 Appendices
3. Volume 3 Book of Maps
4. Volume 4 Strategic Environmental Assessment & Appropriate Assessment

Volume 1, the written statement, consists of the main text of the Development Plan and comprises 12 chapters. This current chapter, Chapter 1, provides background information to the Development Plan. Chapter 2 details

the core strategy which sets out the overall vision for the county and the core principles underlying the development strategy in the Plan. Chapters 3 to 10 expand on the development strategy for the county. Each of these chapters includes a written statement in which strategic themes, policies and objectives for each topic are provided. Chapter 11 provides detailed development management guidelines and standards. These guidelines and standards give general guidance to applicants on the criteria which will be used by Meath County Council in assessing planning applications. They supplement the various policies and objectives which are provided throughout the Plan. Chapter 12 focuses on the implementation and monitoring of the County Development Plan. The written document is accompanied by a series of maps supporting the text.

The appendices to the Development Plan, Volume 2, include the Record of Protected Structures and Landscape Character Assessment. They also include supporting and background documents such as the housing and retail strategies, a county wide flood risk assessment and a statement regarding the implementation of Ministerial Guidelines in the Development Plan. Should there be any conflict between the appendices or maps and the written statement in Volume 1, the written statement shall take precedence.

1.3

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before the decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The purpose is to *"provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development."* (European Directive 2001/42/EC)

The County Development Plan was the subject of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as required by legislation. The output reports produced from the SEA process are included in Volume 4. The process of SEA was carried out as required throughout the review period of the Plan.

1.4 Appropriate Assessment

Article 6(3) of European Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive) requires competent authorities, in this case Meath County Council, to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. The assessment examines

the implications of proceeding with the plan or project in view of the site's conservation objectives.

Appropriate assessment was initiated for the Meath County Development Review and the output reports prepared are included in Volume 4. The process of appropriate assessment was carried out as required throughout the review period of the Plan.

1.5 Planning Policy Context

The preparation of the Development Plan has been influenced by a number of strategic international, national, regional and local documents as illustrated in Figure 1.1. Appendix 2 details some of the considerations from key policy documents for the preparation of this Plan. These include the mandatory objectives for Development Plans that are set out in the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011.

Under Section 9(6) of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011, Development Plans must be consistent as far as is practicable with national plans, policies or strategies that the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government determines relate to proper planning and sustainable development. The Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government can issue guidelines to Planning Authorities regarding their planning functions and authorities must have regard to these. In addition, as a planning authority within the Greater Dublin Area, Meath County Council's County Development Plan must be consistent with the transport strategy of the National Transport Authority and it must be consistent with the Regional Planning

Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area.¹ Finally, this County Development Plan must have regard to the Development Plans of adjoining authorities. The local authorities adjoining County Meath are Louth, Kildare, Westmeath, Monaghan, Cavan, Offaly and Fingal.



¹ At the time of writing, the counties in the Greater Dublin Area are Meath, Kildare, Wicklow, Dublin City, Fingal, South Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown.

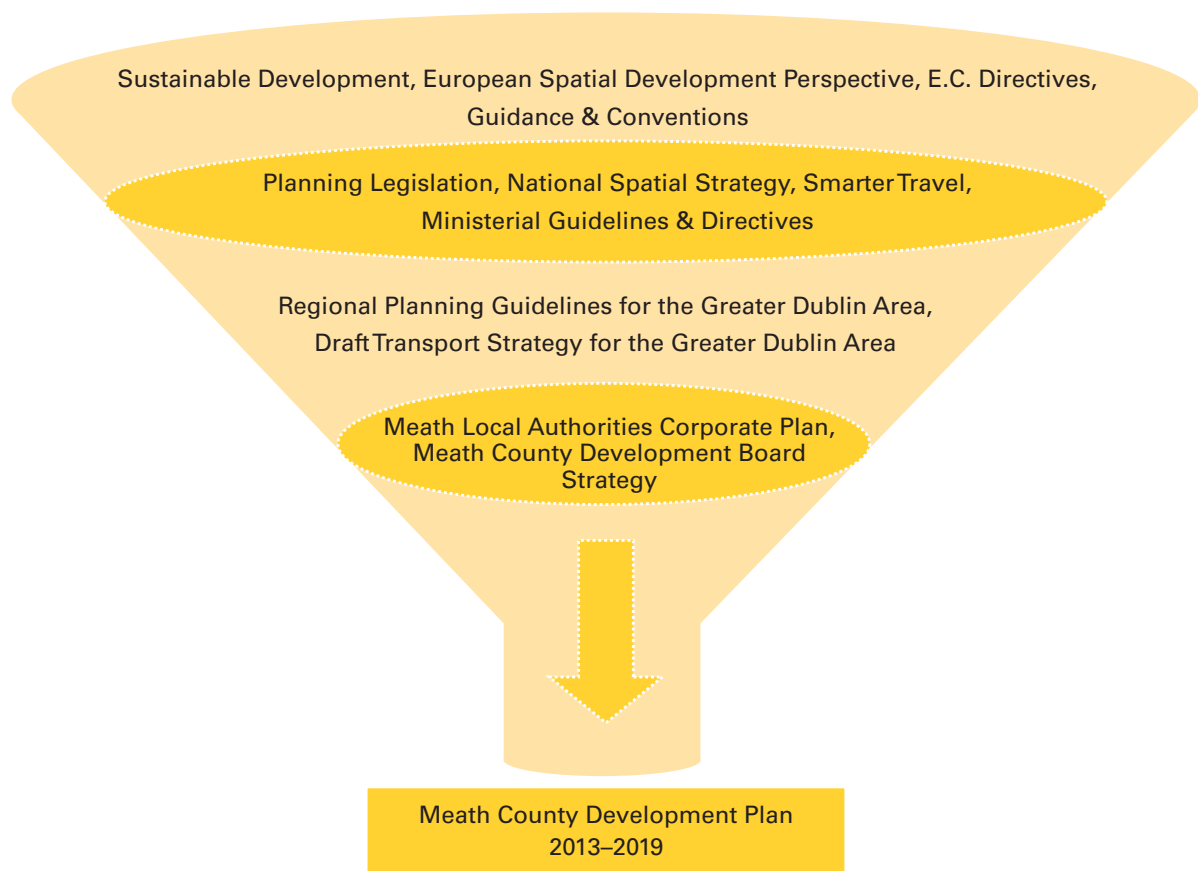


Figure 1.1: Strategic policy influences on the preparation of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019

A number of important documents prepared by Meath County Council and associated agencies had an influence on the preparation of the Development Plan. The strategy of the Meath County Development Board "Le Chéile – An Integrated Strategy for Meath to 2012" sets out an integrated approach to the development of the county. It sets out 184 actions to be implemented over the 2002-2012 period and has six overall objectives:

1. Secure sustainable economic and employment growth leading to improved living standards in County Meath;
2. Improve the international competitiveness of businesses in Meath and the capacity to attract inward investment;
3. Promote more balanced development throughout Meath;
4. Promote social inclusion in all parts of the county;
5. Improve quality of life for all sections of society in Meath;
6. Maintain and enhance the quality and diversity of the natural and cultural heritage.

While the document will be subject to review during the lifetime of the Development Plan, it is nonetheless an important consideration in that it identifies broad themes that are of particular relevance to this plan, e.g. promoting strong communities, economic development and heritage.

The Meath Local Authorities Corporate Plan 2009-2014 sets out a vision for County Meath as "a County that is recognized locally,

nationally and internationally as an excellent place to invest in, to visit and to live in, renowned for the quality of its employment opportunities, heritage, culture and the strength and viability of its communities.”

The Corporate Plan sets out six organisation wide objectives to guide and shape the direction of the functions of Meath Local Authorities:

1. Promote a positive image of County Meath as a place to live, an ideal tourist destination and a business location of choice for investors;
2. Deliver efficient and effective services for the county's citizens;

3. Plan and develop the social and physical infrastructure of County Meath to strengthen its communities;
4. Facilitate and stimulate sustainable economic growth and employment opportunities;
5. Support and enhance community participation and local democracy;
6. Develop Meath's towns and villages as living, viable, community and commercial centres.

These objectives and those of the Meath County Development Board strategy have contributed to generating the vision and strategic direction of the Development Plan set out in Chapter 2, the core strategy.

1.6

Environmental Considerations

Under the Habitats and Birds Directive and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, both an Appropriate Assessment and a Strategic Environmental Assessment were carried out for the entire Development Plan including the written statement, maps and objectives, and also appendices. The Plan had regard to both assessments with resultant changes being made to the Plan throughout the Plan process.

In addition, the Plan has had regard to other relevant environmental legislation. Legislation is outlined in the relevant chapters of the Plan and includes, but is not exclusive to, the Water Framework Directive, Floods Directive, Shellfish Directive, Waste Water Treatment Directive, the Wildlife Acts, National Monuments Acts and Waste Management Acts. It is considered that the development objectives in the Plan are consistent, in as far as practicable, with the conservation and protection of the environment.



MyPlan.ie is an initiative of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government on behalf of the planning authorities across the country. It is a free and easy to use public information system about development and local area plans and also provides other information which is relevant to planning decision-making (Census, heritage sites, patrons of housing developments etc.). Information is available on the website

regarding land use plans in County Meath, which has been supplied by Meath County Council. MyPlan.ie is a valuable resource for the public and people working in the area of planning and it is the intention of Meath County Council to continue to contribute information to this website. Information on planning in Meath is also available on the Council's website at www.meath.ie.

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- 2.1 Introduction
 - 2.2 Strategic Planning Approach
 - 2.3 Sustainable Communities
 - 2.4 Sustainable Economy
 - 2.5 Sustainable Heritage
 - 2.6 Infrastructure and Supporting Services
 - 2.7 Rural Areas
 - 2.8 Core Strategy Map
 - 2.9 Land Use Zoning Objectives

Core Strategy

Core Strategy

2



Core Strategy

2.1

Introduction

The purpose of the core strategy, as defined in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, is to show that the development objectives in the Development Plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with the national and regional development objectives that are set out in the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (RPGs). In addition to this general objective, the legislation makes specific reference to the inclusion of information in respect of population and settlement, retail development and rural areas. However, as well as this statutory basis, the core strategy represents an opportunity to outline the strategic vision and approach of Meath County Council that is followed in this Plan.

This Development Plan has been prepared in a challenging economic environment. Responding to this context and developing an appropriate strategy to ensure the development of Meath in a sustainable and holistic manner are key challenges. This strategy sets out how this is to be achieved.

There is no doubt that Meath occupies a strategic location in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) and benefits from a wealth of natural resources. As a constituent of the GDA, it is part of the largest market in the country and at the centre of Ireland's primary economic hub. The transport infrastructure in the County provides easy access to Dublin Airport and Port. Meanwhile the presence in Meath of a large number of national roads facilitates access to the remainder of the country. Meath also benefits from a strategic location along the M1

Dublin-Belfast international corridor, the primary economic corridor in Ireland.

The population of Meath has grown significantly in recent years. This has resulted in a substantial increase in the cohort of working people resident in the county. This is an asset for potential employers and ensures a strong base for indigenous enterprise and the local economy. The large population growth also means that Meath is on the path towards achieving the critical mass that is sought by investors.

The unparalleled heritage and natural assets of Meath, the Heritage Capital of Ireland, represent a unique selling point for the county and provide the opportunity to develop cultural tourism as a significant driver of the local economy. The sustainable development of green infrastructure and natural heritage and the maintenance and improvement of built heritage also contributes to enhancing quality of life for people resident in the county; a further attractor for economic investors.

Therefore, the base ingredients for a successful economy, for sustainable communities and for a quality environment are present in Meath. This Development Plan seeks to harness these assets, and, through developing an integrated strategy, maximise them for the benefit of the county.

2.2 Strategy Planning Approach

The vision statement for the sustainable planning and development of Meath which will form the basis of this County Development Plan is detailed below. The vision statement encapsulates the three themes which Meath County Council identifies as the pillars of the development strategy in this Plan; that of sustainable community, economy and heritage. There is an interdependence between these three pillars and achieving the Development Plan vision will require the successful implementation of policies

in respect of all three issues. The creation of vibrant, sustainable communities requires the presence of employment locally. Heritage is a key component of the identity of the county. It contributes to promoting a high quality of life, maximising local distinctiveness as an attraction to potential investors and providing the raw materials for a thriving tourism industry. The people of Meath represent its best asset and have shaped the county into what it is today – a place of unique cultural heritage.

Development Plan Vision

Meath to be a county that fosters sustainability throughout its vibrant communities, dynamic economy and unique cultural and natural heritage.

This vision is supplemented by a series of core principles.

Development Plan Core Principles	
Core Principle 1	To develop Meath's critical role in the Dublin and Mid East Region and its role as part of the Dublin City National Economic Gateway maximising on its proximity to Dublin Airport.
Core Principle 2	To facilitate the development of sustainable and socially inclusive communities which generate pride, a sense of place, and a healthy lifestyle; are safe, well connected, well served, environmentally sensitive, thriving and well designed.
Core Principle 3	To promote sustainable economic development to support the population of County Meath.
Core Principle 4	To support the sustainable heritage of the County by safeguarding the cultural, natural and built heritage and natural resources, including biodiversity, of the County.
Core Principle 5	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.
Core Principle 6	To support the creation of a compact urban form in all settlements in Meath.
Core Principle 7	To protect and support rural areas through careful management of physical and environmental resources and appropriate, sustainable development.
Core Principle 8	To support agriculture and agricultural related development in Meath and strengthen the county as a hub for the vibrant agricultural and food sectors.

Core Principle 9	To consolidate population growth and employment in areas best served by public transport and a range of transport modes.
Core Principle 10	To promote and support the integration of land use and transport and a modal shift to greater use of sustainable modes of transport, including public transport, walking and cycling.
Core Principle 11	To integrate climate change considerations into the policies and objectives of Meath County Council and its key stakeholders.
Core Principle 12	To ensure that future development patterns in Meath accord with the sustainable management of water resources.

The following sections of the core strategy outline the strategic policy of Meath County Council in respect of population growth and settlement; economic development and

heritage. The achievement of the vision for Meath also requires a number of supporting elements which are briefly addressed.

2.3

Sustainable Communities

Sustainable communities are defined as ‘places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all’ (The Bristol Accord, ODPM, 2005, p.6).

Implicit in this definition are a number of key factors including the needs:

- To consider and meet the requirements of all residents;
- For a strong focus on planning in order to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the growth of areas and consideration of the long term implications of development;
- For a high quality environment in which development is sensitive to its surrounds;
- For a strong economy – supporting employment for the community should be available; without this town centres and business areas risk losing their vitality and thus the quality of the environment can be negatively affected.

Putting in place a framework to provide sustainable communities begins a self

perpetuating cycle of benefit. The emphasis on a quality environment for residents is also of benefit in attracting investment while ensuring that development is sensitive to its environment promotes the enhancement of natural and built heritage. This is vital to promote key economic sectors such as tourism. Meath County Council considers that promotion of sustainable communities is a prerequisite for the sustainable development of Meath and will seek to implement this approach.

The core strategy sets out the broad parameters within which this is to be achieved. In respect of the strategy for population allocation, it requires that Meath County Council takes a careful approach to population growth, ensuring it is directed to locations which can absorb new development, at a scale that facilitates the growth of communities and is appropriate to its location. In respect of settlements, it requires that policies are put in place to foster balanced and integrated communities that consider all sectors of society. This in turn brings about a broad range of considerations, e.g. ensuring that services are located so that people who do not have access to private vehicles can easily reach them; facilitating the provision of supporting infrastructure such as schools, sporting

facilities, shops; promoting social inclusion and facilitating access for all.

Chapter 3 (Settlement Strategy and Housing) sets out the detailed policy and objectives in respect of settlement and housing. In the interests of brevity, the key elements are detailed here and reference is included to the relevant section of Chapter 3 which expands upon the points further. The focus of this section of the core strategy is to address the scale and location of future population growth ensuring that they take place in a sustainable manner.

2.3.1 Settlement Hierarchy

The settlement hierarchy for the county is detailed in Table 2.1 below. This hierarchy is consistent with that set out in the RPGs.

Details of the role and function of the towns in the hierarchy are set out in Section 3.4 (County Meath Settlement Strategy). Table 2.2 provides a brief summary of the role of the towns in each level of the hierarchy. The priority centres for the county are the Large Growth Towns, in particular Navan. This is in line with the policy of the RPGs.

Table 2.1: County Meath Urban Settlement Hierarchy

Type of Settlement	County Meath Settlement Hierarchy Centres
Large Growth Town I	Navan, Drogheda Environs
Large Growth Town II	Dunboyne, Maynooth Environs
Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns	Ashbourne, Kells, Trim, Kilcock Environs, Dunshaughlin ¹
Small Towns	Athboy, Bettystown/Laytown/Mornington East, Duleek, Enfield, Oldcastle, Ratoath, Stamullen
Villages	Ballivor, Carlanstown, Carnaross, Clonard, Clonee, Crossakiel, Donore, Drumconrath, Gibbstown, Gormonston, Julianstown, Kentstown, Kilbride, Kildalkey, Kilmainhamwood, Kilmessan, Longwood, Mornington/Donacarney, Moynalty, Nobber, Rathcairn, Rathmolyon, Slane, Summerhill



¹ Dunshaughlin will become a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town following the granting of permission of a railway order for the Navan Rail Line Phase II, including a station at Dunshaughlin.

Table 2.2 Role of Settlements

Hierarchy	Description	Population
Large Growth Town I	Key destination, economically active supporting surrounding area, located on multi-modal corridor in metropolitan hinterland.	Plan for up to 50,000
Large Growth Town II	Smaller in scale than Growth Town I but strong active growth towns, economically vibrant with high quality transport links to larger towns/city.	Plan for a range suitable for the scale of the town c. 15,000-30,000
Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns	10km from large town on public transport corridor, serve rural hinterland as market towns.	5,000-15,000
Small Towns	Good bus or rail links; 10km from large growth towns.	1,500-5,000
Villages	Serve smaller rural catchment, provide local services with some smaller scale rural enterprises in a number of such villages.	Up to 1,000

2.3.2 Future Population Growth

The population projections for County Meath are detailed in Table 2.3. These are based on the RPG population projections.

Table 2.3: County Meath Population and Household Projections

	2006	2016	2022
Population	162,831	195,898	210,260
Household Allocation	61,257	79,729	95,458

The population target for Meath for 2016 in the RPGs is 195,898 persons and the household allocation is 79,729 units. During the preparation of the Development Plan, the Members of Meath County Council expressed their concerns regarding the method used in the RPGs to calculate the population projections, in particular the use of the 2006 Census as the baseline figure. In the event that the population and household projections in the RPGs are revisited following the release of the Census 2011 results, the County Development Plan will need to be subsequently reviewed. The results from the Census 2011 recorded a population for the county of 184,135 persons and 69,697 units. Meath is on track to achieve the 2016 population and household targets

taking into account the quantity of committed units in the county (estimated at approximately 10,998 units) and the average household size recorded in the 2011 census of 2.9.

The population and household projections for the lifespan of the Development Plan have been prepared in the context of the RPG targets. The Housing Strategy outlines the full details. The target for Meath over the lifetime of the Plan is 15,613 units.

The "Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (DoEHLG, 2007) state that planning authorities should take all reasonable steps to ensure that sufficient zoned residential land is available throughout

the lifetime of the Development Plan and beyond to meet anticipated needs and allow for an element of choice. In order to ensure continuity of supply of zoned residential land, the Guidelines state that planning authorities should ensure that Development Plans make provision for sufficient land to meet residential needs for the next nine years, i.e. for the six year lifespan of the Development Plan plus an additional three years (referred to as 'headroom').

In line with the RPG targets, the Housing Strategy notes that, on the basis of 15,613 units being required between 2013-2019, a further 8,327 units will be required between 2020-2022. It is therefore considered prudent to provide sufficient zoned land for 23,940 units (the expected demand arising within the Development Plan period of six years and for the equivalent of 3 years demand beyond the date on which the current plan ceases to have effect) and make allowance for this in the household allocations to each settlement.

Although the overall housing requirement, including headroom, amounts to 23,940 units, the extent of committed units (i.e. units for which planning permission has been granted but which have not yet been built) must be taken into account. Meath County Council estimates that approximately 10,998 committed units were approved at the end of 2011. The housing allocation for the lifetime of the Development Plan therefore amounts to 12,942 taking into account the committed units.

Table 2.4 details the household allocation for the urban and rural area of the county for the lifetime of the Development Plan.

The allocation of units has been influenced by the following factors:

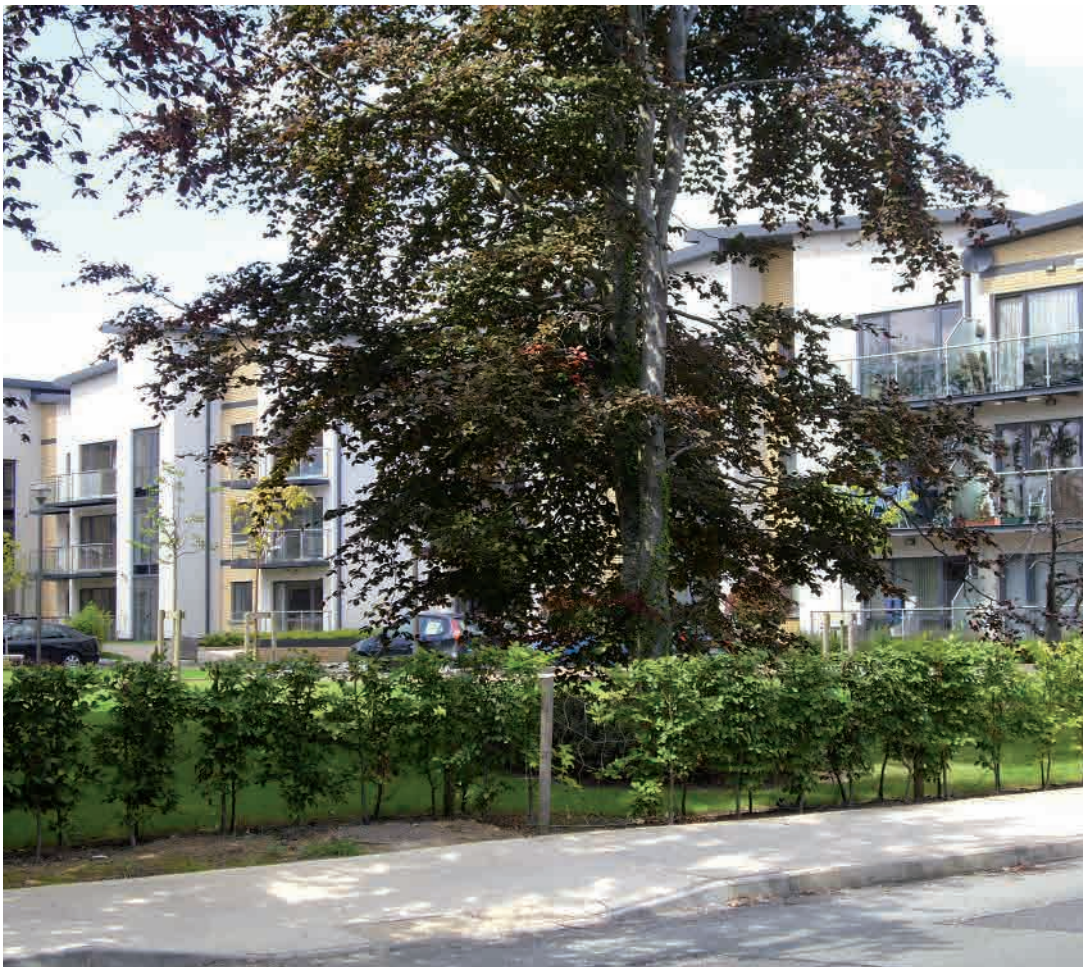
1. The settlement hierarchy and strategy described in detail in Chapter 3. This clearly identifies that settlements at the upper tiers in the hierarchy are to be the focus for growth, with Small Towns and Villages growing on a more managed basis in line with services and facilities available. Therefore, the majority of population has been directed to the upper tiers of the hierarchy. This is consistent with the approach of the RPGs.
2. The achievement of critical mass is considered a necessary requisite to attract industry to the County. As the county town and the only Large Growth Town I located entirely in Meath, it is vital that the future growth of Navan attains critical mass. Therefore, within the context of the previous point, Navan has been identified as the primary growth centre in Meath.
3. It is necessary to direct development into the Metropolitan Area to promote consolidation of development at locations proximate to the City Gateway and close to services and facilities. The RPGs recommend that a minimum of 11% of household growth be directed to the Metropolitan Area of the County. The household allocations in Table 2.4 direct 17% to the Metropolitan Area (see also Figure 2.1). Dunboyne as a Large Growth Town II directly served by new public transport infrastructure will be the focus for the Metropolitan Area.
4. The conflict between the pattern of development that has occurred to date in towns and villages in comparison with the role of centres as envisaged in the settlement strategy. The settlement strategy clearly states that centres should not expand on the basis of commuter led development. This has been the case to date with many of the Small Towns and Villages in Meath as identified in Sections 3.4.5 and 3.4.6. In many instances, the rate of population increase has vastly exceeded the rate of delivery of supporting services and facilities. It is a strategic aim and integral part of the vision of this Development Plan to create sustainable communities. In order to do this, a period of consolidation in population growth is necessary to allow other sectors of the

towns and villages to develop e.g. social infrastructure and employment. The settlement strategy identifies some Small Towns which have developed on the basis of local growth and associated with larger towns in Meath, i.e. Athboy and Oldcastle. The settlement strategy aims to support the continued development of these towns on this basis, and this is reflected in their household allocation.

5. The proposals for Phase II of the Navan rail line include stations to serve Dunshaughlin and Kilmessan. The RPG's emphasise that growth should be focused on areas served and to be served by public transport. A timeframe has yet to be confirmed for the delivery of this project and cognisance needs to be taken of this in determining a household allocation for Kilmessan which

is a village in the settlement hierarchy. The household allocation to Kilmessan endeavours to support the potential investment in public transport. It will be important to monitor Government policy in the area of capital infrastructure together with the timeframe for the delivery of the rail line.

6. Similarly, as referenced in section 3.4.5 Enfield benefits from public transport and the household allocation to the town reflects this. While the availability of public transport is a strong asset for the town, nonetheless growth should not be solely on the basis of outward commuting. It will be important to monitor future development patterns in the town to ensure that this does not happen.
7. The availability of infrastructure, including



social infrastructure, has influenced the distribution of population growth. Those centres where capacity is available are a particular focus. For example, at the level of Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns, there has been investment in water services and the construction of the new town centre in Ashbourne in recent years. In addition, the town has benefitted from the expansion of industrial areas since the preparation of the last Development Plan. This is reflected in the household allocation made to the town in comparison with other Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns.

8. The number of committed units in each centre. Meath County Council has

estimated the number of committed units outstanding in each centre. This is detailed in Table 2.5. Centres which have a substantial number of units committed and which are not at the highest tiers of the hierarchy will not be a focus for new residential development for this Development Plan.

9. In determining an allocation for rural housing it should be noted that the number of applications for such housing sought and permitted will be demand led and criteria based as all applications for rural housing are subject to the demonstration of a local housing need as set out in Chapter 10. The number of units assigned has had regard to the need to stabilise and sustain services in the Graigs.

Figure 2.1 Future Population Distribution

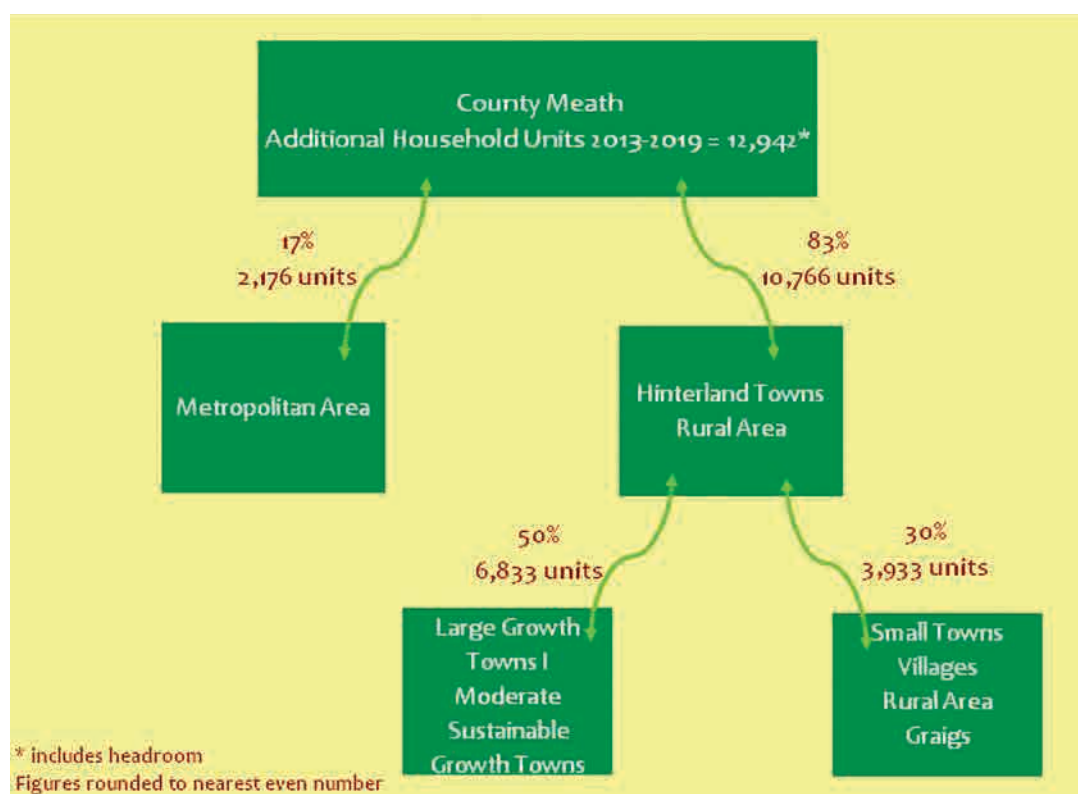


Table 2.4 Housing Allocation & Zoned Land Requirements

	Household Allocation 2013-2019	Av. Net Density Applicable unit/ha	Quantity of Residential Zoned Land Required*	Available Land Zoned for Residential Use (Ha)	Available Land Zoned for Mixed Use incl. Residential (Ha)**	Total Available Zoned Land (Ha)	Deficit/ Excess (ha)
Large Growth Town I							
Navan*	3,984	45	88.5	240.5	13.9	254.4	165.9
Drogheda Environs	857	43	19.9	157.2	1.8	159.1	139.1
Large Growth Town II							
Dunboyne	1,494	45	33.2	88.6	1.19	89.8	56.6
Maynooth	199	35	5.7	9.5	0.85	10.4	4.7
Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns							
Ashbourne	637	35	18.2	39.5	0.3	39.7	21.5
Trim	518	35	14.8	108.4	3.3	111.7	96.9
Kells	518	35	14.8	75.7	7.1	82.7	67.9
Dunshaughlin	319	35	9.1	62.9	1.9	64.9	55.7
Kilcock	398	35	11.4	63.5	0.0	63.5	52.1
Small Town							
Athboy	319	25	12.7	34.3	0.4	34.7	22.0
Bettystown/Laytown/Mornington East	80	25	3.2	106.4	7.4	113.8	110.6
Duleek	239	25	9.6	34.6	0.6	35.2	25.7
Enfield	319	25	12.7	35.6	2.3	37.9	25.2
Oldcastle	319	25	12.7	25.9	1.3	27.2	14.5
Ratoath	239	25	9.6	23.3	3.0	26.3	16.7
Stamullen	80	25	3.2	20.9	1.4	22.3	19.1
Villages							
Ballivor	60	20	3.0	24.7	0.9	25.6	22.6
Carlanstown	40	20	2.0	10.5	0.6	11.0	9.0
Carnaross	20	20	1.0	1.7	0.6	2.2	1.2
Clonard	20	20	1.0	8.5	1.1	9.6	8.6
Clonee	84	35	2.4	1.2	0.0	1.2	-1.2
Crossakiel	20	20	1.0	3.1	0.3	3.5	2.5
Donore	20	20	1.0	12.1	0.6	12.7	11.7
Drumconrath	60	20	3.0	17.4	0.0	17.4	14.4
Gibbstown	20	20	1.0	9.4	0.6	10.0	9.0
Gormonston	20	20	1.0	52.7	0.0	52.7	51.7
Julianstown	24	20	1.2	1.8	0.1	1.9	0.7
Kenstown	60	20	3.0	9.4	0.2	9.7	6.7
Kilbride	20	20	1.0	8.7	0.4	9.1	8.1

	Household Allocation 2013-2019	Av. Net Density Applicable unit/ha	Quantity of Residential Zoned Land Required*	Available Land Zoned for Residential Use (Ha)	Available Land Zoned for Mixed Use incl. Residential (Ha)**	Total Available Zoned Land (Ha)	Deficit/ Excess (ha)
Kildalkey	20	20	1.0	11.1	0.1	11.2	10.2
Kilmainhamwood	20	20	1.0	4.4	0.1	4.5	3.5
Kilmessan	159	35	4.6	5.7	0.0	5.7	1.2
Longwood	40	20	2.0	20.9	0.4	21.3	19.3
Mornington/ Donacarney	20	20	1.0	28.2	0.8	29.0	28.0
Moynalty	20	20	1.0	9.0	0.1	9.2	8.2
Nobber	60	20	3.0	13.7	0.1	13.8	10.8
Rathcairn	40	20	2.0	12.8	0.6	13.3	11.3
Rathmolyon	20	20	1.0	10.2	0.5	10.7	9.7
Slane	120	20	6.0	10.3	0.5	10.7	4.8
Summerhill	120	20	6.0	12.9	0.0	12.9	7.0
Rural Housing	1,320						
Total	12,942		329.4	1682.0	60.48	1497.8	1,153
* As per the Guidance Note on Core Strategies (DoEHLG 2010) the SDZ at Clonmagadden has not been included in the figure for residential zoned land in Navan.							
** Note that the figure entered represents 30% of the total available mixed use land zoning, reflecting that residential uses would be subsidiary use in these zoning categories that relate to town and village centre sites and edge of centre sites.							

Table 2.5 Allocated and Committed Units

Urban centre	Committed Unbuilt Units	Household Allocation 2013-2019*
Large Growth Town I		
Navan	786	3,984
Drogheda Environs	1,653	857
Large Growth Town II		
Dunboyne	113	1,494
Maynooth	0	199
Moderate Sustainable Growth Town		
Ashbourne	1,356	637
Trim	912	518
Kells	349	518
Dunshaughlin	784	319
Kilcock	0	398
Small Town		
Athboy	159	319
Bettystown/Laytown/Mornington East	1,077	80

Urban centre	Committed Unbuilt Units	Household Allocation 2013-2019*
Small Town		
Duleek	160	239
Enfield	31	319
Oldcastle	9	319
Ratoath	311	239
Stamullen	262	80
Village		
Ballivor	2	60
Carlanstown	22	40
Carnaross	0	20
Clonard	90	20
Clonee	601	84
Crossakiel	38	20
Donore	4	20
Drumconrath	0	60
Gibbstown	0	20
Gormonston	0	20
Julianstown	12	24
Kenstown	6	60
Kilbride	0	20
Kildalkey	6	20
Kilmainhamwood	0	20
Kilmessan	39	159
Longwood	70	40
Mornington/Donacarney	420	20
Moynalty	0	20
Nobber	0	60
Rathcairn	1	40
Rathmolyon	120	20
Slane	44	120
Summerhill	82	120
Rural Houses	1,479	1,320
Total	10,998	12,942

* Note that headroom of 50% has been included in these figures, as per the 'Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities.'

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 & 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 (i) except where

- the planning authority decides to indicate objectives for the area of the town in its development plan, or
- 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 East 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. The existing process of having a joint LAP for Dunboyne/Clonee/Pace will be maintained.

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, Donacarney/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.). For the remaining centres, detailed objectives and land use zoning objectives will be incorporated into the County Development Plan by variation, subject to the necessary amendments to ensure that they are consistent with the County Development Plan. Subsequently, the LAPs relating to these centres 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 variations to the town LAPS, a new LAP for Bettystown/Laytown/Mornington East 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. Given the timeframes for the other Development Plans, 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 matrix.³ This is consistent with the sequential approach and the principle of consolidation which support the development of centre sites prior to greenfield⁴ lands.

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 Local Area Plans/Development 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 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 The 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. **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.*

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.

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 to make it consistent with the settlement strategy and core strategy, particularly Table 2.4, of this Development Plan.
CS OBJ 2	To publish variations 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, 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, Donacarne/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.
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 Development Plans will be varied, if necessary, to ensure that they are consistent, within one year of the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019.
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 only identify 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	To ensure that planning applications for residential development adhere to the requirements of Table 2.4 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 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.

2.4

Sustainable Economy

The economic development strategy of this Development Plan will provide for the potential of County Meath to be maximised and to become a key driver within the economy of the Greater Dublin Area. The repositioning of the

county as a key economic driver of the Greater Dublin Area will require maximising the inherent attributes and opportunities of both urban and rural areas in achieving this goal.

GOAL

To build on and enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of County Meath in order to make it one of the country's prime locations for indigenous and foreign economic and employment generating investment.

The Primary Economic Growth Towns will be promoted as anchors of regional enterprise. These growth towns are located on multi-modal growth corridors which provide locational advantages in terms of access to strategic rail and road networks and to gateways, such as ports and airports. These centres shall be prioritised for economic development and investment to redress the imbalance of residential development and jobs and the emergence of dormitory areas. These centres, supported by designated Secondary Economic Growth Towns, will continue to be the focal point for regional population growth and employment in order to sustain and attract economic activity and build upon the significant investments made to-date in these areas.

The economic strategy focuses investment in Navan as the primary centre of economic development and employment in this county. This complements the role of Navan set out in the settlement strategy. The economic strategy ensures that the primacy of Navan is recognised, protected and promoted whilst ensuring that over time, a number of other major supporting employment centres are developed which provide balance to the location of employment opportunities across the county.

Individual town Development Plans, Local Area Plans and development objectives for other towns and villages to be contained within the

County Development Plan as described in Section 2.3.3 will reflect the economic policies contained in this County Development Plan. The nature, location and quantum of lands identified for employment generating uses for each settlement and their ability to be serviced must reflect, and be consistent with, their role in the economic and settlement hierarchies as provided for in this core strategy.

In order to realise the economic potential of County Meath and identified strategic employment centres therein, sectoral strengths need be developed and promoted. The core strategy will seek to further develop and enhance the existing sectoral convergences evident in the county and target specific sectors to develop within certain designated centres across the county. The economic development strategy facilitates a more diversified economic base, a focus on cost competitiveness and productivity and a choice of investment locations. The strategy advocates the development of a number of key strategic, integrated and specialised employment centres which provide different types of functions to each other. The economic strategy has determined which specific sectors will be targeted for individual centres and the appropriate land use zoning objectives framed around such uses are now presented.

This repositioning of the county as a key economic driver of the Greater Dublin Area must recognise the inherent attributes and opportunities of both urban and rural areas in achieving this goal. The core strategy provides for 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 which are essential components of the development of a sustainable rural economy.

Meath, – the Heritage Capital of Ireland, has much to offer as a tourist destination, in particular its rich heritage, quality rural landscape, attractive towns and villages, range

of outdoor pursuits and its appealing coastline. The county's accessibility and proximity to the national Gateway (the primary access point to the country and home to the largest domestic market), and the wide range of attractions and facilities available augur well for the continued expansion of the tourism sector as a key component of the economic development strategy advocated in this core strategy. The Boyne Valley has been included as 1 of 10 top world class tourist destinations being developed, promoted and marketed by Fáilte Ireland, through the Discover Ireland campaign. This places Meath in an advantageous position to attract significant visitor numbers to the county.

2.4.1 Spatial Economic Strategy

County Meath is unique in the context of the existence of a number of radial multi-modal corridors, which traverse the County, extending across both its metropolitan and hinterland areas outwards from the National Gateway core. The spatial dimension to the economic strategy supports the growth of the Polycentric Gateway and Primary Economic Growth Towns in the Hinterland linked by multi-modal corridors and focused on identified Core Economic Areas. The stated centres are:

- Navan Core Economic Area with Navan as a Primary Economic Growth Town and including the Secondary Economic Growth Town of Kells and the town of Trim;
- Drogheda Core Economic Area (encompassing M1 Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor as it passes through it)⁵;
- Secondary Economic Growth Towns of Ashbourne / Dunboyne; and;
- The Environs of Maynooth and Kilcock located in the administrative area of Meath (in addition to Dunboyne/Pace and Clonee) are included in the Gateway Core Economic Area.

This hierarchy is complementary to the settlement hierarchy summarised in Section 2.3.1

⁵ See page 75 (Section 3.7.6) Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022.

and described in detail in Chapter 3 in which Navan and Drogheda are at the highest tier, followed by Dunboyne and Maynooth and then, amongst others, Kells, Trim, Ashbourne and the Kilcock environs. The corridors offer potential as locations for economic growth and constitute potential economic drivers for the County to provide for the integration of employment, population and transport in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development principles. They also offer the potential to positively address the negative labour ratio of

the County in comparison to the Mid-East and Dublin Local Authorities.

2.4.2 Retail

The County Retail Strategy confirms a retail hierarchy, as set out in Table 2.6 below. This hierarchy is consistent with the Retail Hierarchy contained in the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008. It is also complementary to the economic strategy spatial hierarchy and the settlement hierarchy.

Table 2.6 Retail Hierarchy in County Meath

Level	Centre	Retail Hierarchy
Level 1	N/A	
Level 2	Major Town Centres and County Town Centres	Navan
Level 3	Town And/Or District Centres and Sub County Town Centres	Ashbourne, Dunboyne*, Dunshaughlin, Kells, Trim, Laytown /Bettystown, Enfield
Level 4	Neighbourhood centres, local centres – small towns and villages	Various
Level 5	Corner Shops/small villages	Various
Other		Drogheda Environs
*Dunboyne will gradually develop over the next 20 years towards a Level 2 Centre in recognition of the status affirmed in the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area		

The comprehensive survey (household and shopper) undertaken as part of the County Retail Strategy highlights continued significant levels of comparison expenditure leakage from the County from the settlements in the east and south east. There remains considerable scope for improvement in the retail offer of the county. In particular, there is considerable scope for the further enhancement of higher order comparison shopping facilities within Navan and Level 3 centres. This is of key importance if the county's performance and attractiveness for living, working, visiting and investment is to be sustained.

The County Retail Strategy identifies Core Retail Areas for the Level 2 and Level 3 centres within the County Retail Hierarchy and also identifies a number of Opportunity Sites within each town which are considered to be suitable locations for retail development. New retail development should be located within or close to these identified core retail areas where possible. The County Retail Strategy sets out broad guidance on the type and amount of additional floorspace that will be required to accommodate additional expenditure over the timescale of the Strategy. This is summarized in Table 2.7 below:

Table 2.7: County Meath Floorspace Potential

Year	Convenience sq.m.	Comparison sq.m. Scenario 1 ⁶	Comparison sq.m. Scenario 2	Bulky Goods sq.m.
2011	15,431	124	- 124	-19,983
2019	31,071	13,723	38,527	-7,614
2022	35,617	20,368	48,446	-1,570

New retail floorspace provision should reflect the existing and projected population in the County and the identified retail hierarchy. Enhancing the range and quality of comparison floorspace within the County is essential in ensuring that County Meath enhances its retail offer and attraction and claws back some of the leakage of expenditure that is occurring to competing centres such as Blanchardstown. As the County Town and administrative capital Navan, in particular, should be promoted and developed as a centre for higher order comparison floorspace. Additional demand for comparison retail floorspace will be promoted in particular within Navan and the Sub County Centres of Ashbourne, Dunboyne, Dunshaughlin, Kells and Trim.

In terms of convenience provision, it is evident that certain centres, most notably Trim, Dunboyne, Kells and Dunshaughlin, are under

provided for in terms of convenience offer. Convenience development will in particular be promoted in these urban centres to improve competition choice and diversity in the retail market.

In terms of retail warehouse development, the County is well served. There are two large retail warehouse parks in Navan and a further retail park in Ashbourne. There is an extant permission for retail warehousing in Trim. Vacancy is prevalent in the Ashbourne Retail Park and in the Navan Retail Park. In this regard, a cautious approach will be taken regarding further such development over the period of the strategy.

The Retail Strategy identifies a number of general policies which are intended to shape and guide retailing in the County over the period of the County Development Plan and beyond.



⁶ Scenario 1 is a low growth scenario and scenario 2 is a high growth scenario.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

CS OBJ 10	To provide and promote a strategic economic development strategy that identifies a hierarchy of employment centres related to the overall development strategy of the County which will encourage a more balanced and sustainable pattern of employment across the county.
CS OBJ 11	<p>To facilitate and encourage the sustainable development of designated core economic areas, such as would allow the creation of a critical mass, in terms of residential population and economic activities, sufficient to service the proposed expanded economic function of such centres. The promotion and facilitation of large scale employment generating developments will occur within the Primary Economic Areas/ Primary Economic Growth Areas and Secondary Economic Growth Areas.</p> <p>From a county Meath perspective, the stated centres are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Navan Core Economic Area with Navan as a Primary Economic Growth Town and including the Secondary Economic Growth Town of Kells and the town of Trim); (ii) Drogheda Core Economic Area; (iii) Secondary Economic Growth Towns of Ashbourne / Dunboyne; and; (iv) The Environs of Maynooth and Kilcock located in the administrative area of Meath (in addition to Dunboyne / Pace and Clonee) are included in the Gateway Core Economic Area corresponding with the Metropolitan Area. Maynooth and Leixlip are identified as a Core Economic Area with the towns of Kilcock and Celbridge providing a supporting role.
CS OBJ 12	The development strategies pursued by Meath Local Authorities in the review of individual town development plans and local area plans and preparation of development and zoning objectives for urban centres to be included in the Meath County Development Plan shall be consistent with the Economic Development Hierarchy presented in Table 4.2 and with the high level objectives for the designated Economic Growth Area/Towns contained in Section 4.1.
CS OBJ 13	To encourage economic and employment development by encouraging mixed use settlement forms in which employment and residency are located in close proximity to each other and to strategic multi modal transport corridors or corridors served by high quality and high frequency bus services.
CS OBJ 14	To promote the continued economic development of the Dublin–Belfast/M1 Economic Corridor.

CS OBJ 15	To improve the jobs ratio level in Meath and address commuting patterns by building up the local economy to a more sustainable level through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) fostering employment creation and maximising jobs potential in designated growth centres; (ii) seeking to advance the preparation of a new IDA Regional Plan for the Mid East Region in conjunction with the Mid East Regional Authority which would be specifically tailored to concentrate certain types of industries / sectors into certain designated economic growth areas / centres; (iii) assisting Enterprise Ireland and other state agencies in the development and growth of indigenous Meath companies and high potential start up companies with an export led business in worldwide markets
CS OBJ 16	To promote rural economic development by recognising the need to advance the long term sustainable social and environmental development of rural areas and encouraging economic diversification and facilitating growth of rural enterprises.
CS OBJ 17	To promote the development of sustainable tourism as a key driver of the Meath economy.
CS OBJ 18	To implement the Meath County Retail Strategy 2013 - 2019.

2.5

Sustainable Heritage

The third pillar of the vision for the Development Plan is sustainable heritage. The identity of Meath is intrinsically linked to its heritage and many of the cultural sites in Meath, such as Tara and the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne, are synonymous

with Ireland and are of international importance. County Meath's character and culture are vital assets that help the county compete as a tourism destination and a location of choice for investment.

GOALS

To ensure that the unique cultural heritage of Meath is protected, conserved, enhanced and sensitively integrated into the sustainable development of the county for the benefit of present and future generations.

To ensure that features of Meath's natural heritage and green infrastructure that provide ecosystem services are protected and that tourist and recreational uses are facilitated in a sustainable manner.

To protect the landscape character, quality and local distinctiveness of County Meath.

A study commissioned by the Heritage Council⁷ outlined the economic rationale for investment in built heritage. It identified that the historic environment is a highly significant contributor to Ireland's national economy, directly supporting almost 25,000 full time equivalent jobs. When indirect effects are included, it is estimated that the sector supports approximately 40,000 full time equivalent posts in Ireland. In addition, the historic environment is estimated to account for some €1.5 billion to the nation's Gross Value Added; this would be equivalent to 1% of total Irish Gross Value Added and approximately 2% of overall employment.

Therefore, there are significant economic benefits to promoting the value of the built heritage and investing in its protection, management and improvement. Meath is designated and marketed as the 'Heritage County' and has a large number of visitor attractions associated with heritage. The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne ranks among the most visited tourist sites in the country. Other tourist attractions based on Meath's archaeological and historical heritage include the Royal site of Tara, Kells, Trim castle, Loughcrew, Tailteann, the Hill of Ward, the Christian sites at Slane, Donaghmore, Killeen, Dunsany and Duleek, monastic ruins at Bective and stately homes throughout the county.

The vast potential for heritage to contribute to the economic re-positioning of Meath has remained latent to date. It is the intention of this Development Plan to rectify this by actively supporting the protection, conservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage in Meath

to benefit the people of Meath and to target cultural tourism as a major economic driver in the county. This is consistent with the approach to tourism outlined in the economic strategy and with the overall vision statement for the Development Plan.

Natural heritage is a further significant asset for the county. It provides a variety of services for free which bring many benefits to society and the economy. A high quality, natural environment supports the economy by attracting employers, visitors and inward investment.

Meath Tourism commissioned an audit of the current cultural tourism product in Meath which identified potential opportunities to increase cultural tourism in Meath. The success of such ventures will be reliant on the ongoing sustainable protection and management of heritage resources. Through the core strategy and the Development Plan, Meath County Council sets out a framework for this to occur.

Green infrastructure refers to strategically planned and interconnected networks of green space and water capable of delivering ecosystem services and quality of life benefits to people. It can include parks, open spaces, rivers, farmland, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens which surround and intersperse our towns and villages. Green infrastructure should be provided as an integral part of sustainable development alongside other infrastructure such as utilities and transport networks if the maximum benefit from natural assets is to be obtained.

2.6

Infrastructure and Supporting Services

The core principles recognise that the achievement of the Development Plan vision requires inputs from other services. The introduction to the core strategy referred to the high quality of the transport linkages in County

Meath. The effective usage of this transport network will contribute to enhancing the quality of life for communities in the county, with the efficient movement of goods necessary for a strong economy and increasing accessibility

⁷ Economic Value of Ireland's Historic Environment Ecorys & Fitzpatrick Associates February 2012

for visitors to the county. In order to maximise the use of transport infrastructure, a greater integration between land use and transport must be promoted and a focus on ensuring that development both enhances accessibility and is situated in locations where it is most accessible. This is consistent with the policies and objectives in the settlement strategy which seek the consolidation of settlements. Map 6.1 illustrates key transport corridors and networks in Meath. There are a number of national primary and secondary road routes which pass through Meath including the M1, M/N2, M/N3, M4, M6, N51 and N52. These routes, particularly the national primary roads and Dublin - Belfast Economic Corridor, have had a significant impact on development patterns and pressures in the county, as evidenced by the attractiveness of towns on the national routes close to Dublin as commuting centres. Meath also benefits from the Dublin-Belfast railway line passing through the east of the county, the Dublin – Sligo railway line passing through the south of the county and the Navan – Drogheda – Dublin Port Rail Freight Line. Significant investment has been recently made in constructing Phase I of the Navan-Dublin rail line, which presently terminates at Pace providing park and ride facilities there and a station serving Dunboyne town. The current Development Plan contains an R1 zoning to facilitate the completion of the line to Navan. The County is also served by the Navan – Kingscourt disused rail line which is being promoted as a 'Green way'.

The Development Plan strategy has sought to complement and support the aims of higher level policy documents in the area of transport, particularly 'Smarter Travel' and the draft NTA 'Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2011-2030'. The key aims of these documents include reducing travel demand, maximising the efficiency of the transport network, reducing reliance on fossil fuels, reducing transport emissions, improving accessibility to transport, adopting a hierarchy of transport users with pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users at the top of the hierarchy and considering land use planning and transport planning together.

These have been incorporated into the Development Plan through the inclusion of broader strategic objectives in addition to more detailed policy and specific objectives. For example, at a strategic level, core principle 5 aims 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." This will assist in reducing the overall need to travel and in promoting and increasing accessible to public transport as espoused at national and regional policy level. Core principle 6 supports the creation of a compact urban form in all settlements in Meath which again will reduce the need to travel and facilitate sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling.

More specifically geared towards transport are core principles 9 and 10 which seek to consolidate population growth and employment in areas best served by public transport and a range of transport modes and to promote and support the integration of land use and transport and a modal shift to greater use of sustainable modes of transport, including public transport, walking and cycling, respectively. In Chapter 6 (Transport), policy TRAN SP 2 reinforces this through the promotion of sustainable forms of transport. Section 6.6 of the Development Plan addresses the integration of land use and transport and is supported by policy TRAN SP 1.

Other more specific elements of the draft NTA strategy have also been included in the Development Plan e.g. section 6.7 addresses the preparation of transport plans for Navan, the Drogheda Environs, Dunboyne, Kells, Trim, Ashbourne and Dunshaughlin which are required under the Draft NTA Transport Strategy and the car parking standards of the strategy have been replicated in the development management standards of the Development Plan.

The delivery of supporting services for development, particularly water services, will also be critical. Meath County Council has

sought to direct growth towards centres where capacity is available and will strive to seek the expansion of services necessary to support

the development strategy in this Plan, in accordance with the sustainable management of water resources.

GOALS

To facilitate the provision of the County's infrastructure in a sustainable and efficient manner that promotes the social and economic development of the County.

To provide adequate water and sewerage capacity to accommodate the projected needs of the future population as set out in this core strategy, ensuring the sustainable use of water resources.

To promote and facilitate the provision of the necessary transport infrastructure to fully accommodate existing and future population needs as well as the demand for economic development in an environmentally sustainable manner.

2.7

Rural Areas

Map 10.1 and 2.1 illustrate the rural areas of County Meath. Chapter 10 of the Plan outlines in detail the different types of rural areas identified in County Meath in accordance with the 'Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2005) and the approach taken to rural housing demand and management, as required by the RPGs. Three types of rural area are denoted in Meath. The following text summaries the characteristics of these areas as set out in Chapter 10.

Area 1 - Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence

This area exhibits the characteristics of proximity to the immediate environs or close commuting catchment of Dublin, with a rapidly rising population and evidence of considerable pressure for development of housing due to proximity to such urban areas. This area includes the commuter-belt and peri-urban⁸ areas of the county, and the areas that are experiencing the most development pressure for one-off rural housing. These areas act as attractive residential locations for the inflow of migrants into the county.

The policies for this area, as set out in Chapter 10 (Rural Development) include:

RD POL 1

To ensure that individual house developments in rural areas satisfy the housing requirements of persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community in which they are proposed, subject to compliance with normal planning criteria.

RD POL 2

To facilitate the housing requirements of the rural community as identified while directing urban generated housing to areas zoned for new housing development in towns and villages in the area of the development plan.

⁸ Peri Urban areas are parts of the open countryside that have been subjected to very high levels of urban generated adjustment.

RD POL 3

To protect areas falling within the environs of urban centres in this Area Type from urban generated and unsightly ribbon development and to maintain the identity of these urban centres.

Area 2 – Strong Rural Areas

This area is underpinned primarily by relative levels of residential stability compared to Area Type 1 within a well developed town and village structure and in the wider rural area around them. This stability is supported by a traditionally strong, agricultural, economic base

and the level of individual housing development activity in these areas tends to be lower than that within Area Type 1 and confined to certain areas.

The policies for this area, as set out in Chapter 10 (Rural Development) include:

RD POL 4

To consolidate and sustain the stability of the rural population and to strive to achieve a balance between development activity in urban areas and villages and the wider rural area.

RD POL 5

To facilitate the housing requirements of the rural community as identified while directing urban generated housing to areas zoned for new housing development in towns and villages in the area of the development plan.

Area 3 – Low Development Pressure Areas

This area type covers much of the north-western, western and south-western parts of the county. This area is associated with relatively high levels of residential stability, above average percentages of family households and high rates of agricultural employment. In addition, it is characterised by the lowest average population densities. This area has the weakest urban structure within the

county and the rural housing policy applicable should reflect same.

Rural communities will be supported through the identification of small towns, villages and Graigs (rural nodes) which will present an opportunity to provide services locally and conveniently to residents in rural areas.

The policy for this area, as set out in Chapter 10 (Rural Development) includes:

RD POL 6

To accommodate demand for permanent residential development as it arises subject to good practice in matters such as design, location and the protection of important landscapes and any environmentally sensitive areas.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

CS OBJ 19

To support rural communities through the identification of lower order centres including small towns, villages and graigs to provide more sustainable development centres in the rural areas.

2.8

Core Strategy Map

This core strategy is accompanied by two maps (Map 2.1 and 2.2) which illustrate the vision supporting the core strategy including:

- Key growth corridors where the major economic and population growth towns are located. These correspond with the major road and rail lines which pass through the county. They include the M1 international corridor where the Large Growth Town I and Primary Economic Centre of Drogheda is located, the M3 corridor where the Large Growth Town I and Primary Economic Centre of Navan is situated along with Kells (a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town and Secondary Economic Growth Centre) and the Large Growth Town II of Dunboyne which is also a linked Secondary Economic Growth Centre with Ashbourne which is situated along the M2/N2 corridor. Finally, the environs of Maynooth and Kilcock, a Large Growth Town II and Moderate Sustainable Growth Town respectively, are located on the M4 corridor. The map shows how Maynooth is linked with Leixlip as a Primary Economic Growth Area and, similarly, how Navan and Kells will interact as a Primary Economic Growth Area.
- The urban settlement hierarchy as outlined in Table 2.1.
- Transport infrastructure: There are a number of national primary and secondary routes which pass through Meath including the M1, M/N2, M/N3, M4, M6, N51 and N52. These routes and relevant regional and local roads are illustrated.
- Inter-urban and commuter rail routes: Dublin-Belfast route, the Dublin- North Dunboyne (Pace)-Pace line, the Dublin-Sligo line and the Navan-Drogheda freight line.
- Key heritage assets of the county, including the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne, Tara, Loughcrew, Kells and Trim. These will be particularly significant in driving cultural tourism in Meath.

2.9

Land Use Zoning Objectives

2.9.1 Introduction

The purpose of land use zoning is to:

1. identify the quantity of land for designated land uses needed over the plan period;
2. the best locations for such land, and;
3. the acceptability or otherwise of the various classes of land use within any particular zone.

The use of zoning objectives by Meath County Council indicates the planning control objectives of the Council for the lands in question. This is applied primarily to urban areas and the rail reservation zoning objective R1. The Core Strategy sets out, inter alia, the

quantum and location of residential units which will be accommodated primarily in various urban centres across the county. The County Development Plan must ensure that adequate lands will be available to meet anticipated development requirements such as housing, employment, retail, community infrastructure, etc. and that such uses will be developed in a sequential and co-ordinated manner.

The County Development Plan determines the overall zoning objectives to be applied at the county wide level. The location of zoning objectives within settlements will be determined in the town development plans, local area plans and zoning objectives for the urban centres to be contained within the County

Development Plan within the overall framework established by the County Development Plan.

This section of the Development Plan sets out the land use zoning objectives applicable to all statutory land use plans in the County. It provides an explanation of the land use categories which apply with each of the land use zoning objectives. The zoning policies and objectives are derived from the Core Strategy. Fourteen (14) land use zoning objectives are indicated in the County Development Plan.

2.9.2 Challenges

The zonings arise from an evaluation of the implementation of the 2007 – 2013 County Development Plan which highlighted a number of issues:

- An ever growing number of land use zoning objectives was being applied in individual town development plans and local area plans.
- The same land use zoning objective was generally applied to each settlement regardless of their relative position in the Settlement and / or Economic Hierarchies. There was no targeting of specific uses to specific centres based on their position in the Settlement Hierarchy (critical mass) or their comparative public transport provision. The Economic Development Strategy will address this matter in conjunction with the Core Strategy.
- The majority of land use zonings provided for single use land use zoning with limited application of mixed use zonings.
- Land use zonings should promote future economic development in the county and facilitate developments in the emerging sectors, such as green technologies, biotechnology, ICT, research and development, etc.

2.9.3 Zoning Strategy

The overall zoning strategy is based on the following principles:

- Adequate lands should be zoned to meet the anticipated development needs of the economy and society in the county within the lifetime of the plan.
- Zoned land should be provided at appropriate locations in the county and serviced to accommodate the expected growth in population over the plan period and thus reposition the county as a key economic driver within the Greater Dublin Area. The Core Strategy has identified the location of proposed residential development and the identified anchors of regional enterprise to achieve these objectives.
- Zoning should be designed to promote particular classes of land uses in appropriate locations to give residents, businesses and developers a degree of certainty.
- Development should generally be encouraged in established centres promoting concepts of brownfield redevelopment, sequential approach and ensuring efficient use of urban lands.
- More intensive development should be permitted within centres in the upper tiers of the settlement and economic hierarchies adjacent or close to public transport nodes and corridors to maximise the use of public transport, minimise trip generation and distribution and to promote sustainable development. The zoning strategy advocates the movement to mixed use zones and away from the use of single or mono zoning in such circumstances.

2.9.4 Land Use Zoning Objectives

This section of the Development Plan sets out the land use zoning objectives applicable to all

statutory land use plans in the County and for the zoning objectives for the urban centres to be contained within the County Development Plan. It provides an explanation of the land use categories which apply with each land use zoning objectives. The zoning policies and objectives are derived from the Core Strategy.

These land use zoning objectives shall apply to the review of all statutory land use plans in County Meath and the inclusion of zoning objectives for the subsumed urban centres in the County Development Plan save with regard to zoning objective “*R1 Rail Corridor*”

which is applicable from the date this County Development Plan shall take effect. In the absence of a review of the existing land use zoning objectives contained in individual Town Development Plans or Local Area Plans, the existing land use zoning objectives shall continue to apply for the purposes of determining the suitability or otherwise of the principle of a proposed use. The zoning matrix associated with the land use zoning objectives which pre date this County Development Plan (i.e. the zoning matrix associated with the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013) is contained in Appendix 3.

Table 2.8 Land Use Zoning Objectives

Site Code	Objective
A1 Existing Residential	To protect and enhance the amenity of developed residential communities.
A2 New Residential	To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities and employment uses as considered appropriate for the status of the centre in the Settlement Hierarchy.
B1 Commercial / Town or Village Centre	To protect, provide for and / or improve town and village centre facilities and uses.
B2 Retail Warehouse Park	To provide for the development of a retail warehouse park.
C1 Mixed Use	To provide for and facilitate mixed residential and business uses.
D1 Tourism	To provide for appropriate and sustainable visitor and tourist facilities and associated uses.
E1 Strategic Employment Zones (High Technology Uses)	To facilitate opportunities for high technology and major campus style office based employment within high quality and accessible locations.
E2 General Enterprise & Employment	To provide for the creation of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for employment through industrial, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing and other general employment / enterprise uses in a good quality physical environment.
E3 Warehousing & Distribution	To facilitate logistics, warehousing, distribution and supply chain management inclusive of related industry facilities which require good access to the major road network.

Site Code	Objective
F1 Open Space	To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities.
G1 Community Infrastructure	To provide for necessary community, social and educational facilities.
H1 High Amenity	To protect and improve areas of high amenity.
R1 Rail Corridor	To provide for a strategic rail corridor and associated physical infrastructure.
WL White Lands	To protect strategic lands from inappropriate forms of development which would impede the orderly expansion of a strategic urban centre

2.9.5 Permissible and Non Permissible Uses

This section provides guidance on the acceptability in principle of various uses for each of the zoning objectives. Uses other than the primary use for which an area is zoned may be permitted provided they are not in conflict with the primary use zoning objective.

Uses not listed under the permissible or open for consideration categories are deemed not to be permissible in principle and such uses will be considered on their individual merits. The expansion of established and approved uses not conforming to use zone objectives will be considered on their merits.

The guidance provided in this section is not intended to replace the normal planning process. An indication that a proposal would be 'permissible' within a particular land use zoning objective should in no way be taken to imply granting of permission, or indeed that a planning application may necessarily be successful. Individual applications are a matter for Meath County Council to decide upon, taking into consideration the wider policies and objectives which pertain to statutory land use planning including Development Management Standards and Guidelines, Ministerial guidance and the merits of individual proposals.

Permissible Uses

A "permissible use" is one which is generally

acceptable in principle in the relevant zone, but which is subject to normal planning consideration, including policies and objectives outlined in the plan.

Open for Consideration Uses

An "open for consideration use" is one which may be permitted where Meath County Council is satisfied that the proposed development would be compatible with the overall policies and objectives for the zone, would not have undesirable effects on permitted uses, and would otherwise be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Relaxation of Zoning Objectives for Protected Structures

Meath County Council actively encourages uses which are compatible with the character of Protected Structures. In certain limited cases, to ensure the long-term viability of a Protected Structure, it may be considered appropriate not to stringently apply generic zoning restrictions, including site development standards, provided the Protected Structure is being restored to the highest standard, the special interest, character and setting of the building is protected and the use and development is consistent with conservation policies and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Transitional Zones

The individual Town Development Plans and Local Area Plan zoning objective maps and

the zoning objective maps to be contained in the County Development Plan will show the boundaries between different zone objectives. While the zoning objectives indicate the different uses permitted in each zone, it is important to avoid abrupt transitions in scale and use at the boundaries of adjoining land use zones. In dealing with development proposals in contiguous zone areas, it is necessary to avoid developments which would be detrimental to the amenities of the more environmentally sensitive zone. For instance, in zones abutting residential areas, particular attention must be paid to the use, scale and density of development proposals in order to protect the amenities of these residential properties.

Explanatory Notes

In the listings which follow each zoning objective indicating whether certain uses are permissible or open for consideration, the following uses are defined hereunder:

A Convenience Outlet is a single level store selling food and other convenience items with a net sales area of not more than 200 sq. m.

A Health Care Centre is a stand alone premises (i.e. not connected with a dwelling) generally with multiple consulting rooms which may cover a variety of health disciplines.

A Healthcare Practitioner is a practice operated by the owner/occupier of a dwelling and which is ancillary to the primary use of the dwelling as a normal place of residence. There is normally only one practitioner operating from the premises.

Office uses referred to in the following sections exclude offices which provide a service for visiting members of the public e.g. solicitors, financial services, estate agents, etc. Reference to office in the following sections does not include office accommodation ancillary to the primary use e.g. office accommodation as part of a manufacturing facility.

Supermarket: Single level, self service store selling mainly food, with a net retail floorspace of less than 2,500 sq.m. net.

Superstore: Generally, single level, self service stores selling mainly food, or food and some non – food goods, with at least 2,500 sq.m. net retail floorspace but not greater than 5,000 sq.m. net retail floorspace and with integrated or shared parking.

A Shop is a comparison retail outlet excluding retail warehouse units.

2.9.6 Primary Land Use Zoning Categories

A1	Existing Residential
Objective	To protect and enhance the amenity of developed residential communities.

Guidance

In A1 zones, Meath County Council will be primarily concerned with the protection of the amenities of established residents. While infill or redevelopment proposals would be acceptable in principle, careful consideration would have to be given to protecting amenities such as privacy, daylight/sunlight and aspect in new proposals.

In all residentially zoned lands, no residential

development shall be permitted on lands that are subject of a deed of dedication or identified in a planning application as open space to ensure the availability of community and recreational facilities for the residents of the area.

Permitted Uses

B & B / Guest House, Community Facility / Centre, Home Based Economic Activities,

Residential / Sheltered Housing, and Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Allotments, Bring Banks, Convenience Outlet, Childcare Facility, Education (Primary or

Second Level), Halting Site / Group Housing, Healthcare Practitioner, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Petrol Station, Public House, Retirement Home / Residential Institution / Retirement Village, and Veterinary Surgery.

A2	New Residential
Objective	To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities and employment uses as considered appropriate for the status of the centre in the Settlement Hierarchy.

Guidance

The appropriate density will be determined on a site by site basis having regard to the DoECLG Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban areas and the positioning of the urban centre in the Settlement Hierarchy provided in the Core Strategy.

Local objectives may be included in Town Development Plans and Local Area Plans which seek to conserve and protect the character and setting of institutional complexes and heritage buildings in residential redevelopment and infill proposals, where deemed appropriate by Meath County Council. Meath County Council will be particularly concerned with the conservation of heritage buildings whose setting and architectural qualities are such as to demand much sensitivity in reuse or adaptation to new purposes. In some circumstances, it will be important that applications for proposals in such zones are determined in a Site Development Brief / Masterplan context. Said documents should be submitted in conjunction with any planning applications arising.

It is envisaged in the interest of sustainability that the larger tracts of lands identified for A2 land use zoning objective in the higher tier settlement centres (Moderate Growth Town and upwards as identified in the Core Strategy) could accommodate ancillary uses such as employment generating uses, community facilities, local shopping facilities, etc. provided they are appropriate in scale and do not unduly

interfere with the predominant residential land use. A number of the uses open for consideration are qualified on this basis.

In all residentially zoned lands, no residential development shall be permitted on lands that are subject of a deed of dedication or identified in a planning application as open space to ensure the availability of community and recreational facilities for the residents of the area.

Individual convenience stores in neighbourhood centres in A2 zoned areas should generally not exceed 1,000 sq. metres net retail floorspace unless otherwise identified in the Town Development Plan/Local Area Plan.



Permitted Uses

B & B / Guest House, Bring Banks, Community Facility / Centre, Childcare Facility, Convenience Outlet, Childcare Facility, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Education (Primary or Second Level), Halting Site / Group Housing, Home Based Economic Activities, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Residential / Sheltered Housing, Retirement Home / Residential Institution / Retirement Village, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Allotments, Bank / Financial Institution, Betting Office, Caravan Park, Cultural Facility, education (Third Level), Enterprise Centre, Health Centre, Healthcare Practitioner, Hotel / Motel / Hostel, Offices <100sq. m., Offices 100 to 1000 sq. m., Petrol Station, Place of Public Worship, Public House, Restaurant / Café, Supermarket, Shop, Take-Away / Fast Food Outlet, Veterinary Surgery.

B1	Commercial / Town or Village Centre
Objective	To protect, provide for and / or improve town and village centre facilities and uses

Guidance

Individual Town Development Plans (Navan, Kells and Trim) and Local Area Plans for Higher Tier Centres (Moderate Growth Towns and upwards as provided for in the Core Strategy) may include local objectives:

- providing for the sequential expansion of the existing town centre
- providing for neighbourhood centres in which the nature and scale of appropriate retail and other uses may be specified.

It is intended to accommodate the majority of new commercial and retail uses in towns and villages within B1 lands identified for B1 land use zoning objective.

This section of the Development Plan establishes the general principle of use within a given land use zoning objective. Nothing in this section shall confer an expectation that a particular scale of retail outlet is permissible within an urban centre as other considerations as outlined in the Retail Strategy Section of Chapter 4 will be taken into account by Meath County Council in the assessment of retail development proposals.

There shall be no restriction to the definition of office in B1 land use zones. Office shall include Class 2 and Class 3 as referred to in

Part 4 Exempted Development – Classes of Uses contained in the Second Schedule of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

Permitted Uses

B & B / Guest House, Bank / Financial Institution, Betting Office, Bring Banks, Cinema, Community Facility / Centre, Conference/Event Centre, Convenience Outlet, Childcare Facility, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Cultural Facility, Dance Hall / Night Club, Education (Primary or Second Level), Education (Third Level), Funeral Home, Health Centre, Healthcare Practitioner, Home Based Economic Activities, Hotel / Motel / Hostel, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Offices <100sq. m., Offices 100 to 1,000 sq. m., Offices >1,000sq. m., Place of Public Worship, Public House, Residential / Sheltered Housing, Restaurant / Café, Supermarket / Superstore, Shop, Take-Away / Fast Food Outlet, Telecommunication Structures, Veterinary Surgery, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Agri – Business, Amusement Arcade, Car Park (incl. Park and Ride), Drive Through Restaurant, Enterprise Centre, Garden Centre, Hospital, Motor Sales / Repair, Petrol Station, Plant & Tool Hire, Retail Warehouse, Retirement Home / Residential Institution / Retirement Village, Science & Technology Based Enterprise.

B2	Retail Warehouse Park
Objective	To provide for the development of a retail warehouse park.

Guidance

The objective of B2 zones is to provide for the development of retail warehouse parks. These zones will also allow the displacement of motor car sales outlets from non compatible town centre and edge of town centre locations, subject to their suitable integration within an overall development proposal.

The development of retail warehouse parks shall be subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure, and, where deemed appropriate by Meath County Council at pre planning stage, in accordance with an approved Masterplan.

Permitted Uses

Cinema, Factory Outlet Stores, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Retail Warehouse, Telecommunication Structures, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Bring Banks, Childcare Facility, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Drive Through Restaurant, Garden Centre, Motor Sales / Repair, Petrol Station, Restaurant / Café, Take-Away / Fast Food Outlet, Wholesale Warehousing / Cash and Carry.

C1	Mixed Use
Objective	To provide for and facilitate mixed residential and business uses.

Guidance

C1 land use zoning objectives are only considered appropriate in the higher tier settlement centres (Moderate Sustainable Growth Town and upwards as identified in the Core Strategy).

The preparation of statutory land use plans for Navan, Drogheda and Dunboyne⁹ shall facilitate opportunities for high density mixed use employment generating activities whilst supporting appropriate levels of residential development. These areas shall be located in proximity to high frequency public transport corridors.

C1 zones have been identified to encourage mixed use development and for this reason it will be a requirement to include at least 30% of a given site area for commercial (non retail) development.

There shall be no restriction to the definition of office in C1 land use zones. Office shall include Class 2 and Class 3 as referred to in

Part 4 Exempted Development – Classes of Uses contained in the Second Schedule of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

Permitted Uses

B & B / Guest House, Bring Banks, Childcare Facility, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Community Facility / Centre, Convenience Outlet, Cultural Facility, Education (Primary or Second Level), Education (Third Level), Enterprise Centre, Health Centre, Healthcare Practitioner, Home Based Economic Activities, Hotel / Motel / Hostel, Offices <100sq. m. Offices 100 to 1,000 sq. m., Offices >1,000 sq. m., Petrol Station, Place of Public Worship, Public House, Residential / Sheltered Housing, Restaurant / Café, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Agri – Business, Amusement Arcade, Betting Office, Car Park (incl. Park and Ride), Cinema,

⁹ All reference to Dunboyne in this section of the Development Plan refers to Corridor demarcated by the Dunboyne Clonee Pace Local Area Plan 2009.

Conference/Event Centre, Dance Hall / Night Club, Drive Through Restaurant, Funeral Home, Garden Centre, Hospital, Industry – Light, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Motor Sales / Repair, Offices >1,000sq. m., Plant & Tool Hire, Retirement Home /

Residential Institution/Retirement Village, Science & Technology Based Enterprise, Shop, Supermarket / Superstore, Take-Away / Fast Food Outlet, Telecommunication Structures, Veterinary Surgery, Wholesale Warehousing / Cash and Carry.

D1	Tourism
Objective	To provide for appropriate and sustainable visitor and tourist facilities and associated uses.

Guidance

D1 zones have been identified to provide for tourism type uses such as accommodation, and entertainment.

Permitted Uses

B & B / Guest House, Caravan Park, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Community Facility / Centre, Conference/Event Centre, Craft Centre / Craft Shop, Cultural Facility, Hotel / Motel /

Hostel, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Restaurant / Café, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Amusement Arcade, Cinema, Convenience Outlet, Childcare Facility, Cultural Facility, Dance Hall / Night Club, Offices <100sq. m., Public House, Shop, Telecommunication Structures.

E1	Strategic Employment Zones (High Technology Uses)
Objective	To facilitate opportunities for high end technology / manufacturing and major campus style office based employment within high quality and accessible locations.

Guidance

E1 zones facilitate opportunities for high end, high value added businesses and corporate headquarters. This adheres to the concept of 4th Generation Science & Technology Parks. It is envisaged that such locations are suitable for high density employment generating activity with associated commercial development located adjacent to or in close proximity to high frequency public transport corridors. This will apply to suitable lands in Navan, Drogheda and Dunboyne. The Maynooth Environs Local Area Plan also contains E1 zones albeit qualified by a Local Objective.

Permitted Uses

Bio Technology Manufacturing, Call Centres, Childcare Facility, Convenience Outlet, Green / Clean Light Industries, High Technology

Manufacturing, Information Communication Technologies, International and National Traded Services, Knowledge Based Economic Development, Offices 100 to 1,000 sq. m., Offices >1,000 sq. m., Research & Development, Science & Technology Based Enterprise, Telecommunication Structures, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Conference/Event Centre, Education (Third Level), Enterprise / Training Centre, Gymnasium, Hotel / Aparthotel, Industry – Light, Restaurant / Café.

E2	General Enterprise & Employment
Objective	To provide for the creation of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for employment through industrial, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing and other general employment / enterprise uses in a good quality physical environment.

Guidance (General)

E2 lands constitute an important land bank for employment use which must be protected. The development of E2 lands seek to provide for the creation and production of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for industrial, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing and other general employment / enterprise uses in a good quality physical environment.

It shall be the policy of Meath County Council to apply a more flexible approach to large scale office type development in excess of 200 sq. m. of gross floor area in significant areas (i.e. in excess of 3 hectares of land that is currently undeveloped) of E2 land use zoning objective under the following conditions:

- The preparation of a Masterplan to ensure the provision of the necessary physical infrastructure, the appropriate density and design of layout and the interface between proposed uses and existing development. This document should be submitted in conjunction with any planning applications arising;
- That all processes being operated in the vicinity of the site, similarly zoned E2, are

classified as light industrial in nature, as defined in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2012, as amended;

- That the site is located adjacent to a public transport corridor and is served by an adequate road network, and;
- That the application is accommodated by a viable Mobility Management Plan which is to the satisfaction of Meath County Council and provides for the achievement of acceptable modal shares for both public and private transport within an appropriate timeframe.

No office shall be permitted on E2 zoned lands where the primary use of the office (or service) is provided principally to visiting members of the public e.g. solicitors, accountants, etc.

Existing employment generating uses together with their expansion to an appropriate scale and size, consistent with the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area and the National Transport Authority Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area, shall be facilitated notwithstanding the category of settlement specified.

Category 1	Primary & Secondary Economic Centres as provided for in Core Strategy (Navan, Drogheda, Dunboyne, Ashbourne, Kells)
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Guidance

Within Category 1 centres, E2 zones provide for industrial and related uses subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure. They allow the full range of industrial processes to take place within a well designed and attractive setting that provides employment opportunities. In established industrial areas, Meath County Council will seek to ensure that non industrial uses are limited to prevent potential land use conflicts developing.

Permitted Uses

Agri – Business, Bring Banks, Builder's Providers, Car Park (incl. Park and Ride), CHP / Waste to Energy Facilities, Domestic Fuel Depot, Energy Installation, Enterprise & Business Start Ups, Enterprise / Training Centre, Factory Shop, Furniture Showroom (only where product displayed is manufactured on site), Go Kart Track, Industry – General, Industry – Light, Heavy Vehicle Park, Logistics, Mart / Co-op, Motor Repair / Servicing, Plant &

Tool Hire, Recycling Facility (Civic & Amenity), Science & Technology Based Enterprise, Telecommunication Structures, Transport Depot, Warehousing, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Abattoir, Car Dismantler / Scrap Yard, Childcare Facility, Construction & Demolition Waste Recycling Facility, Garden Centre, Motor Sales, Offices 100 – 1,000 sq. m., Petrol Station, Restaurant / Café, Veterinary Surgery, Waste Recycling / Transfer / Sorting Centre, Wholesale Warehousing / Cash and Carry.

Category 2

Remaining Moderate Growth Towns as provided for in Core Strategy (Trim, Kilcock Environs, Dunshaughlin)

Guidance

These centres should cater primarily for small to medium scale enterprise and manufacturing uses allowing for the full range of industrial processes to take place within a well designed and attractive setting. The development of small to medium scale office based industry will be accommodated in Moderate Growth Towns on suitable sites.

Permitted Uses

Agri – Business, Bring Banks, Builder's Providers, Car Dismantler / Scrap Yard, Car Park (incl. Park and Ride), CHP / Waste to Energy Facilities, Domestic Fuel Depot, Energy Installation, Enterprise Centre, Enterprise & Business Start Ups, Factory Shop, Furniture

Showroom (only where product displayed is manufactured on site), Go Kart Track, Heavy Vehicle Park, Industry – General, Industry – Light, Logistics, Mart / Co-op, Motor Repair / Servicing, Offices 100 – 1,000 sq. m., Plant & Tool Hire, Recycling Facility (Civic & Amenity), Telecommunication Structures, Transport Depot, Warehousing, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Abattoir, Childcare Facility, Construction & Demolition Waste Recycling Facility, Garden Centre, Motor Sales, Petrol Station, Restaurant / Café, Veterinary Surgery, Waste Recycling / Transfer / Sorting Centre, Wholesale Warehousing / Cash and Carry.

Category 3

Lower Tiered Settlements (Small Towns & Villages as provided for in Core Strategy)

Guidance

These centres should cater primarily for small scale enterprise and manufacturing which focus on incubator units, workshops, creative industries, small businesses, repairs, warehousing, distribution, open storage and transport operating centre type activities. The development of inappropriate uses such as office based industry and retailing will not be accommodated in lower tier centres. It shall be a requirement of an applicant to demonstrate the suitability of a proposed heavy industrial use within such land use zoning objective to Meath County Council.

Permitted Uses

Agri – Business, Bring Banks, Builders Providers, Domestic Fuel Depot, Enterprise Centre, Enterprise & Business Start Ups, Factory Shop, Furniture Showroom (only where product displayed is manufactured on site), Go Kart Track, Industry – Light, Heavy Vehicle Park, Mart / Co-op, Motor Repair / Servicing, Plant & Tool Hire, Recycling Facility (Civic & Amenity), Telecommunication Structures, Transport Depot, Warehousing, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Abattoir, Car Dismantler / Scrap Yard, Childcare Facility, Construction & Demolition Waste Recycling Facility, Garden Centre, Motor Sales,

Veterinary Surgery, Waste Recycling / Transfer / Sorting Centre, Wholesale Warehousing / Cash and Carry.

E3	Warehousing & Distribution
Objective	To facilitate logistics, warehousing, distribution and supply chain management inclusive of related industry facilities which require food access to the major road network.

Permitted Uses

Bring Banks, Car Park (incl. Park and Ride), CHP / Waste to Energy Facilities, Distribution & Supply Chain Management, Domestic Fuel Depot, Energy Installation, Fuel Depot, Heavy Vehicle Park, Logistics, Plant Storage, Recycling Facility (Civic & Amenity), Telecommunication Storage Depot, Transport Depot, Warehousing,

Water Services / Public Services, Wholesale Warehousing / Cash and Carry.

Open for Consideration Uses

Agri – Business, Childcare Facility, Garden Centre, Industry – Light, Restaurant / Café, Waste Recycling / Transfer / Sorting Centre.

F1	Open Space
Objective	To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities.

Permitted Uses

Car Park for Recreational Purposes, Craft Centre / Craft Shop, Community Facility / Centre, Cultural Facility, Cycleways / Greenways / Trail Development, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Playing Pitches, Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Allotments, Bring Banks, Childcare Facility, Place of Public Worship.

G1	Community Infrastructure
Objective	To provide for necessary community, social and educational facilities.

Permitted Uses

Allotments, Car Park (incl. Park and Ride), Cemetery/Crematorium, Children Play / Adventure Centre, Childcare Facility, Community Facility / Centre, Cultural Facility, Education (Primary or Second Level), Education (Third Level), Health Centre, Hospital, Leisure / Recreation / Sports Facilities, Place of Public Worship, Playing Pitches, Recycling Facility (Civic & Amenity), Water Services / Public Services.

Open for Consideration Uses

Bring Banks, Funeral Home, Gymnasium, Halting Site / Group Housing, Healthcare Practitioner, Residential / Sheltered Housing, Restaurant / Café, Retirement Home / Residential Institution / Retirement Village, Telecommunication Structures.

H1	High Amenity
Objective	To protect and improve areas of high amenity.

Permitted Uses

Cycleways / Greenways / Trail Development,
Land & Water Based Recreational Activities
Open Space, Cultural Activities.

Open for Consideration Uses

Kiosk, Restaurant, Tea Room.

R1	Rail Corridor
Objective	To provide for a strategic rail corridor and associated physical infrastructure.

Guidance

The protection of the designed route of the extension of the Clonsilla to Parkway rail line to Navan differs from most of the land use zoning objectives included in this Development Plan. It has a single purpose use which is to protect the designed route from development which would compromise its future delivery. It is not necessary to therefore identify the suitability or otherwise of individual uses on said lands as the intention of Meath County Council is clear.

It will also be a requirement of the Navan Development Plan, Dunshaughlin Local Area

Plan and Kilmessan Local Area Plan to make provision to protect the designed route of the rail line extension from development which would compromise its future delivery as there are existing land use zoning objectives already at the location of the proposed R1 Rail Corridor within these centres. The manner in which Meath County Council considered the proposed town centre expansion in Navan in conjunction with Íarnród Éireann / National Transportation Office will be the template for the consideration of individual development proposals pending the variation / amendment of the identified statutory land use plans in this regard.

WL	White Lands
Objective	To protect strategic lands from inappropriate forms of development which would impede the orderly expansion of a strategic urban centre.

To date, White Lands have appeared in 4 statutory land use plans adopted by Meath County Council, namely Navan Development Plan, Drogheda LAP, Maynooth LAP and Dunboyne – Clonee – Pace LAP. These are strategic lands and their designation is to allow for a long term, integrated approach to the taken to the expansion of an urban area. It is not generally envisaged that development proposals will be brought forward during the life of this Development Plan for such lands. No indication is therefore generally offered regarding the suitability or otherwise

of individual uses on said lands within this Development Plan. The acceptability of specific proposals for development on the lands prior to that time, e.g. an expansion to an existing permitted business, will be considered on their merits. It is vital that such lands are protected against developments which would impede the orderly expansion of an urban area.

Meath County Council indicates in the Economic Development Strategy that an opportunity for a Strategic Development Zone may exist in north Dunboyne within the

Metropolitan Area of the National Gateway. An integrated land use and transportation approach to planning will be applied to this area which may require the reconsideration of the White Lands in north Dunboyne (Pace) within the life of this Development Plan.

of Local Area Plans and town Development Plans and preparation of zoning objectives for inclusion in the County Development Plan will identify specific local objectives. In this regard, a number of areas are outlined in Section 4.3 (Employment Sectors).

2.9.7 Local Zoning Objectives

Local Zoning Objectives relate to particular sites / areas located within a broad zoning category where, notwithstanding the overall zoning of the area, the Council is seeking to achieve a special objective. The review

MEATH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2013-2019

ADOPTED
Core Strategy Map 2.1

comhairle chontae na mif
meath county council

Date: 17th Dec 2012

Scale: N.T.S.



Settlement Hierarchy

- Large Growth Town 1
- Large Growth Town 2
- Moderate Sustainable Growth Town
- Small Town
- Village

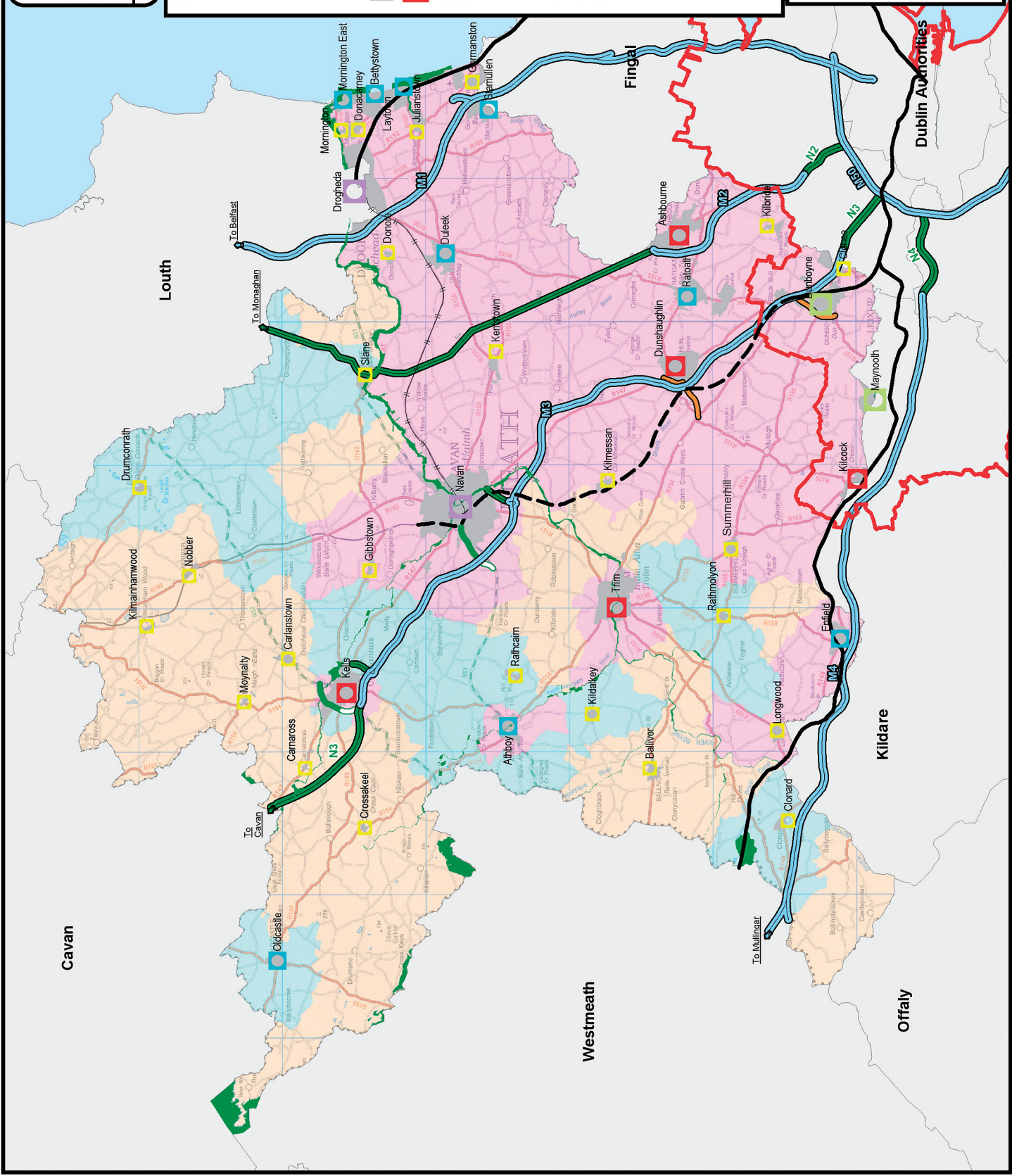
Town/Village Development Area
Metropolitan Area

Neighbouring Local Authorities

- Existing Rail Lines
- Pace - Navan Rail Line
(approved to planning stage)
- Navan - Drogheda Freight Rail Line

Natura 2000 Sites

Rural Area Types
(Refer to CDP 2013-2019 Written Statement)
Strong Urban Influence
Strong Rural Area
Low Development Area











2013-2019

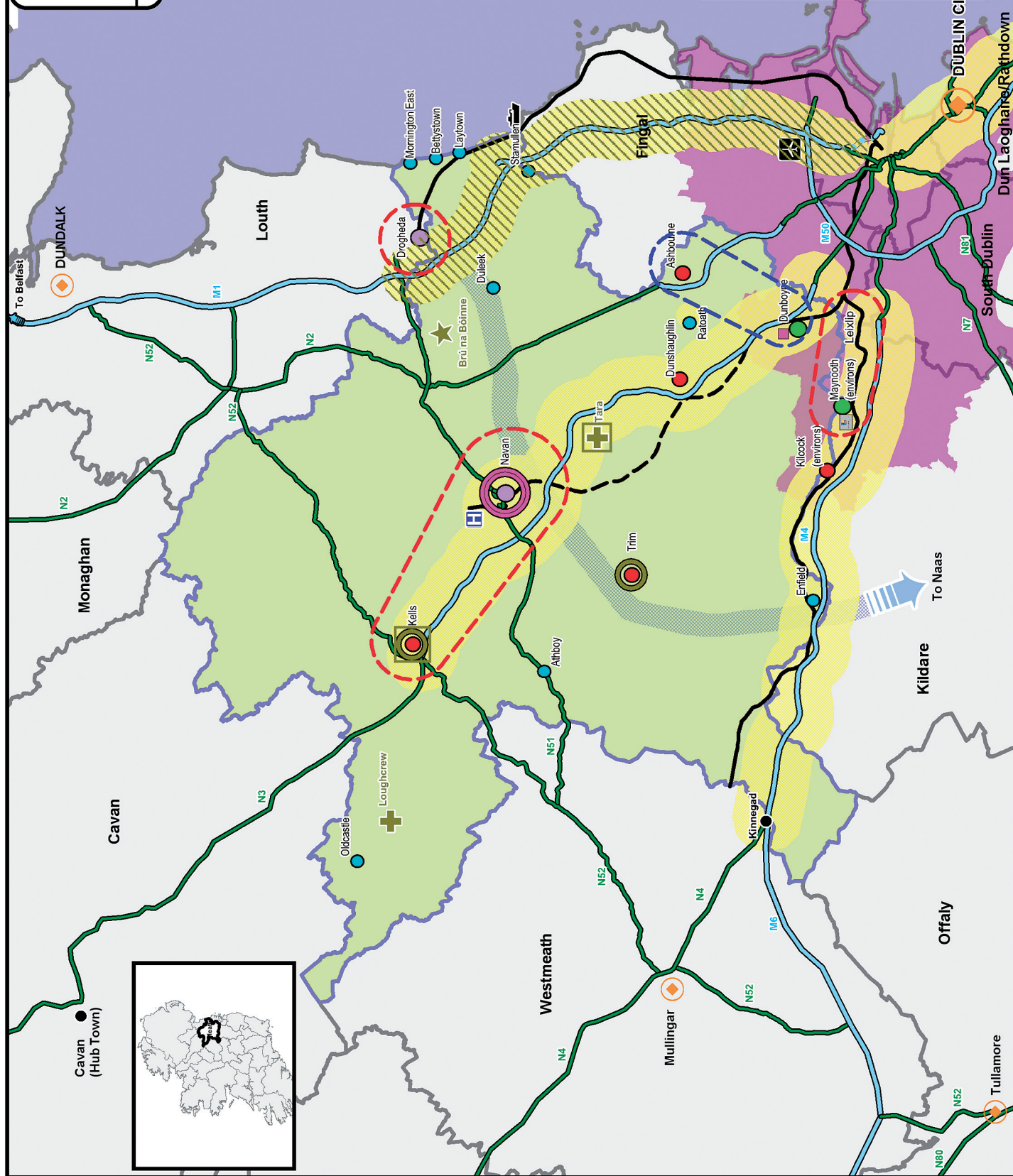
comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council


Date: 17th December 2012
Scale: N.T.S.

LEGEND

- Legend:
- Large Growth Town 1
 - Large Growth Town 2
 - Moderate Sustainable Growth Town
 - Small Town
 - Gateway
 - Gateway Core Economic Area
 - Hinterland Area
 - Multi-Modal Transport Corridors
 - M1 International Corridor
 - National Roads
 - Motorways
 - Port Tunnel
 - Leinster Orbital Route (indicative only as identified in RPG's)
 - Existing Rail lines
 - Pace - Navan Rail Line (approved to planning stage)
 - Primary Economic Growth Area
 - Secondary Economic Growth Area

- | | |
|---|---|
|  | County Town Administrative Capital |
|  | NUI Maynooth |
|  | Preferred location of Regional Hospital
as identified in NEHS study |
|  | World Heritage Site Brú na Bóinne |
|  | Key Heritage Assets |
|  | Heritage Towns |
|  | Potential Future Employment
Strategic Development Zone
(SDZ) Study Area at Dumboyne North |
|  | Tentative World Heritage Sites |



- 
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Background
- 3.3 National and Regional Policy
- 3.4 County Meath Settlement Strategy
- 3.5 The Settlement Hierarchy and Future
Population Growth in Meath
- 3.6 Housing

Settlement Strategy and Housing

Settlement Strategy and Housing

3



Settlement Strategy and Housing

3.1

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to detail the settlement strategy and policy in respect of housing for County Meath over the lifetime of the Development Plan. It is complementary to the aims of the core strategy to create sustainable communities and maximise the potential for creating critical mass of population at strategic locations in Meath which will enhance the economic assets of the county.

The settlement strategy identifies how the various towns and villages in Meath will develop at a broad level and the role for each type of settlement in terms of accommodating social, economic and residential development

over the lifetime of the Plan. Chapter 10 (Rural Development) should be read in tandem with this chapter as it sets out the strategy for development of rural areas including housing policy for such areas.

A Housing Strategy has been prepared for County Meath as part of the preparation of the Development Plan and is included in Appendix 4. The Housing Strategy includes analysis of population projections for Meath and requirements for social and affordable housing in the county. The key findings of the Strategy are reproduced in this chapter and underlie housing policy in this Plan.

3.2

Background

County Meath has experienced significant population growth over the last fifteen years, with the population increasing from 109,732 in 1996 to 184,135 in 2011. This equates to an increase of some 68%. Within the Greater Dublin Area, Meath experienced the second greatest rate of population increase between 2002 and 2011 at 37%.¹ This increase in population has led to Meath comprising an increasing percentage of the population of the GDA. This percentage rose from 8.7% in 2002 to 10.2% in 2011. With Meath occupying an increasingly important component of the population of the GDA, it is vital that the strategic importance of the county to the region is maximised particularly in terms of economic profile.

The rate of inter-censal population change in Meath varied considerably across the county. Figure 3.1 details the change in population in the electoral divisions (EDs) in the county between 2002 and 2011² while table 1 illustrates the EDs with the highest rates of growth between 2006 and 2011. It should be noted that the changes in the EDs of Navan Rural are substantially skewed by the re-drawing of boundaries for Navan town in 2009. Figure 3.2 illustrates the population pyramids for Meath and the State based on the 2011 Census.

Figure 1 illustrates that the largest increases of population growth have occurred in the east and southeast of Meath, with localised

¹ Fingal recorded the highest growth rate at 40%

² It should be noted that these are based on the preliminary results of the 2011 Census. Final results of the 2011 Census at ED level were not available at the time of writing.

strong growth in the southwest. Navan also experienced positive growth. However, generally, the pattern of development has been somewhat diffuse across the county. Table 3.1 illustrates that with the exception of Navan and Ashbourne (Donaghmore ED), no other centres in the upper tiers of the settlement hierarchy (Large Growth Towns or Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns) featured in the centres of largest growth between 2006 and 2011. Having a diffuse population raises challenges in respect of how best to ensure that people have access to vital services. This emphasises the need for a strong network of towns and villages across the county. The

comparison of the population pyramids for Meath and the State in Figure 3.2 shows the youthful nature of the Meath population. A considerably greater proportion of the population is within the 30-44 cohort than in the state as a whole. Furthermore, a similarly greater proportion of Meath's population is aged between 0 to 14 years. The presence of such a young population brings with it the requirement to plan and deliver necessary educational and child facilities. The large proportion of the cohort in the working age bracket emphasises the need to deliver a range of employment opportunities locally in order to build sustainable communities.

Table 3.1 Electoral Divisions in Meath which Recorded Highest Rates of Growth 2006-2011

	2006	2011	% change
Navan Rural (Part Urban)	544	25,017	4,498.7
Newtown	609	885	45.3
Crossakeel	341	466	36.7
Castlerickard	1361	1,849	35.9
Donaghmore	8,408	10,989	30.7
Killaconnigan	1,605	2,098	30.7
Ballinlough	175	223	27.4
Innfield	3,175	4,011	26.3
Kilmessan	1,162	1,436	23.6
Stamullin	3,844	4,683	21.8



Figure 3.1: Population Change in Meath 2002-2011

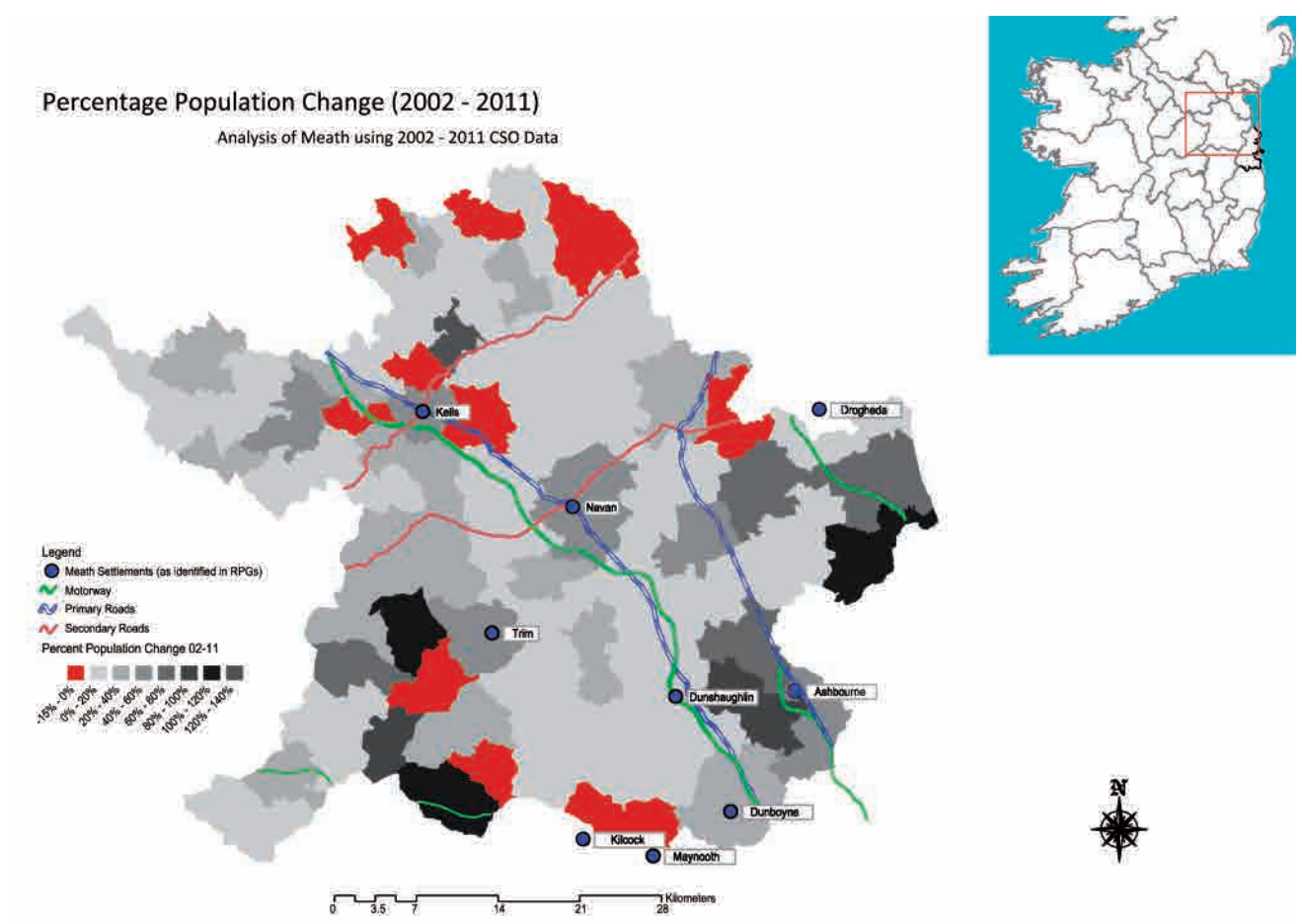
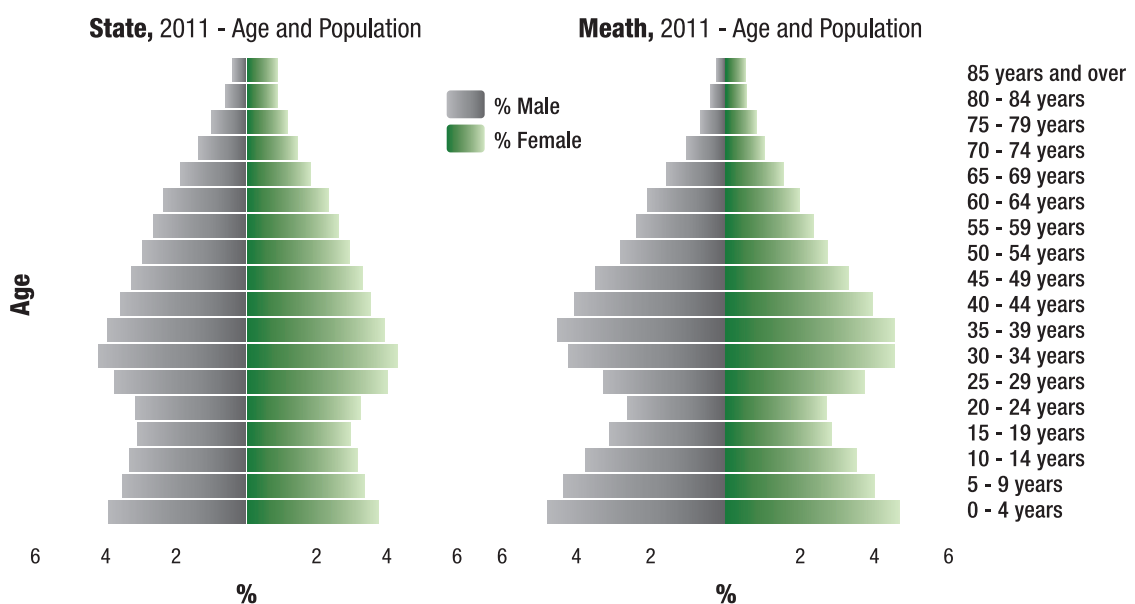


Figure 3.2 Population pyramids for Meath and the State



The overall recent increase in population is to Meath's benefit in being able to count on a youthful and vibrant community as an asset for its future development. It should be noted that the current pattern of growth across the county is not sufficiently aligned with the core strategy settlement hierarchy as set out in this Plan. Consequently, it is considered that there would be benefits in supporting a more targeted form of growth in the urban centres of the county, to achieve a critical mass of population in a single area or across a number of linked centres. It is important that such centres should have the supporting infrastructure in place or plan to cater for the additional growth and that they should be assigned significance in the county

economic strategy to ensure that sustainable communities with local employment opportunities are developed. As the county town and administrative capital, Navan will have a prominent role in this regard supported by other key centres in the county. In addition to this, it is also important to ensure that other centres continue to develop to meet the needs of existing residents. An appropriate allowance should be made for future growth to sustain such centres without compromising the ability of the designated growth towns to achieve critical mass.

The goal of the Development Plan with regards to population and settlement is as follows:

To implement a settlement strategy that will sustain the vitality of local communities in County Meath, supporting the economic development of the county and the sustainable management of the county's natural and built resources.

3.3

National and Regional Policy

While the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 represents the primary local planning policy document in Meath, the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011 have placed the formulation of Development Plans within a national and regional spatial framework. For the purposes of the settlement strategy, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 and the National Spatial Strategy are of particular relevance in considering countywide development patterns and the role of individual towns and villages. In particular, the provisions of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 strengthened the relationship between regional planning guidelines and Development Plans. The Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 is statutorily required to be consistent with the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area.

Broader sustainability issues are also a significant consideration in developing a settlement strategy and policy for housing in Meath. Other documents of particular relevance to this chapter include 'Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Travel Future 2009-2012' (Department of Transport, 2009), the 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009), the 'Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2007) and the National Transport Authority Draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area.

3.4

County Meath Settlement Strategy

A clear strategy for the development of the towns and urban areas in Meath is important for the County to achieve its full economic potential. The towns and other main areas will play an important role in delivering jobs and services to the rural areas around them and to their resident population. County Meath will benefit from a strong urban structure and this Development Plan seeks to deliver that. Table

3.2 outlines the urban settlement hierarchy for County Meath which accords with the regional hierarchy set out in the RPGs. Chapter 10 outlines the settlement policy in respect of the rural areas of the county. (Reference to the European sites (Nature 2000 sites) that occur in each of these towns is made in the Natura Impact Report).

Table 3.2 Settlement Hierarchy for County Meath

Type of Settlement	Centres
Large Growth Town I	Navan, Drogheda Environs
Large Growth Town II	Dunboyne, Maynooth Environs
Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns	Ashbourne, Kells, Trim, Kilcock Environs, Dunshaughlin ³
Small Towns	Athboy, Bettystown/Laytown/Mornington East, Duleek, Enfield, Oldcastle, Ratoath, Stamullen
Villages	Ballivor, Carlanstown, Carnaross, Clonard, Clonee, Crossakiel, Donore, Drumconrath, Gibbstown, Gormonston, Julianstown, Kentstown, Kilbride, Kildalkey, Kilmainhamwood, Kilmessan, Longwood, Mornington/Donacarney, Moynalty, Nobber, Rathcairn, Rathmolyon, Slane, Summerhill

County Meath can be categorised according to the two sub-regions identified in the RPGs: the Metropolitan Area and the Hinterland Areas. These are illustrated in Figure 3.3. The Metropolitan Area of Meath consists of the EDs of Rodanstown and Dunboyne. In this Development Plan, the focus for the development of the Metropolitan Area is the consolidation of settlements and the promotion of development which facilitates the integration of land use and transport. The priority for rural parts of the Metropolitan Area is primarily for agricultural, horticultural and equestrian use or as amenity facilities. Applications for rural housing will be assessed according to the policies set out in Chapter 10 Rural Development. Policy for rural nodes (termed

Graigs in this Development Plan) is also set out in Chapter 10.

The vast majority of Meath is located in the Hinterland Area. For this area, the large towns shall absorb most of the new population growth and will continue to act as major service centres for adjoining towns and the surrounding rural area. All other towns and villages should grow at a sustainable and self sustaining scale. The role of the rural area as a key resource for the county is vital and agricultural and amenity lands should be carefully managed to ensure that their primary use is protected from encroachment, fragmentation and urban driven development.

³ As stated in the RPGs, Dunshaughlin will become a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town following the granting of permission of a railway order for the Navan Rail Line Phase II, including a station at Dunshaughlin.

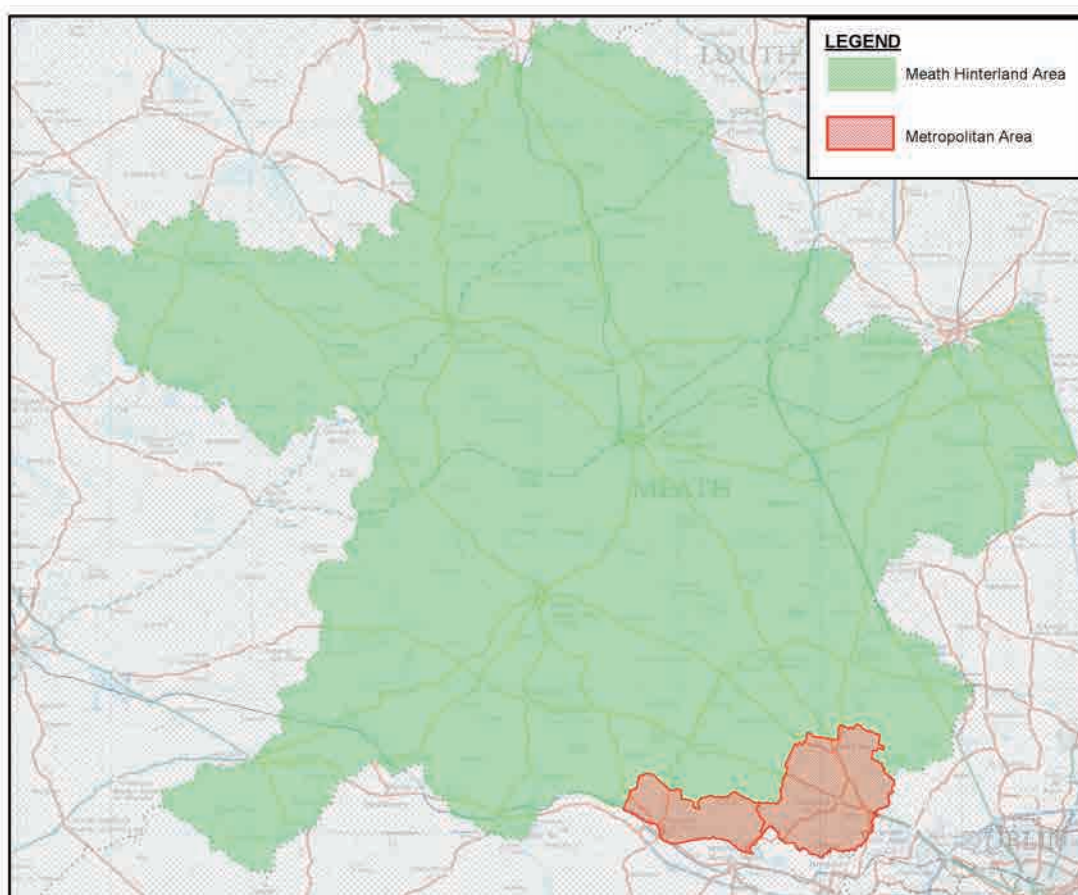


Figure 3.3 Metropolitan and Hinterland Areas of Meath

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

SS OBJ 1	To secure the sustainable development of County Meath in accordance with the settlement hierarchy set out in Table 3.2. In doing so, development will be primarily directed towards the identified Large Growth Towns. In towns and villages, development will facilitate in the first instance, the consolidation of settlements and the integration of land use and transport. The expansion of urban areas where it is necessary to facilitate growth as set out in the Development Plan shall promote mixed use development and be guided by the sequential approach to create a compact urban form and facilitate sustainable modes of transport.
SS OBJ 2	To ensure that throughout the county, growth takes place concurrent with the provision of necessary services and infrastructure, including water services. Planning permission shall only be granted where the Planning Authority is satisfied that there is adequate capacity available to serve development.

SS OBJ 3	To seek the consolidation of development within the existing built up footprint of urban centres in the Metropolitan Area of County Meath to achieve a more compact urban form and secure the use of rural areas for agricultural, horticultural and equestrian farmlands and amenity facilities, subject to the requirements of ED POL 13.
SS OBJ 4	To focus development on the high quality integrated growth and consolidation of the identified Large Growth Towns enabling them to act as key employment and service centres in the county, to ensure that all other towns develop at a sustainable rate to facilitate self sustaining expansion and to protect agricultural and amenity lands for their primary purpose.
SS OBJ 5	To encourage the development of compact urban forms by consolidating existing development boundaries and utilising brownfield sites in preference to expanding urban areas into the countryside and adjoining settlements.
SS OBJ 6	To have regard to capacity in social infrastructure, when assessing applications for residential development. Planning applications for 200 or more dwelling units must be accompanied by a report identifying the demand for school places likely to be generated by the proposal and the capacity of existing schools in the vicinity to cater for such demand and an audit of the social infrastructure and community facilities available to serve the proposed development.

The following sections articulate the roles and functions envisaged for the tiers of the Meath settlement hierarchy, elaborated upon as necessary for individual towns.

3.4.1 Large Growth Towns

Large Growth Towns are to accommodate significant new investment in transport, in economic and commercial activity and in housing. These towns will act as important self sustaining regional economic drivers for the GDA, capitalising on their international connectivity and high quality connections to Dublin City, whilst also supporting and servicing a wider local economy. They are important centres for delivery of public services, with hospitals, Courts, Local Authority and Civil

Service offices located within the towns; alongside IDA promoted companies, high order retail businesses, supported enterprise centres and active Chambers of Commerce providing a strong commercial hub within the town and environs.

The category of Large Growth Town makes a distinction between Large Growth Towns I and Large Growth Towns II. This distinction recognises the smaller population base and lesser range of facilities provided in Large Growth Towns II.

The approach to Large Growth Towns in this Development Plan is consistent with that set out in the RPGs.

OBJECTIVE

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

SS OBJ 7

To ensure that all of the Large Growth Towns will, in so far as practicable, be self sufficient incorporating employment activities, sufficient retail services and social and community facilities.

3.4.2 Large Growth Town I – Navan and Drogheda Environs

The Large Growth Towns I in Meath represent key destinations in the GDA. The policy of the Development Plan is to promote them as economically active towns supporting the surrounding area and maximising their location on multi modal corridors. Consistent with this approach, and in line with the policy of the RPG's, Meath County Council is identifying the Large Growth Towns I of Navan and the Drogheda Environs as the primary growth centres in County Meath. The functions of these towns are to include acting as regional economic drivers in the GDA whilst also supporting and servicing a wider local economy. They will accommodate significant new investment in transport, in economic and commercial activity and in housing. Planning for Navan and Drogheda Environs should take cognisance of accommodating an ultimate population of 50,000 persons in those towns. This is critical as it will contribute to achieving critical mass in these centres. The household allocations set out in the core strategy emphasised the importance of this, particularly

in respect of Navan whose significance is represented in the unit allocation made to the town.

Navan and Drogheda have also been assigned significant economic status in the economic strategy of the Development Plan, benefitting their identification in the RPGs as primary economic growth towns. The towns are to be the main centres of economic activity in Meath and should embody the dynamism of the GDA economy.

The development of the economic role assigned to these towns is considered crucial as the basis for their future growth should not be as dormitory towns for the Metropolitan Area of the GDA.

Large Growth Towns I will become, in the longer term, self sustaining and must grow in a manner which supports this goal without threatening the role of other settlements and regions. In particular, development should allow for the integration of land use and transport and the holistic and balanced expansion of the towns.

OBJECTIVE

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

SS OBJ 8

To develop Navan and the Drogheda Environs as the primary development centres in Meath and to ensure that the settlements grow in a manner that is balanced, self sufficient and supports a compact urban form and the integration of land use and transport.

3.4.3 Large Growth Town II – Dunboyne and Maynooth Environs

In Meath, the Large Growth Towns II are smaller in scale than Large Growth Towns

I but remain strong active growth towns, economically vibrant with high quality transport

links to larger towns/city. Although smaller in scale, they are nonetheless significant because of their connectivity within the GDA region.

As a key Metropolitan Area settlement, Dunboyne will have a similar role in the settlement hierarchy to Navan and Drogheda. Like the Large Growth Towns I, it will be a key growth centre in the County and encompass regional economic activity and local service provision. However, growth should be planned for a population in the order of 15,000 – 30,000 persons and it is important that new services and facilities should be provided as the town expands.

Dunboyne also has a strong economic function, albeit different to Navan and Drogheda. Dunboyne has been identified as a secondary economic growth town in the Development Plan economic strategy (linked with Ashbourne). These towns have a complementary and supporting role to Navan and Drogheda as the primary economic centres

in the county. It is desirable to strengthen the connections between the towns of Dunboyne and Ashbourne, both physical and in terms of achieving more integrated planning and joint strategising to maximise the potential afforded by the linked centre status (see Map 6.1 for information on potential transport links between the two towns).

The Ashbourne/Dunboyne economic growth area experiences high levels of outward commuting to Dublin, and it is important that economic stimuli measures are underpinned by necessary supporting infrastructure investment, particularly in relation to water and waste water services.

Maynooth is also designated as a Large Growth Town II. The environs of the town are located in County Meath and their development in an appropriate manner will be important in ensuring the overall sustainable development of Maynooth.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

SS OBJ 9	To ensure that Dunboyne develops as a key settlement centre in the Metropolitan Area of the Greater Dublin Area and to ensure that the settlement grows in a manner that is balanced, self sufficient and supports a compact urban form and the integration of land use and transport.
SS OBJ 10	To ensure that development of the Maynooth Environs contributes to the sustainable development of the town, in a manner that is balanced, self sufficient and supports a compact urban form and the integration of land use and transport.

3.4.4 Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns – Kells, Trim, Ashbourne, Kilcock Environs and Dunshaughlin⁴

All of the Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns should develop in a self-sufficient manner and levels of growth should be balanced to ensure that any increase in population will be

in tandem with employment opportunities, capacity in physical and social infrastructure and will not be based on long distance commuting. Economic development and service provision in these towns will be an important factor in determining the appropriateness of new housing. These towns need to provide a full range of services adequate to meet local needs,

⁴ As stated in the RPGs, Dunshaughlin will become a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town following the granting of permission of a railway order for the Navan Rail Line Phase II, including a station at Dunshaughlin.

both within the town and in the surrounding rural catchment area, but not generate long distance travel patterns.

Economic opportunities through good road connections, good social infrastructure and a strong local labour market should be capitalised on to attract a range of enterprises. The levels of economic activity are sufficient to service the local population. Both Kells and Ashbourne are designated as secondary economic towns in the economic strategy in this Plan as well as in the RPGs, linked with Navan and Dunboyne respectively and the expansion of employment and economic development in these towns should be consistent with this role. Trim also plays an interacting supporting economic role with Navan.

The South Meath area experiences significant outward commuting and it is important that the employment and enterprise sectors in the linked centres of Ashbourne and Dunboyne expand to reduce long distance commuting in line with the economic strategy outlined in Chapter 4.

Tourism is also a major force for development in Trim and Kells. The designation and marketing of Meath as the Heritage Capital of Ireland has been successful and is dependent on

maintaining the intrinsic character of important built settlements such as Kells and Trim. It is imperative that the market town character of Kells and Trim is respected and maintained and that development should be consistent with the character of the towns.

The Meath County Development Plan 2007–2013 identified the potential for Dunshaughlin to achieve the role of Moderate Sustainable Growth Town. This has been recognised in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010 which state that the town will be classified as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town following the granting of permission for a railway order for Phase II of the Navan Rail Line, including a station at the town. Until such time as the railway order for Phase II is approved, Meath County Council considers that the town must develop in a manner consistent with that of a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town, i.e. focusing on self-sustaining, integrated and compact development.

This Development Plan seeks the development of the Kilcock environs on a balanced and sustainable basis whereby residential development is matched by the delivery of key physical and social infrastructure and a strong economic base in the town.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

SS OBJ 11

To ensure that Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns develop in a self sufficient manner with population growth occurring in tandem with physical and social infrastructure and economic development. Development should support a compact urban form and the integration of land use and transport.

3.4.5 Small Towns – Athboy, Bettystown/Laytown/Mornington East, Duleek, Enfield, Oldcastle, Ratoath, Stamullen

The Small Towns in Meath have varying characteristics and differences can be seen in the factors that have influenced their growth. This is recognised in the RPGs. The

types of Small Town present in Meath include local commuter type towns situated close to larger centres and small commercial towns, remote from the Dublin commuter areas that have strong trading tradition serving a large rural hinterland. Oldcastle and Athboy are representative of this type of settlement. They have developed on a local, independent and economically active basis under the influence

of large towns in Meath. Meath County Council will continue to encourage them to develop in this manner. Oldcastle in particular has a strong indigenous industrial base. While the town is peripheral in Meath, it is strongly influential in its wider area of influence which extends into Cavan and Westmeath.

Within Meath, other Small Towns such as Ratoath, Stamullen and Bettystown/Laytown/Mornington East have developed mainly on the basis of dormitory towns and are facilitating commuting primarily to Dublin. The East Meath town of Stamullen has seen its location close to the M1 and within easy reach of Dublin as a major force for development in recent years.

The pattern of commuter lead development in these towns must be limited in the future, with Small Towns catering for a greater proportion of local growth. This takes cognisance of the fact that none of the Small Towns are designated in the RPGs as being strategic centres and it will allow for a period of consolidation of local facilities and infrastructure to serve the local population, facilitating more sustainable communities as envisaged in the core strategy of this Development Plan. The distribution of household growth at the level of Small Town must therefore be appropriate to this level of the hierarchy and ensure that further commuter development will not be encouraged.

Duleek has experienced growth related to commuter development in the past but has also seen an expansion of industrial use in the business park in the town. This expansion should be encouraged to provide a greater proportion of employment locally, consistent with the role of the Small Town.

Enfield has an advantageous location along the M4 and benefits from multi modal transport linkages with the town being served by a rail line. In this respect, car parking facilities at the railway station have been extended in recent years. Opportunities to maximise the use of public transport infrastructure in the town should be taken and a greater integration of land use and transport should be promoted.

However, this must be managed to ensure that the town develops in a balanced manner, providing employment locally rather than creating a dependence on outward commuting for employment, even by public transport.

Ratoath has experienced substantial growth in recent years which has placed significant pressure for infrastructure and service provision. Growth in local employment and services has not matched the growth in population. In the short term, the priority is to encourage a more balanced town to develop with the expansion of social infrastructure and promotion of local employment opportunities. Ratoath has been included in the RPG's as an employment base because of its educated workforce.

The broad approach of the Development Plan for Small Towns is to manage growth in line with the ability of local services to cater for growth and respond to local demand. Relatively small and locally financed businesses are expected to locate in Small Towns. However, other economic investment opportunities should be considered and supported where sustainable and in keeping with the size and services of the town. Retail is likely to be mainly in the convenience category, with a small supermarket and possible local centres serving only the town and its local catchment area.



In line with the guidance contained in the 'Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009), within all Small Towns no one proposal for residential development should increase the existing housing stock (including permitted units) generally by more than 15% within the lifetime of the Development Plan.

The Meath County Development Plan 2007–2013 contained an objective requiring that 25% of all new multi-house development in Small Towns should be reserved for persons who are native to the County. This objective is not included in this Plan. Instead, the approach to ensuring that population growth in Small Towns caters for locally derived growth is through the means of apportioning an appropriate household allocation to each town, as set out in the core strategy.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

SS OBJ 12	To ensure that Small Towns develop to cater for locally generated development and that growth occurs in tandem with local services, infrastructure and demand.
SS OBJ 13	To ensure that Small Towns grow in a manner that is balanced, self sustaining and supports a compact urban form and the integration of land use and transport.
SS OBJ 14	To ensure that in Small Towns, no proposal for residential development should increase the existing housing stock (including permitted units) of the town by more than 15% within the lifetime of the Development Plan.

3.4.6 Villages – Ballivor, Carlanstown, Carnaross, Clonee, Clonard, Crossakiel, Donore, Drumconrath, Gibbstown, Gormonston, Julianstown, Kentstown, Kilbride, Kildalkey, Kilmainhamwood, Kilmessan, Longwood, Mornington/Donacarne, Moynalty, Nobber, Rathcairn, Rathmolyon, Slane, Summerhill

Settlements within the category of village generally have a population of up to 1,000 people. The centres identified as Villages in Meath serve a smaller rural catchment area than the towns at the upper tiers of the hierarchy, and provide important local services, with some smaller scale rural enterprises in a number of the villages. Over the lifetime of this Plan, the level of growth in Villages must be managed so that they cater for local need and do not expand rapidly, putting pressure on

services and the environment and creating the potential for higher levels of commuting.

The development of the Villages will serve to concentrate population, services and jobs in locations which have relatively good access from nearby towns. The concentration of population will strengthen the viability of services, such as public transport, secondary and/or national schools, retail and the facilitation and expansion of small rural enterprise thus creating sustainable communities in these centres. This approach is consistent with that of the RPGs. All of these settlements are intended to act as centres for distinctive quality driven residential development. All forms of development (i.e. residential, commercial etc.) should be in keeping with the character of the village in question. This is considered vital to protecting the heritage of the county. A number of Villages are notable for their built heritage e.g. Slane, Moynalty, Longwood, Summerhill. Maintaining the quality of the urban

environment is key to protect this heritage and maximise its potential for tourism.

There are two broad sub-types of Villages that can be observed in Meath - commuter villages and key villages. Commuter villages tend to be located close to Dublin or close to major routes to the City or other major growth towns. The nature of development to date reflects their status and many have experienced the pressures of sudden growth. The future growth of these villages should be curtailed or safeguarded so that they do not act as catalyst to facilitate continuing expansion of unsustainable growth patterns. The villages within South and East Meath and along transport corridors to Dublin and other major towns are typical of this type of settlement, e.g. Mornington/Donacarney, Donore, Julianstown, Clonard, Kentstown.

Key villages tend to be located more remotely from major towns or centres and play a key local role for services for the local rural and adjoining village populations. In effect, they operate as rural service centres; a vital role to sustain rural communities. Many villages in the North and West of Meath e.g. Carlanstown, Rathcairn, Gibbstown are typical of this form. The future development of such villages as a key local centre for services and local enterprise development will be supported and growth beyond that which caters for local need or which would create unsustainable commuting patterns will not be considered appropriate.

The Meath County Development Plan 2007–2013 as adopted, classified Dunboyne and

Clonee as a single settlement for the purposes of the settlement hierarchy and population and household distribution. A joint LAP was prepared in 2009 for Dunboyne, Clonee and Pace. For the purposes of this Development Plan, a distinction will be made between Clonee and Dunboyne/ North Dunboyne (Pace). This will allow for a more targeted approach to household distribution in the area, taking into account that Dunboyne is now served by a rail line and that development should secure the expansion of Dunboyne in an integrated manner that will maximise the benefit from this infrastructure and promote public transport usage.

In line with the guidance contained in the 'Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009), within all Villages no one proposal for residential development should increase the existing housing stock (including permitted units) generally by more than 15% within the lifetime of the Development Plan.

The Meath County Development Plan 2007–2013 contained an objective requiring that 30% of all new multi-house development in Villages should be reserved for persons who are native to the County. This objective is not included in this Plan. Instead, the approach to ensuring that population growth in Villages caters for locally derived growth is through the means of apportioning an appropriate household allocation to each village, as set out in the core strategy.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

SS OBJ 15	To ensure that Villages in Meath cater for a local catchment for service provision. Future population growth in Villages shall be managed to ensure that they do not lead to unsustainable commuting patterns.
SS OBJ 16	To ensure that Villages grow in a manner that is balanced, self sustaining and supports a compact urban form and the integration of land use and transport.

SS OBJ 17

To ensure that in Villages no proposal for residential development should increase the existing housing stock (including permitted units) of the village by more than 15% within the lifetime of the Development Plan.

3.5**The Settlement Hierarchy and Future Population Growth in Meath**

The core strategy has set out the distribution of population growth for the County over the lifetime of the Plan which is complementary to this settlement hierarchy.

The status of Large Growth Towns at the top of the hierarchy has been reinforced with the direction of a significant proportion of population growth. In particular, the role of Navan as the primary growth centre of the County and the need to achieve critical mass in the town to enhance its economic profile is supported. Dunboyne is the only Large Growth Town in the Metropolitan Area of Dublin which is located entirely in Meath. It has a significant role in the economic strategy and benefits from recent investment in public transport facilities. The potential to expand the town based upon the integration of land use and transport is a major opportunity. The direction of population to Dunboyne in the core strategy aims to build on this and support the role for the town envisaged in this settlement hierarchy.

The Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns are to continue to expand on a balanced basis. Ashbourne has seen the strongest growth in its economic sector in recent years, with the construction of the new town centre area and expansion of industrial estates. Therefore it has

received the highest allocation of the Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns. The allocations to the other towns at this level will enable them to continue to expand but at a rate that makes allowances for the need to increase services as such towns grow.

The level of growth envisaged in various Small Towns reinforces the sentiments of the settlement strategy. Centres which have expanded on the basis of commuter development are not the focus for significant levels of new housing in the core strategy e.g. Laytown/Bettystown/Mornington East and Stamullen. Towns which have developed on a more local, sustainable basis will be encouraged to continue developing in this manner and are considered to have greater scope to accommodate additional population e.g. Athboy and Oldcastle.

The level of growth directed to Villages has been managed to allow those centres which have experienced significant commuter led development to consolidate and to focus on sectors which have not expanded at the same rate as housing e.g. social facilities, thereby facilitating the development of more balanced and sustainable communities.

3.6**Housing****3.6.1 Introduction**

This section of the Settlement Strategy and Housing Chapter sets out the policies and objectives for the provision of housing and creating sustainable communities, to transform areas within County Meath into active and

vibrant communities for the existing and future population of Meath.

The Housing Strategy included in Appendix 4 is underpinned by all national policies and legislation and is applicable for the same timeframe as the Development Plan. It is in

accordance with the core strategy and the settlement strategy set out in the Development Plan. The main findings of the Housing Strategy are set out in Sections 3.6.2 – 3.6.5 below.

3.6.2 Housing Strategy Vision and Aim

The Housing Strategy is guided by the following vision:

“To facilitate and promote a robust and sustainable housing strategy that plans and provides for the housing needs of all citizens, thereby promoting equality, social inclusion and ensuring the delivery of quality outcomes for the resources invested”

The overall aim of housing policy is to enable every household to have available an affordable dwelling of good design, suited to its needs, in a quality environment and, as far as practicable, at the tenure of its choice. This also refers to households with specific needs, e.g. older people or those who have a disability, either physical or intellectual. The Housing Strategy acknowledges the need to meet the housing requirements of those who are homeless and to provide suitable accommodation for travellers who are indigenous to the area. The Housing Strategy intends that those who can afford to do so should provide housing for themselves through the range of options available to them, and those unable to do so should have access to social housing/ accommodation provided by Meath County

Council. There are 5 principal options open to Local Authorities to deal with the demand for, and delivery of, social housing:

1. Provision of Social Housing under Part V of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011;
2. Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), Leasing Initiatives and Housing Assistance Payment;
3. Provision of Social Housing in partnership with Voluntary Bodies and Housing Co-operatives;
4. Casual Vacancies;
5. Purchase of New or Second Hand Dwellings.

Current Government policy indicates that the administration of rental supplement will transfer to local authorities in 2012. This may add to the existing options available to authorities.

3.6.3 Housing Affordability

The Housing Strategy analysed anticipated social and affordable housing needs for the county. The social and affordable housing needs are based on an analysis of average household disposable income levels together with the approximate affordable house prices and the additional required households. Table 3.3 reproduces the findings.

Overall, the annual social and affordable requirement percentage for the period 2012–2022 ranges from 15.37% - 16.68% and the average requirement is 16%.

Table 3.3 Social & Affordable Housing Requirements 2012–2022

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
New Household Formations	1,821	1,931	2,006	2,066	2,206	2,389	2,457	2,558	2,665	2,778	2,884
Social and Affordable Housing Requirement	317	322	324	328	345	369	377	393	409	429	448
Housing Shortfall as a % of Total Households Required	17.41%	16.68%	16.17%	15.90%	15.63%	15.45%	15.37%	15.37%	15.37%	15.45%	15.54%

3.6.4 Planning Permissions & Part V of the Planning & Development Acts, 2000–2011

Section 96 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011 provides that the objectives of the Housing Strategy in relation to social and affordable housing shall be implemented by means of conditions attached to planning permissions for residential development.

The Council will require a 16% quota of social/affordable housing to be provided from each housing development within the County, on lands zoned for residential use or for mixture of residential and other uses. This is based on the calculation of social and affordable housing requirements. This requirement will be included as a condition of development, with the exception of an application for development of 4 or less houses, or for housing on land of 0.1 hectares or less as provided for under the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011. Therefore, all residential developments in excess of 4 housing units or any proposed site for residential development in excess of 0.1 hectares is to be subject to the provision of “Social/Affordable” Housing.

3.6.5 Methods of Providing Affordable/Social Housing

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government has announced that a review of Part V is now underway (Circular Letter Housing 11/2012 issued 29th February 2012). The review is being carried out by the Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency and has been charged with considering how planning gain can still be captured while taking account of prevailing market conditions.

The Circular Letter advises that pending the outcome of the review, authorities should negotiate agreements in which Part V obligations are discharged through mechanisms that place no additional funding pressures on authorities.

Consequently, the requirement under Part V of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011 for Social/Affordable housing in developments may be met by the following methods or by a combination thereof at the discretion of the Planning Authority:

- (a) Financial contribution (as provided for under section 96(3)(b)(vi) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2011);
- (b) Direct provision of the housing units on completion as determined in accordance with the Strategy, integrated as part of the overall development of a site;
- (c) The transfer of a portion of the site which is the subject of the planning application to the Council which will enable the Council to provide the appropriate number of units thereon in satisfaction of the requirements of the Housing Strategy or the disposal of a number of fully or partially serviced sites within the site to the Council which will enable the Council to provide the appropriate number of units thereon in satisfaction of the requirements of the Housing Strategy or the transfer to the planning authority of the ownership of any other land within the functional area of the planning authority.

The Council will, in reaching agreements under Section 96 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011, have due regard to the Housing Strategy and the Development Plan objectives.

It is imperative that the requirements of social and affordable housing are met in a manner which satisfies existing and potential demand in each centre. Meath County Council will use the provisions of Part V of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011 to satisfy the social housing needs in known areas of need. The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government circular letter Housing 11/2012 acknowledges the continued rationale for capturing planning gain for residential development through the resourcing of social housing supports and Meath County Council intends to implement Part V in this context. The ratio of social to affordable houses to be

provided shall be assessed on a case by case basis, having regard to local housing needs, but at all times the 16% requirement shall be met. In so far as it is known at the time of the agreement, the Council will indicate to the developer its intentions in relation to the provision of social/affordable housing. This will include a description of the proposed houses, on the land or sites to be transferred, where such lands form part or parts of the lands which are subject to the application for permission as is, or are specified by the agreement as being parts required to be reserved for the provision of housing.

The Council, in making such agreements, will have regard to:

- The Development Plan, in particular the core strategy and settlement strategy, and any relevant Local Area Plan;
- The need to ensure the overall coherence of the development to which the planning application relates;
- The views of the developer in relation to the impact of the agreement on the proposed development;
- The need for social integration, and;
- The needs and obligations of Meath County Council in respect of housing.

Meath County Council will encourage housing developers to whom the 16% quota will apply to discuss the likely terms of the Part V agreements as part of pre planning consultations. Both the Council and the developer shall thus have a common understanding of the nature of the likely agreement before a decision to grant planning permission is made. Meath County Council will endeavour to finalise the agreement within two months at the latest following the grant of permission. All social housing provided under Part V of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011, in accordance with this strategy shall be allocated to persons on the waiting list for that allocation area in accordance with the Council's Allocation Scheme for the Provision of Social Housing Support. All Affordable housing provided under Part V of the Act in accordance with the terms of this Housing Strategy shall be allocated in accordance with the Allocations

Scheme for affordable housing as adopted by the Council.

3.6.6 Design of Residential Development

The primary aim of the Planning Authority in relation to residential development is to deliver high quality living environments to serve the needs of residents. Residential schemes should deliver a range of housing units which vary in size, type and tenure, within an overall scheme design, to accommodate a broad population profile including single person households, couples, households with children, older people and people with a disability.

Housing developments should generally be designed with the aim of creating walkable neighbourhoods which facilitate as a priority travel for pedestrians and cyclists. Footpaths and cycleways should represent the most direct means of transport around and into a development. The landscaping of large areas of public open space in particular should include traversing paths, which follow pedestrian desire lines. Layouts should be conducive to designing efficient routes for public transport.

Access roads should be designed with the aim of creating streets and with a priority for pedestrians and cyclists. Traffic calming measures should be designed into the road layout rather than by add-on measures such as speed ramps. All roads, footpaths and cycleways should be overlooked by houses.

Open space for amenity purposes is a key component in residential schemes, contributing towards the recreational requirements of residents and enhancing the quality of the environment. On all residentially zoned lands, no residential development shall be permitted on lands that are the subject of a deed of dedication or identified in a planning application as open space to ensure the availability of community and recreational facilities for the residents of the area. The taking in charge of residential developments should include the transfer of open space land to the ownership of the local authority.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:


HS POL 1	To encourage and foster the creation of attractive mixed use sustainable communities which contain a variety of housing types and tenures with supporting community facilities, public realm and residential amenities.
HS POL 2	To require a high standard of design in all new residential schemes that are built in a style and scale that is appropriate to the landscape setting.
HS POL 3	To integrate new housing into the existing social and urban fabric of the County's settlements detailed in Table 3.2.
HS POL 4	To promote energy efficiency both during the construction phase and during the lifetime of residential development by sensitive design and layout taking into account topography, orientation and surrounding features.
HS POL 5	To recognise the need for people with special needs to enjoy a decent living environment in the County and to support local communities, health authorities and other agencies involved in the provision of facilities to people with special needs including supporting the voluntary sector in the development of housing for people with special needs.
HS POL 6	To support the concept of independent living for older people and people with disabilities and ensure where possible that housing for such groups is integrated with mainstream housing in their existing communities. Such housing shall generally be located close to existing or committed community and convenience retail facilities, where possible.
HS POL 7	To pay special attention to the needs of older people on low incomes in substandard, privately rented accommodation when planning and allocating accommodation for older people.
HS POL 8	To support proposals for day/resource centres for people with special needs within, or close to, town, village and neighbourhood centres, subject to normal planning requirements.
HS POL 9	To ensure that all new housing is designed in a way that is adaptable and flexible to the changing needs of the homeowner, with regard to the Lifetime Homes guidance contained in Section 5.2 of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities'(2007).

HS POL 10	To support a sequential approach to residential development in which the first choice location for new housing is within the built up area of towns and villages maximising under-utilised and brownfield lands within and adjoining town and village centres in the first instance and thereafter moving sequentially outwards.
HS POL 11	To facilitate consultation with approved Voluntary and Co-operative housing associations through the life of the Development Plan in order to identify and agree opportunities for their participation in the provision of the suite of social housing delivery options.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

HS OBJ 1	To require that developers comply with the Housing Strategy.
HS OBJ 2	<p>To require that developers comply with Part V of the Planning and Development Act through the following options or by a combination thereof at the discretion of Meath County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Financial contribution (as provided for under section 96(3)(b)(vi) of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011); (b) Direct provision of the housing units on completion as determined in accordance with the Strategy, integrated as part of the overall development of a site; (c) The transfer of a portion of the site which is the subject of the planning application to the Council which will enable the Council to provide the appropriate number of units thereon in satisfaction of the requirements of the Housing Strategy or the disposal of a number of fully or partially serviced sites within the site to the Council which will enable the Council to provide the appropriate number of units thereon in satisfaction of the requirements of the Housing Strategy or the transfer to the planning authority of the ownership of any other land within the functional area of Meath County Council.
HS OBJ 3	To provide appropriate accommodation for Travellers through the implementation of the “Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009 - 2013” and any subsequent Programme adopted during the life of this Development Plan.
HS OBJ 4	To implement the Meath County Council’s housing programme.
HS OBJ 5	To review the Housing Strategy two years after the adoption of the Development Plan and, following such review, if required, to review the reservation policy outlined in this Strategy inclusive of the breakdown of social and affordable housing units for different urban centres.

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- 4.1 Economic Development Strategy
 - 4.2 Quantum of Available Zoned
Employment Generating Land
 - 4.3 Employment Sectors
 - 4.4 Rural Areas
 - 4.5 Retail
 - 4.6 Tourism
 - 4.7 Prevention of Major Accidents

Economic Development Strategy

Economic Development Strategy

4



Economic Development Strategy

4.1

Economic Development Strategy

The promotion of economic development in general, and industry and enterprise in particular, depends heavily on the policies, objectives and guidelines set out in other Sections of this Development Plan. The promotion of economic development requires a multi-pronged approach, the key components of which are:

- Identifying key settlements for focused residential and economic growth;
- Providing and facilitating the provision of requisite physical infrastructure;
- Reserving sufficient land in suitable locations for industry and enterprise uses;
- Availability of high-speed telecommunications;
- Availability of clean and reliable sources of energy;
- Promoting and facilitating appropriate educational/training measures to ensure a suitably skilled local workforce;
- Encouraging research and development linkages between industry/business and proximate third-level institutions;
- Forging mutually-beneficial linkages and partnerships;

- Securing high standards of landscape and environmental protection/enhancement;
- Ensuring that towns and villages remain attractive to investment, and;
- Offering a good quality of life to those who live and work in the County.

County Meath has an unparalleled and unique competitive advantage within Ireland, due to its:

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

These advantages offer distinctive economic and commercial investment opportunities.

GOAL

To build on and enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of County Meath in order to make it one of Ireland's prime locations for indigenous and foreign economic and employment generating investment.

This Economic Development Strategy seeks to ensure that the potential of County Meath is maximised and that the county becomes a key driver within the Greater Dublin Area. This will greatly assist the achievement of balanced

development within the wider region.

The spatial dimension to the Economic Strategy supports the growth of the National Gateway and Primary Economic Growth Towns in the

Hinterland linked by multi-modal corridors and focused on identified Core Economic Areas. The stated centres are:

- The Navan Core Economic Area, which includes Navan as a Primary Economic Growth Town and Kells as a Secondary Economic Growth Town.
- The Drogheda Core Economic Area located in the administrative area of Meath;
- Secondary Economic Growth Towns of Ashbourne / Dunboyne; and;
- The Environs of Maynooth & Kilcock located in the administrative area of Meath (in addition to Dunboyne / Pace and Clonee) are included in the Gateway Core Economic Area. Maynooth and Leixlip are identified as a Core Economic Area with the towns of Kilcock and Celbridge providing a supporting role.

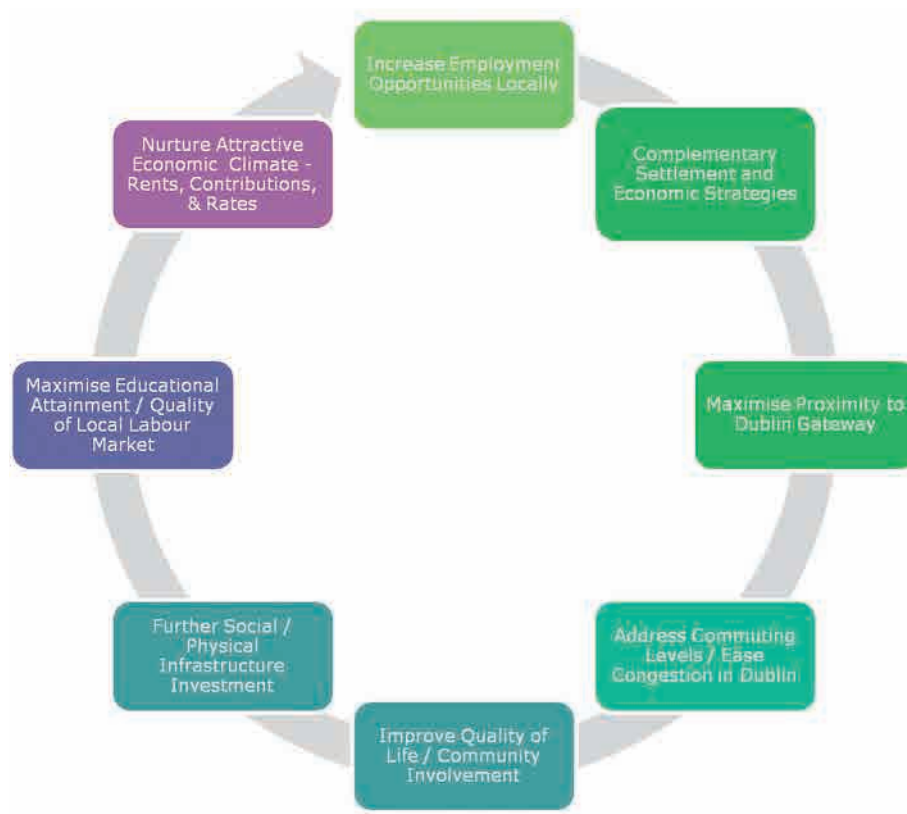


Figure 4.1: Making Mid East Region a Critical Engine for Growth

The Economic Development Strategy will provide for the potential of County Meath to be maximised and for the county to become a key driver within the economy of the Greater Dublin Area. Emphasis is to be placed on supporting the growth of the Polycentric Gateway¹ and Primary Economic Growth Towns within the County. These areas are linked by multi-modal corridors and focused on the identified Core Economic Areas in accordance with the Regional Planning Guidelines for the

Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022. The Primary Economic Growth Towns will be promoted as anchors of regional enterprise and will benefit from locational advantages in terms of access to strategic rail and road networks to gateways, ports and airports. These centres shall be prioritised for economic development and investment to redress the imbalance of residential development and jobs and the emergence of dormitory areas. These centres supported by the Secondary Economic Growth

¹ i.e. multi-centered

Towns will continue to be the focal point for regional population growth and employment in order to sustain and attract economic activity and build upon the significant investments made to date in these areas.

This Strategy focuses investment in Navan as the primary centre of economic development and employment in this county. This will rebalance the provision of jobs so that residents of Navan have access to opportunities for employment within easy distance from their homes, thereby reducing levels of commuting in the area as a whole. The Strategy will ensure that the primacy of Navan is recognised, protected and promoted whilst ensuring that over time, a number of other major supporting employment centres are developed which provide balance to the location of employment opportunities across the county.

Within the Primary & Secondary Economic Growth Towns, there are a number of key strategic, integrated and specialised employment centres which provide different types of functions. The main issues critical to the success of these major employment centres are continued availability of suitable land, improved public transport services to relieve congestion and reliance on the main inter urban road network and comprehensive infrastructure, to include piped water services, broadband and power.

The subsequent sections of this Strategy outline the high level economic development objectives for Primary Economic Growth Towns and Secondary Economic Growth Towns in County Meath.

4.1.1 Navan Core Economic Area which includes Navan as a Primary Economic Growth Town and including the Secondary Economic Growth Town of Kells and the town of Trim.

The high level economic development objectives for this area are:

- Navan is to be promoted to become the primary centre of employment in the County so that the significant residential population will have access to opportunities for employment within easy distance from their homes, thereby reducing levels of commuting in the area as a whole. The significant intensification of employment opportunities in Navan to serve the large resident population is a strategic objective of the Development Plan;
- Need to identify further strategic land banks for employment creation mindful of the different requirements of people and product intensive industries, both of which should be promoted in Navan;
- Continue to develop Navan as a Level II Town Centre and primary retail location within the county. This will require the development of an expanded retail core and continue to stem the comparison retail leakage from the wider region;
- A study has identified a site in Navan for the development of a Regional Hospital. The RPG's further indicate that a HSE study found Navan to be the most suitable location for a new Regional Hospital;
- Recognise the significance of the Navan Rail Line and Regional Hospital as catalysts for significant employment opportunities in the wider area;
- Continue to enhance the physical fabric of the town, building on the notable success of recent years (Kennedy Place, Market Square, Watergate Street) and the targeted softening of the urban landscape;

- Navan to become a national exemplar of SMARTER Travel working in close co-operation with the National Transport Authority and Department of Transport;
- Navan has the potential to become a national cycling hub town on the National Cycling Network and a significant hub in the Boyne Valley for cycling and walking;
- The Boyne and Blackwater candidate Special Area of Conservation is acknowledged as a background influence to economic development within the Navan Core Economic Area;
- Kells and Trim to develop as a tourism cluster with improvement in the connectivity between both centres identified for investment. Each town to develop a strategy for niche tourism as integral part of their overall development strategy e.g. culinary tourism, regional food hub, creative industries, etc.;
- Protection of the intrinsic built and natural heritage of Kells and Trim and their promotion as a basis of tourism must be dominant in the development strategies adopted for both "*Heritage Towns*";
- Kells, identified as a Secondary Economic Growth Town, benefitting from N3 and N52 bypasses, to further develop its retail and manufacturing bases.

4.1.2 Drogheda

The high level economic development objectives for this area are:

- Donore Road is identified as a key employment hub for ongoing intensification of development – close to the national road network yet readily accessible from the town centre and residential suburbs. There is significant scope in the IDA Business Park for further expansion. The Donore Road area was recommended as the second employment hub to complement the town centre in the Planning Strategy for the Greater Drogheda Area;
- High value added employment manufacturing and traded services;
- Tourism potential - significant hub within the Boyne Valley region due to quality of public transport allied to proximity of UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne and the coastal area and broad beaches of East Meath stretching from Mornington to Gormonston whilst ensuring the environmental protection of sensitive and protected coastal habitats and landscape.
- The Boyne Estuary cSAC / SPA and River Nanny and Shore SPA are acknowledged as a background influence to economic development within the Drogheda Core Economic Area;
- The adjoining Small Growth Towns of Laytown / Bettystown have a considerable resident population without significant employment opportunities having been provided to sustain this population to date. Small Towns should provide for the employment needs of their local hinterlands to make such centres more sustainable and balanced in their role and function. Serviced industrial sites and incubator units should be available within these centres. Mixed use settlement forms will be encouraged with particular emphasis on tourism & flexibility afforded to employment uses within walking distance (800 metres) of Laytown train station.

4.1.3 Maynooth / Leixlip Economic Area

The high level economic development objectives for this area are:

- Development of Life Sciences, High Tech, Bio Tech, ICT, Research & Development synergies with NUIM and major employers already established in the sub region (Intel, Hewlett Packard);
- Development of key linkages and partnerships with NUIM – brand the area as a centre of excellence in the knowledge based economy;
- Local Area Plan for Maynooth Environs adopted in 2008 with specific focus on attracting high technology and bio technology firms. Commitment from Kildare County Council to provide requisite piped water services for employment generating uses.
- The Rye Water Valley / Carton cSAC is acknowledged as a background influence to economic development within the environs of Maynooth.

4.1.4 Ashbourne / Dunboyne

The high level economic development objectives for this area are:

- Continue to expand retail offer and employment opportunities to reinforce RPG recognition that Ashbourne is developing in a holistic and sustainable manner illustrative of its transition from a dormitory hinterland area towards a more urbanised, metropolitan character;
- Attract new industry to Ashbourne which capitalises on the quality of road infrastructure and proximity to M50 and airport;
- In Dunboyne a priority initially for Meath County Council is the consolidation and sustainable build out of town in a sequential manner and its ability to develop over the next 15 years towards Level II status in the Retail Hierarchy;
- Encourage mixed use settlement forms and sustainable centres, in which employment, residency, education and local services / amenities are located in close proximity to each other;
- Meath County Council considers that an opportunity for a Strategic Development Zone may exist in north Dunboyne within the Metropolitan Area of the National Gateway.² This will require the completion of an integrated land use and transportation approach to planning for the area, in consultation and agreement with statutory stakeholders including the NTA, NRA and Iarnród Éireann, including an examination of traffic demands and modal share, determination of the operational capacity of the junction with the M3 Motorway and potential effects on same and the sustainable build out of the existing settlement of Dunboyne. This is consistent with the promotion of higher densities for employment uses around public transport as advocated in

² The Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 states that opportunities exist for Planning Authorities and Enterprise Agencies, together with other relevant stakeholders, to take a proactive role in identifying appropriate locations for Strategic Development Zones for employment and develop planning schemes to deliver these areas for economic development. These strategic locations should be supported by existing or planned multi-modal public transport infrastructure, adequate water services, broadband and next generation of communication technology, sustainable energy supplies.

the RPGs which indicates that the “*provision of integrated land use and transport plans for developing zoned and brownfield / regeneration lands of strategic importance are a means of managing growth and investment in the medium to long term and should be prepared*”. Unparalleled economic development opportunities exist adjacent to M3 Parkway which would allow the development of a strategic employment cluster, possibly based on the Strategic Development Zone concept. 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 institutions. Following the finalisation of the integrated land use and transportation approach to planning for this area, it is the intention of the Planning Authority to progress the consideration of a Strategic Development Zone for employment generating uses within the Dunboyne / Pace area to the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government. It is an objective of the Planning Authority to progress the relevant studies seeking to advance this Strategic Development Zone designation within a timely fashion following the completion of the integrated land use and transportation approach to planning for this area;

- Positioning of Dunboyne to gradually grow to a Level II Town Centre by 2028 as provided for in the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area. The Retail Hierarchy contained therein illustrates the accepted economic potential of this area over a designated time span;
- Strategic investment required as residential and economic development is currently hampered by a lack of available water services which must be resolved. Such targeted investment would maximise the benefit accruing from the substantial investment in transport infrastructure in recent years. This is a key infrastructural priority for Meath; Ratoath has been included in the RPG's as an employment base because of its educated workforce and additional opportunities are outlined in Table 4.2.

4.1.5 M1 Dublin – Belfast Economic Corridor & Provision of Deepwater Port Facility at East Meath

In addition to the identified Primary and Secondary Economic Growth Towns, the RPG's also recognise the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor as it passes through the region. This builds on the recognition afforded to the corridor under the National Spatial Strategy and the expressed need to secure and enhance the role of towns strategically placed along the corridor. Economic strategies in each council area must recognise the role of the corridor in stimulating investment opportunities; engaging in branding and international promotional link-ups and in working with State agencies, and in encouraging cooperation with other research

and business bases located within the corridor area. Such existing business bases, located in the existing urban areas of the corridor, including (but not limited to) South Drogheda environs, Swords, Balbriggan and Dublin City will play a key role in the future economic development of this international multi-modal corridor. The role of Drogheda, as a key business base, is recognised in the Economic Strategy of this Development Plan.

The “*Mid East Regional Authority Economic Development Strategy*” (December 2009) which is appended to the RPGs, recognises the imbalance in the Mid-East Region between existing residential development and the limited level of economic development being provided. The Strategy advocates the designation of

Stamullen as a Secondary Economic Hub, predicated upon the development of the deepwater port and would further support the clustering of a wide range of economic activities leveraging on the existing economic base.

Indecon International Economic Consultants prepared an “*Economic Development Strategy for the M1 Economic Corridor*” for the period 2010 – 2022 on behalf of Meath, Fingal & Louth Local Authorities. The comparative strengths and weaknesses of the Corridor were assessed and economic development opportunities were identified which can be successfully developed over the period. The resultant strategy also identified the Stamullen / Gormonston area as being suitable for creating an employment hub serving the wider East Meath area. Any change in the status of Stamullen to accommodate an expanded economic role in the regional hierarchy will be advanced through future reviews of the RPGs.

The RPGs 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.

There is a proposal to develop a world class deepwater port, logistics centre and business park at Gormonston, County Meath. At present, Bremore Ireland Port Ltd. is considering different options to advance the project through the statutory planning consent process. The development of the deepwater port would transform the economic and employment prospects of the East Meath – North Fingal area and establish a new economic hub on the Dublin – Belfast M1 Corridor. The current status of the project is that pre-feasibility and environmental / habitat assessment is being carried out. It is also noted that pre application consultations with An Bord Pleanála for a proposed Strategic Infrastructure Development application are also underway.³

Meath County Council is committed to the development of a deep water port and associated landside activities in East Meath.

4.2

Quantum of Available Zoned Employment Generating Land

Planning for future employment development requires a more broadly based approach than planning for other sectors due to the increasingly diverse nature and requirements of development in the economic and employment sector. One of the most important factors is that there is a good choice and plentiful supply of zoned and serviced land available.

In achieving sustainable and balanced employment within the GDA, the RPGs support the improvement of jobs ratio levels in each of the constituent local authorities of the region.

Each local authority should include an objective or series of measures, compliant with the RPG economic strategy, to foster employment creation and maximise jobs potential in growth towns.

The preparation of individual town development plans, local area plans and zoning objectives for urban centres to be included in the County Development Plan need to reflect the economic policies contained in this County Development Plan. Table 4.1 highlights a considerable variation in the extent of lands identified for

³ Pre application consultations for the construction of a Deepwater Port, Logistics Centre and Business Park at Bremore Port, Gormonston, Co. Meath (formerly at Bremore, Balbriggan, Co. Fingal) between Bremore Ireland Port Ltd. and An Bord Pleanála commenced on 27/11/2007. The consultancy case is in abeyance at time of preparation of the plan. The Planning Authority is advised that the original reference to the Joint Venture is also required to be amended as the Department of Transport Tourism and Sport confirmed at a recent meeting that the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform is still considering the proposed Joint Venture Agreement and that there remains only one share holder in Bremore Ireland Port Ltd namely Drogheda Port Company.

employment generating uses in the upper tiers of the County Settlement Hierarchy. This requires attention. It is now opportune to review the continued appropriateness of employment generating zonings across the county. The nature, location and quantum of lands identified for employment generating

uses for each settlement and their ability to be serviced must reflect and be consistent with their role in the Economic and Settlement hierarchies, and be based on an assessment of need directly linked to a specific jobs target over the plan period.

Table 4.1: Quantum of Available Zoned Employment Generating Land provided for in suite of individual Town Development Plans and Local Areas Plans (all stated areas relate to hectares)

Settlement Hierarchy	Centre	E1 Use Objective	E2 Use Objective	E4 Use Objective	Total	White Lands Use Objective
Large Growth Town I	Navan	26.56	38.71	17.45	82.72	50.94
	Drogheda	56.15	68.73	0	124.88	50.84
Large Growth Town II	Dunboyne / Clonee	84.33	66.03	0	150.36	53.34 ⁴
	Maynooth	0	0	60	60.00	22.2
Moderate Sustainable Growth Town	Ashbourne	15.76	45.53	0	61.29	
	Kells	0	79.34	0	79.34	
	Trim	0	40.94	0	40.94	
	Kilcock	0	10.12	0	10.12	
Small Towns	Dunshaughlin	0	48.98	0	48.98	
	Enfield	6.6	10.23	0	16.83	
	Ratoath	5.5	12.97	0	18.47	
	Athboy	0	15.00	0	15.00	
	Bettystown / Laytown	0	32.34	0	32.34	
	Duleek	0	7.98	0	7.98	
	Oldcastle	12.94	0	0	12.94	
	Stamullen / Gormonston ⁵	0	143.03	0	143.03	
Total		207.84	619.93	77.45	905.22	177.32

Please note that the E1, E2, E4 and White Land Use Objectives referred to in the above table are contained within existing Town Development Plans and Local Area Plans and pre date the preparation of this County Development Plan.

⁴ This includes White Lands extending to 33.92 hectares and Framework Plan lands to accommodate Level II Town Centre extending to 19.42 hectares.

⁵ This comprises 39.58 hectares associated with City North Business Campus and 84.98 hectares associated with the Department of Defence lands at Gormonston.

Whilst Navan is to be promoted as a regional anchor of enterprise in this Economic Strategy, there appears to be limited lands identified for employment generating opportunities.

This should be examined and remedied as a matter of priority. The Economic Development Unit of Meath County Council commissioned a study (2010) which identified future lands which would be suitable for product intensive and employee intensive uses. It is considered timely to review this study with a view to implementing its recommendations and to take proactive measures to remedy the deficiency in both the quantum and choice of employment generating lands which are presently zoned, serviceable and available. It is considered that strategic and targeted marketing of specific sectors to specific locations in conjunction with a more collaborative approach between state and local agencies is also required.

It is considered both appropriate and opportune to review the nature, location and quantum of lands zoned for employment uses to the east of the M3 Motorway / R147 (former N3) at Dunboyne / Clonee. The relative merits of retaining such lands in favour of promoting the lands which adjoin the lands east of the rail line in Dunboyne and / or M3 Parkway rail station, particularly for people intensive employment uses should be undertaken as part of this review. This should be carried out as part of the integrated land use and transportation assessment in consultation and agreement with stakeholders including the NTA, NRA and Iarnród Éireann to determine the future direction of growth in the Dunboyne / Clonee corridor. The review should also critically

consider the likelihood of water services capacity being available to serve the preferred lands and the timeframes for providing same.

The quantum of lands identified for employment generating uses in Kells would appear disproportionate to the scale of existing industrial / enterprise development and the existing / projected resident population. This is further exacerbated by the scale of lands earmarked for town centre expansion and mixed use development. It is considered that the ongoing review of the Kells Development Plan should question the extent of lands identified for employment and enterprise on the basis of established need and the ability to service such lands from a water services perspective within the life of the next Kells Development Plan (2013 – 2019).

The lands at Laytown (Minnistown Road) have been zoned since the 2000 East Meath Development Plan with no meaningful attempt to develop said lands in the intervening period. It is considered that the lands immediately adjoining the rail station in Laytown could accommodate people intensive enterprise should such a demand arise in lieu of the lands on the Minnistown Road.

The scale of lands identified for employment generating uses in Stamullen needs to be reconsidered. The preparation of zoning objectives for the town shall be included in the varied County Development Plan. No decision should be taken in this regard until the pre feasibility stage of the assessment of the proposed deepwater port has been concluded.

4.3

Employment Sectors

The goal presented at the beginning of this Economic Development Strategy seeks to build on and enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of County Meath in order to make it one of the country's prime locations for indigenous and foreign economic and employment generating investment. This will

require the repositioning of the county as a key economic driver of the Greater Dublin Area recognising the inherent attributes and opportunities of both urban and rural areas in achieving this goal. In order to realise the economic potential of County Meath and identify strategic employment centres

therein, sectoral strengths need be developed and promoted. In this regard, a number of opportunity development areas have been identified, the core of which are pivoted around the main growth settlements.

An analysis has been carried out by Meath County Council which examined the individual employment sectors that are presently in the county and identified certain sectoral

convergences already in existence. The analysis excluded hotels, retail, public utilities and public administration (Meath County Council, OPW Trim and other decentralized Government Departments) along with the HSE NE, which includes Navan Hospital. A more detailed Background Paper has been prepared in this regard and is available on the County Development Plan website.

Table 4.2: Hierarchy of Economic Centres and Targeted Sectors

Hierarchy	Centre	Role	Sectors Targeted
Primary Economic Growth Towns	Navan Drogheda	Identified for regional population growth and serve a pivotal role in employment and provision of goods and services	High technology manufacturing and research, international and nationally traded services, ICT, office based industry, food production and processing, public administration, healthcare, banking, retail (convenience, higher order comparison and warehousing). Bloodstock, mining and furniture sectors will continue to be targeted in Navan with specific emphasis on manufacturing of health products and promoting range of languages available in resident population.
	Maynooth ⁶		Knowledge based economy focusing on high technology / bio technology, research and development in partnership with NUIM
Secondary Economic Growth Towns	Ashbourne	Important supporting and complementary role in developing regional economic growth in tandem with primary economic growth towns and large hinterland areas	High value added manufacturing, Logistics, Distribution & Supply Chain Management, Data Centres and Retail (convenience, comparison and limited warehousing)
	Dunboyne		High value added manufacturing, Logistics, Distribution & Supply Chain Management and Knowledge Based Economy focusing on high technology / bio technology, research and development in partnership with third level institutions centred around public transport corridors and routes such as Dunboyne and M3 Parkway rail stations and retail (convenience and lower order comparison)
	Kells		Tourism, high value added manufacturing, retail (convenience & lower order comparison), and administration.
District Employment Centres	All	Towns providing employment needs of urban areas as well as large rural hinterlands	Innovation in indigenous enterprise and business start ups
	Trim		Tourism, Manufacturing, Administration & Healthcare
	Kilcock		Manufacturing, Logistics, Distribution & Supply Chain Management
	Dunshaughlin		Manufacturing
	Ratoath		Manufacturing, Equine Industry and possibly office based industry using highly qualified resident labour force

⁶ Maynooth and Leixlip are identified as Primary Economic Growth Towns in the Metropolitan Areas of the Greater Dublin Area supported by Celbridge and Kilcock. Local Area Plans have been prepared for the environs of Maynooth and Kilcock which are in the administrative area of Meath County Council.

Hierarchy	Centre	Role	Sectors Targeted
Local Employment Centres	Small Towns	Small Towns and Villages provide employment needs for local hinterlands. Serviced industrial sites and incubator units should be available within these centres.	Local Investment generally and small scale industry
	Enfield		Flexibility afforded within walking distance (800 metres) of train station
	Athboy		Manufacturing
	Bettystown / Laytown		Tourism & Flexibility afforded within walking distance (800 metres) of Laytown train station
	Duleek		Manufacturing, Extractive Industries and Waste / Energy facilities
	Oldcastle		Manufacturing
	Stamullen / Gormonston ⁷		Logistics, Distribution & Supply Chain Management, Manufacturing and potential Port related activities
	Villages		Local investment generally small scale industry
Rural Employment	Graigs and rural areas	Sustainable Rural employment	Agriculture, horticulture, equine, forestry, energy production, rural resource based enterprise, extractive industries

Notwithstanding the content of Table 4.2 new developments that relate to an additional sector, not specified in Table 4.2, may be considered in each level of the settlement hierarchy, and will be assessed on the land use zoning, appropriateness of their scale, size and compatibility with the area.

The findings of this analysis highlighted a greater range of employment opportunities occurring within the larger settlements such as Navan (Financial Services, Industrial Offices / Call Centres, Food, Manufacturing & Meat Processing), Drogheda (Financial Services) and Dunboyne / Clonee (Corporate Headquarters and Meat Processing). Kells and the general Oldcastle area have a particular concentration of manufacturing facilities. Ashbourne has the greatest concentration of national and international logistics and chain suppliers along with a notable cluster of manufacturing. Food and Meat Processing was also found to occur at various rural locations throughout the county. Rural resource based extractive industries are pepper potted across the county following primarily a vein which runs from the south west

to the north east. The analysis demonstrates the continued reliance for employment on manufacturing, extractive industries and food / meat processing enterprises noting that the downturn in the economic climate affecting residential and the general construction industry and the completion of the motorway network has had a devastating effect on the extractive industry locally. This Economic Development Strategy will develop the existing sectoral convergences evident in the county and target specific sectors to develop within certain designated centres across the county.

The Economic Development Strategy facilitates a more diversified economic base, a focus on cost competitiveness and productivity and a choice of investment locations. The Strategy advocates the development of a number of key strategic, integrated and specialised employment centres, which provide different types of functions to each other. This Strategy is presented in Table 4.2.

The Core Strategy outlined the land use zoning objectives which shall apply in the review of

⁷ This comprises 39.58 hectares associated with City North Business Campus and 84.98 hectares associated with the Department of Defence lands at Gormonston

all statutory land use plans in County Meath for this County Development Plan taking effect and in the inclusion of development and zoning objectives for centres in the County Development Plan for urban centres with no individual land use plan. The employment land use zoning objectives provides for the targeting of specific uses to specific centres or on the basis of their comparative public transport provision. The Economic Strategy has determined which specific sectors will be targeted for individual centres and the appropriate land use zoning objectives have now been framed around such uses.

Section 2.9.7 (Local Zoning Objectives) outlined that specific local objectives may be applied to lands within a broad zoning category where the Council is seeking to achieve a special objective. Consideration will be given to including the following particular local zoning objectives in the review of the Ratoath and Ashbourne Local Area Plans and the preparation of development objectives for Maynooth Environs.

Strategic Employment Zones (High Technology Uses)

1. To provide for high technology / bio technology industries in a high quality campus style environment within the Maynooth Environs Local Area Plan area. This objective will also seek to accommodate associated advanced manufacturing, office, research and development uses. An emphasis on exemplar sustainable design and aesthetic quality will be promoted to enhance corporate image and identity. Mobility Management of future employees shall be to the fore in establishing the agreed quantum of employees which can be accommodated within individual locations predicated on maximising public transport opportunities and the use of innovation in reducing associated carbon footprint. The suitability of these subject lands to accommodate intensive office based development will have to be assessed in a Development Management context.

2. Data Centre in the vicinity of Rath Roundabout, Ashbourne.
To provide for the development of Data Centres in the general vicinity of the Rath Roundabout. This shall seek to provide for data centre facilities and associated related industries set in open parkland with extensive landscaping, a high architectural standard of layout and building design. Employment types other than those strictly related to data storage shall show a clear process related requirement to locate in proximity to a data centre.

A data centre is a facility used to house computer systems and associated components, such as telecommunications and storage systems. It generally includes redundant or backup power supplies, redundant data communications connections, environmental controls (e.g. air conditioning, fire suppression) and security devices.

3. To provide for the continued development and expansion of equine related activities in Ratoath.
To support and provide for enhancement and diversification of existing equine and related industry in Ratoath centred around Fairyhouse Race course and Tattersalls.



4. To provide for small and medium sized industries to develop in the vicinity of Raystown, Ratoath.
To provide for small and medium sized industries to develop on the R125 Ashbourne Road in accordance with an approved Masterplan and subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure. This area should have a particular focus on providing incubator units and facilities for start up industries. It is intended that the area will also include the provision of a civic amenity site.

Meath County Council will require that a Masterplan accompanies any planning application made for development on these lands detailing the overall site and building layout, building height and design principles, landscaping, phasing, mix of uses for the site, traffic impact assessment and management proposals and service arrangements. Public lighting, footpaths and cycleways shall be provided on all roadways provided as part of the development of the lands.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

ED POL 1	To promote and support the sustainable growth of the Polycentric Gateway and Primary Economic Growth Towns linked by multi-modal corridors and focused on identified Core Economic Areas.
ED POL 1	To develop primary economic growth towns as regional anchors of enterprises, promoting a mix of employment types and thereby reducing the need for residents of County Meath to commute outside the County for employment.
ED POL 3	To ensure that sufficient and suitable land is zoned for employment generating uses through the individual town development and local area plan process and in the preparation of development and zoning objectives for towns/ villages with no individual land use plan that will be included in the County Development Plan, as appropriate.
ED POL 4	To pursue the sustainable development of attractive business and industrial parks that accommodate mixed use businesses located in identified Primary & Secondary Economic Growth Centres advocating the least restrictive enterprise land use approach to zoning of land, consistent with good planning practice.
ED POL 5	To recognise the contribution of rural employment to the continued and sustainable growth of the economy and to promote this continued growth by encouraging rural enterprise generally, especially those activities that are resource dependent, including energy production, extractive industry, small scale industry and tourism in a sustainable manner and at appropriate locations.
ED POL 6	To encourage developments which generate significant travel demand to locations on or close to high frequency public transport corridors.

ED POL 7	To encourage developments which rely on proximity to national road infrastructure and which generate significant levels of freight traffic to locate close to the national road network having regard to the Spatial Planning & National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities.
ED POL 8	To promote innovative economic sectors and encourage clustering which positively exploits synergies between interconnected companies and / or which forge synergies with adjoining third level education institutions.
ED POL 9	To facilitate the sustainable development of a new deep water port in East Meath.
ED POL 10	Pending the outcome of the pre feasibility assessment and the establishment of the requisite planning framework (following Strategic Environmental Assessment / Appropriate Assessment, as required, in relation to ED POL 9) which may include the seeking of a designation of lands as a Strategic Development Zone, to facilitate associated landside activities to support the proposed deep water port, maximizing the economic benefits to nearby communities and minimizing any negative impacts of landside activities on such communities or the environment and heritage of the area.
ED POL 11	To ensure any port related development proposals are subject to full environmental assessment including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment, as required.
ED POL 12	To continue to develop and enhance the Sister Cities Project between Meath County Council and the Town of Cary, North Carolina with a particular focus on leveraging capacity to provide “best practice” examples for economic development projects at appropriate locations within County Meath.
ED POL 13	To foster the prioritisation of employment generating land uses in the urban area of Ashbourne and the adjoining linked settlement of Ratoath.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

ED OBJ 1	To identify and promote a wide range of locations throughout the county for different types of enterprise. The identification of areas for different types of employment generating uses shall be consistent with Table 4.2 and the application of the land use zoning objectives contained in Section 2.9.4.
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ED OBJ 2	<p>To incorporate a review of the appropriateness of the nature, location and quantum of industrial and employment generating land use in individual Development Plans and Local Area Plans and in the preparation of development and zoning objectives for towns and villages that are to be included in the County Development Plan. This review shall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) occur in tandem with the assessment of residentially zoned lands required pursuant to the Core Strategy (CS OBJ 2 & 3 refer); (ii) apply the land use zoning objectives contained in the Core Strategy of this County Development Plan to the individual Town Development Plan, Local Area Plan or individual objective maps to be included in the County Development Plan as relating to industrial and employment generating uses (land use zoning objectives E1, E2 and E3 refer from the Core strategy); (iii) critically assess the nature, quantum and location of lands identified for industrial and employment generating use in Dunboyne/ Clonee/ Pace, Kells and Gormonston/ Stamullen. In the case of Dunboyne/Clonee/Pace, the integrated land use and transportation study identified as a high level development objective in Section 4.1.4 will be required to be completed in advance of this exercise being carried out. As part of this integrated land use and transportation study, Meath County Council will consult and agree the future location and appropriate scale of development, particularly in the knowledge intensive, science based and people intensive employment sectors with statutory stakeholders including the NTA, NRA and Iarnród Éireann; (iv) review of the zoning objectives for Maynooth Environs and Kilbride in the preparation of zoning maps for the centres for inclusion in the County Development Plan. <p>The outcome of this review may necessitate variations to individual development plans and amendments to local area plans arising therefrom. It is noted that such variations or amendments may be subject to an Appropriate Assessment of the likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites due to the proximity of urban centres to Natura 2000 sites.</p>
ED OBJ 3	<p>To ensure that sufficient and suitable land is zoned for sustainable large scale and general industry at the major employment centres of Navan, Drogheda Environs, Ashbourne, Dunboyne and Kells and to a scale and extent befitting their respective roles in the Economic Development & Settlement hierarchies.</p>
ED OBJ 4	<p>To ensure that sufficient and suitable land is zoned for logistics, distribution and supply chain management industries at Ashbourne, Dunboyne / Clonee and Stamullen and in addition to land zoned for large scale and general industry.</p>

ED OBJ 5	To explore joint ventures with developers / industrialists / landowners to develop strategic sites in designated economic growth areas / centres consistent with the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. The fast tracking of statutory planning consents shall be facilitated and encouraged which may include the use of appropriate statutory instruments, to include, inter alia, Part VIII planning consent for site development works or indeed for the entire development, preparation of Motorway Orders, etc. This process should include the reservation of prize sites which would be suitable for or comparable to the IDA "strategic sites" which could support investment from large Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) firms which may have significant space requirements.
ED OBJ 6	To seek to advance the preparation of an Economic Development Action Plan for the Mid East Region in conjunction with the Mid East Regional Authority which focuses on the inherent strengths and attributes of the region whilst complementing the existing strategy prepared by the Dublin Local Authorities and the Economic Strategy contained in the Regional Planning Guidelines. The Economic Development Action Plan should seek to identify measures to promote and support key economic growth sectors / clusters in the Mid East Region.
ED OBJ 7	To co-operate with local and national development agencies to maximise job creation opportunities and to engage with existing and future large scale employers in order to maximise job opportunities in the county.

4.4

Rural Areas

Agriculture will continue to be an important component of County Meath's economy. Advancing technology and farm consolidation will result in increased output but will also continue to reduce agriculturally based employment. The agricultural sector must continue to 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 a sustainable rural economy.

No single economic sector offers 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 possess. In all areas of the County, there is a role for rural development in contributing to the general economic growth of the county. Meath County Council will encourage diversification by promoting rural tourism and leisure activities and encouraging appropriate forms of rural employment development. This can comprise a number of different sectors including agriculture (arable, dairy, sheep, horticulture and organic), equine, forestry, tourism (walking, cycling, leisure, fishing, golfing, water based activities, beach and cultural heritage), mineral extraction and rural enterprises. This Plan promotes and encourages economic development to meet

the needs of rural areas whilst recognising their environmental character.

4.4.1 Rural Enterprise

The Economic Development Strategy seeks to facilitate the provision of adequate land for employment uses, having regard to spatial planning, infrastructural, environmental and transportation requirements and their compatibility with adjoining land uses. This directs such employment uses primarily to suitably zoned lands within designated urban centres. Policies are also included that support and protect the existing economic base where it occurs and promotes the diversification of the economy through inward investments at key growth centres and the parallel promotion of agriculture, forestry and tourism-related industries in rural areas.

This Development Plan accepts that there is a need to respond to the restructuring of the agricultural sector and the loss of traditional opportunities arising from the decline of traditional manufacturing and construction sectors by developing a rural economy that offers viable and sustainable employment for existing communities. There is also a need to strengthen the provision / retention of services, regenerate rural communities and promote the economic development of rural areas. This manifests itself in the requirement to both acknowledge the need for, and promote the development of, small scale enterprises in rural areas.

Once off, medium to large scale rural enterprise can only be located in the open countryside if it is demonstrated, to the satisfaction of Meath County Council, that the enterprise can be more readily accommodated in a rural setting than provided in a designated settlement centre and subject to standard development management considerations being applied. It is equally accepted that there are certain types of rural enterprises, especially those that involve processing of natural resources or serve rural communities which have a critical role to play in sustainable rural development.

The promotion and facilitation of micro enterprises (up to a maximum of 10 employees) is a key area for sustainable employment opportunities in rural areas. Meath County Council will seek to facilitate the development of this sector by ensuring that incubator units for micro enterprises are provided in lower tier centres (Small Towns and Villages) as well as considering their individual appropriateness in rural nodes and possibly, the open countryside. In particular, the reuse of redundant agricultural buildings and the development of new buildings to accommodate such diversification / enterprise within an overall farmyard complex will be considered on their individual merits.

4.4.2 Bio-Fuels and Renewable Energy

Ireland's dependency on imported energy has grown to around 90% in comparison with the EU average of 50%. The dominant energy source remains imported oil, with a large part of Ireland's power generation and industrial production critically dependent on oil and gas. With the continued threat of global climate change, the volatility of oil prices and the need to secure supplies of indigenous energy, bioenergy and wood based fuels, in addition to other sources of renewable energy such as wind, wave, solar etc., are fast becoming an alternative cost effective solution. The use of wood and bio energy crops such as willow and miscanthus for energy generation is a growing sustainable industry that can supplement the development of the rural economy of Meath.

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 potential and synergies for future economic development in County Meath. This Development Plan aims to recognise and develop the full potential of biomass for energy production / manufacturing and associated energy production including the export of green electricity to the national grid.

The requirement to prepare a Thematic Spatial Strategy for Industrial Development (Objective TRANS OBJ 22 refers) is also considered relevant with regard to meeting the specific needs of renewable energy and general energy related infrastructure projects. As part of the preparation of this Thematic Spatial Strategy, there is particular merit in examining significant landholdings associated with quarrying and extractive industries to develop energy related infrastructure projects. The existing example to support such a clustering argument is

Carranstown and Caulstown, Duleek adjacent to Irish Cement operation at Platin – Indaver 70MW waste to energy facility and the permitted Scottish and Southern Energy Plc 60MW open cycle gas turbine power generation plant. The accommodation of such energy related infrastructure projects which tend to absorb large areas of land and cannot be facilitated within traditional industrial zonings in towns around the county is worthy of further detailed consideration.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

ED POL 14	To promote rural economic development by recognising the need to advance the long term sustainable social and environmental development of rural areas and encouraging economic diversification and facilitating growth of rural enterprises.
ED POL 15	To recognise and develop the full potential of biomass for energy production and manufacturing including the export of green electricity to the national grid. The Development Plan acknowledges that such enterprises are more readily accommodated in rural areas due to the extent of lands required to ensure security of supply of raw materials and that proximity to the medium to high voltage national electricity transmission network for green electricity exportation is a key locational consideration for development proposers. All proposals for biomass energy production and manufacturing will require screening to determine if a full Appropriate Assessment of the likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, is required.
ED POL 16	To recognise the contribution of rural employment to the overall growth of the economy and to promote this growth by encouraging rural enterprise and diversification generally and to promote certain types of rural enterprise, especially those activities which are rural resource dependent, including renewable energy production, food production / processing and the extractive industries.
ED POL 17	To normally permit development proposals for the expansion of existing authorised industrial or business enterprises in the countryside where the resultant development does not negatively impact on the character and amenity of the surrounding area. In all instances, it should be demonstrated that the proposal would not generate traffic of a type and amount inappropriate for the standard of the access roads. This policy shall not apply to the National Road Network.

ED POL 18

To permit development proposals for industrial or business enterprises in the countryside where generally the following criteria are met:

- (i) the proposed use has locational requirements that can more readily be accommodated in a rural location than an urban setting and this has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of Meath County Council;
- (ii) the development will enhance the strength of the local rural economy;
- (iii) the resultant development is of a size and scale which remains appropriate and which does not negatively impact on the character and amenity of the surrounding area;
- (iv) the proposal demonstrates that it has taken into account traffic, public health, environmental and amenity considerations;
- (v) the proposal is in accordance with the policies, requirements and guidance contained in this plan;
- (vi) it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of Meath County Council that the proposal would not generate traffic of a type and amount inappropriate for the character of the access roads or would require improvements which would affect the character of these roads. This policy shall not apply to the National Road Network.

ED POL 19

To support rural entrepreneurship and the development of micro businesses (generally less than 10 no. employees) in rural areas where environmental and landscape impact is minimal and such developments do not generate significant or undue traffic. This objective shall not apply to the National Road Network.

ED POL 20

To facilitate the development of broadband telecommunications as an enabler of rural and other enterprise.

4.5**Retail****4.5.1 Background to Retail Strategy**

The Retail Planning Guidelines (2012) were adopted by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in April 2012 and replace the previous Retail Planning Guidelines (2005). Paragraph 3.3 of the Retail Planning Guidelines outlines the matters which should be addressed in all future County and City Development Plans:

- State the elements of their settlement hierarchy in line with the relevant regional planning guidelines and their core strategy;
- Outline the level and form of retailing activity appropriate to the various components of the settlement hierarchy in that core strategy;
- Define, by way of a map, the boundaries of the core shopping areas of city and town centres and also location of any district centres;
- Include a broad assessment (square metres) of the requirement for additional retail floorspace only for those plans in the areas covered by a joint or multi-authority retail strategy;

- Set out strategic guidance on the location and scale of retail development to support the settlement hierarchy, including where appropriate identifying opportunity sites which are suitable and available and which match the future retailing needs of the area;
- Identify sites which can accommodate the needs of modern retail formats in a way that maintains the essential character of the shopping area;
- Include objectives to support action initiatives in city and town centres such as mobility management measures - that both improve accessibility of retail areas while aiming to develop a pedestrian and cyclist friendly urban environment and vibrant street life;
- Public realm interventions - aimed at improving the retailing experience through high quality civic design, provision of attractive street furnishing, lighting and effective street cleaning/business improvement district type initiatives; and
- Identify relevant development management criteria for the assessment of retail developments in accordance with these guidelines.

The Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (2008) provides guidance and policies for retail development at a strategic level and aims to ensure a co-ordinated and sustainable approach to the assessment and provision of retail development in the Greater Dublin Area. The Retail Strategy for the GDA supports the continued development of Navan as the main retail centre in the County (Level 2 Major Town Centre & County Town Centre). The Strategy identifies Dunboyne, Ashbourne, Dunshaughlin, Kells, Trim, Laytown/Bettystown & Enfield as Level 3 centres (Town and/or District Centres and Sub-County Town Centres). The Retail Strategy provides that Dunboyne will gradually develop to Level 2 status by 2028.

The Meath County Retail Strategy (2013 - 2019) has been prepared in this context and sets out the strategic policy framework for the spatial distribution of retail floorspace within the County up to 2019 and beyond to 2022. The Strategy is set out in Appendix 5.

The strategy aims to sustain and improve the retail competitiveness of the county, address retail expenditure leakage and ensure an equitable, efficient and sustainable spatial distribution of retail floorspace across the county. The emphasis of the Retail Strategy is on ensuring that the county sustains its role and importance in the shopping patterns of local people, the region and nationally. This should be largely driven by the continuing improvement of Meath's comparison shopping offer particularly in its main centres.

4.5.2 Survey & Analysis – Key Findings

A comprehensive survey of households in County Meath was undertaken in December 2011 to establish existing shopping patterns. The survey highlights continued significant levels of comparison expenditure leakage from the County and concluded that there remains considerable scope for improvement in the retail offer of the county. In particular, there is considerable scope for the further enhancement of higher order comparison shopping facilities within Navan and future Level 2 centres. This is of key importance if the county's performance and attractiveness for living, working, visiting and investment is to be sustained.

Convenience (Main Food & Grocery Shopping)

- 77% retention of convenience expenditure within the County - Navan (high) retains 92% compared to Bettystown (low) retaining only 52% within the county;
- Main reason cited was geographical proximity;
- Towns do not provide a significant attraction outside of their immediate catchment area;

- Drogheda acts as a significant attractor for the east Meath area (37%);
- Between 89.5 % - 98.15% of respondents undertake their top up shopping locally;
- Retention of convenience expenditure has increased in each zone since 2008.

Comparison (Clothes & Footwear)

- 58.9% of respondents carry out their main comparison shopping outside of Meath;
- Navan fulfils sub regional comparison retail role - 70.1 % retention within its own catchment and attracts 54.3% & 37.5% expenditure from Trim and Kells catchments;
- Ashbourne retains 11.8% comparison goods expenditure in its own catchment area - main attraction is Blanchardstown (60.5%);
- Almost all comparison expenditure from the east coast settlements leaves the county primarily to Drogheda (78.7%);
- Main reason cited for shopping outside of county is to avail of more varied product range.

Bulky Goods Shopping (Furniture and Electrical Goods)

- Expenditure leakage for bulky goods was less (32.6% for furniture and 31.8% for electrical goods) than for comparison goods;
- Geographical trends evident in comparison goods expenditure leakage are reaffirmed;
- Navan performs quite well
 - retains 84.7% of electrical goods and 78.2% of furniture expenditure;
 - attracted 45.7% and 21.7% electrical goods expenditure and 51.6% and 34.1% furniture expenditure from Kells and Trim catchments respectively;
 - association of furniture with Navan is also evident in attracting 33.7% of expenditure from the Ashbourne catchment area.
- Ashbourne catchment - 51.1% of bulky goods takes place outside the county which rises to 75% for electrical goods expenditure

- Blanchardstown satisfying 52.3% and 19.8% of expenditure respectively.
- Bettystown catchment - lack of retention of expenditure is alarming
 - Drogheda attracts 78.4% and 95.3% of this expenditure of which it is estimated that 44.3% of bulky goods and 70.6% of electrical goods expenditure from the Bettystown catchment takes place within the extent of Drogheda within the administrative area of Meath County Council.

Commentary

The survey confirms the continued leakage of comparison and bulky goods expenditure from the east Meath catchment to Drogheda and from the Ashbourne catchment to Blanchardstown. The Retail Strategy indicates that this is not surprising given their geographical proximity. Blanchardstown has an influential pull on shopping trends, with the centre being named as the most frequented competing centre outside of County Meath. The majority of trips generated to Blanchardstown, Dublin city and Liffey Valley are for comparison goods shopping. The results of the household survey demonstrate a requirement for an increase in the variety and range of comparison stores provided within the County. This would help reduce the leakage to external centres.

4.5.3 Confirmation of Retail Hierarchy

The 2012 County Retail Strategy confirms a retail hierarchy, as set out in Table 4.3 below. This hierarchy is consistent with the Retail Hierarchy contained in the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area.

Level 2 County Town Centre: In accordance with its designation within the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area Navan is a Level 2 Centre in the context of the Meath Retail Strategy. This is reflective of its importance as the County Town and the wide range of retail and service functions available in the town.

Level 3 Town and/or District Centres and Sub County Town Centres: Ashbourne, Dunboyne,

Dunshaughlin, Kells, Trim, Laytown/Bettystown and Enfield are included in this tier. These towns perform an important sub county retail role / function and generally include a good range of convenience provision and a modest

provision of comparison offer. It is considered that Dunboyne will not achieve First Tier Status over the period of the Retail Strategy. Enfield does not currently have the population or retail offer of the larger centres in the second tier.

Table 4.3: Retail Hierarchy in County Meath

Level	Centre	Meath Retail Hierarchy
Level 1	N/A	
Level 2	Major Town Centres and County Town Centres	Navan
Level 3	Town And/Or District Centres and Sub County Town Centres	Ashbourne, Dunboyne*, Dunshaughlin, Kells, Trim, Laytown/ Bettystown, Enfield
Level 4	Neighbourhood centres, local centres – small towns and villages	Various
Level 5	Corner Shops/small villages	Various
Other		Drogheda Environs

**Dunboyne will gradually develop over the next 20 years towards a Level 2 Centre in recognition of the status affirmed in the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area*

Level 4 Neighbourhood Centres, Local Centres, Small Towns and Villages: This category includes other small towns and villages in the County including (although not exclusively) Athboy, Ballivor, Clonee, Duleek, Kilmessan, Nobber, Oldcastle, Ratoath, Slane and Stamullen.

Level 5: Corner Shops/small villages: various

Other - Drogheda Environs: Drogheda environs contain a relatively large quantum of retail development due to its association with Drogheda, a second tier centre in the national retail hierarchy. Southgate Shopping Centre (District Centre) has recently been constructed at Colpe Cross on the southern fringe of Drogheda and includes a significant office component. The retail provision in Drogheda environs performs an important function in serving the needs of the local and surrounding communities.

The purpose of the County Retail Hierarchy

is to indicate the role and importance of each development centre within the county in order to enable the Council to protect each centre's overall vitality and viability whilst allowing each centre to perform its overall function within the county's settlement hierarchy.

4.5.4 Identification of Core Retail Areas and Opportunity Sites

In accordance with the guidance set out within the Retail Planning Guidelines, the County Retail Strategy identifies Core Retail Areas for the first and second tier centres within the County Retail Hierarchy. The Retail Strategy also identifies a number of Opportunity Sites within each town which are considered to be suitable locations for retail development. In accordance with the objectives of the Retail Planning Guidelines, new retail development should be located within or close to these identified core retail areas where possible.

4.5.5 Sequential Approach

The primary fundamental objective of the Retail Planning Guidelines is to protect, support and promote the continued role of city and town centres. In order to meet this objective the Retail Planning Guidelines established the Sequential Approach to the determination of retail applications. This essentially recognises the importance of sustaining the retail importance, viability and vitality of town centres.

All applications for large retail developments in out of centre or edge of centre locations (in excess of 1,000 sq. m. – net area) should be subject to the sequential approach as follows:

- In the first instance, priority should be given to locating retail development within the Core Retail Areas;
- Only where it can be demonstrated that there are no sites which are suitable, available and viable should an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre site be considered.

4.5.6 The Requirement for Additional Retail Floorspace

One of the key requirements of the Retail Planning Guidelines is that retail strategies should provide a broad assessment of the additional retail floorspace required in counties over the lifetime of their strategies. The requirement for additional retail floorspace within the county is estimated having regard to the changes to the population, population forecasts, updated information on expenditure, retail floorspace, extant planning permissions and the findings of the 2011 household and shopper surveys.

The County Retail Strategy sets out broad guidance on the type and amount of additional floorspace that will be required to accommodate additional expenditure over the timescale of the Strategy. This is summarized in Table 4.4 below:

Table 4.4: County Meath Floorspace Potential

Year	Convenience sq. m.	Comparison sq. m. Scenario 1	Comparison sq. m. Scenario 2	Bulky Goods sq. m.
2011	15,431	124	124	-19,983
2019	31,071	13,723	38,527	-7,614
2022	35,617	20,368	48,446	-1,570

It is noted that there are significant extant permissions for town centre schemes which have not been implemented and have not been included within the above floorspace figures. The permissions pertaining to these sites in many instances include large scale mixed use proposals. Town centres schemes have been permitted in Navan, Kells, Trim, Dunboyne and, most recently, in Dunshaughlin. In view of the very changed economic context which has emerged over the last couple of years, it is unlikely all of this permitted floorspace will come to fruition in the format and scale originally proposed. The Council remains committed to promoting retail development on

these key sites. A pragmatic approach must be taken to such extant permissions and it should be recognized that any implementation of such permissions is likely to be on a much reduced scale from that originally approved, and/or on a phased basis. A case by case consideration of the relevant pipeline floorspace will be necessary in considering any significant retail development. The key consideration in assessing future planning applications is the location of the proposed retail floorspace. The appropriate redevelopment and revitalization of town centres lands should continue to be promoted as a priority.

The results of the household and shopper's surveys undertaken to inform the retail strategy identify a significant degree of leakage of comparison expenditure from the County. A key objective is to reduce this level of leakage throughout the lifetime of the retail strategy.

4.5.7 Strategic Guidance on the Distribution of Retail Floorspace

The County Retail Strategy provides a strategic policy framework for the spatial distribution of new retail floorspace within the County. The focus of this is to provide strategic guidance on the location and scale of major retail development.

New retail floorspace provision should reflect the existing and projected population in the County and the identified retail hierarchy. Additional demand for comparison retail floorspace will be promoted in particular within Navan and the Sub County Centres of Ashbourne, Dunboyne, Dunshaughlin, Kells, Trim and Laytown / Bettystown.

Enhancing the range and quality of comparison floorspace within the County is essential in ensuring that County Meath enhances its retail offer and attraction and claws back some of the leakage of expenditure that is occurring to competing centres such as Blanchardstown. As the County Town Centre, Navan in particular should be promoted and developed as a centre for higher order comparison floorspace.

In terms of convenience provision it is evident that certain centres, most notably Trim, Dunboyne, Kells and Dunshaughlin, are under provided for in terms of convenience offer. Convenience development will in particular be promoted in these urban centres in order to improve competition choice and diversity in the retail market.

In terms of retail warehouse development the County is well served. There are two large retail warehouse parks in Navan and a further retail park in Ashbourne. There is an extant permission for retail warehousing in Trim.

Vacancy is prevalent in the Ashbourne Park and in the Navan Retail Park. In this regard, a cautious approach will be taken regarding further such development over the period of the strategy.

Table 4.5: Indicative Convenience Floorspace Potential

	2022
Navan	11,000
Trim	5,000
Kells	3,500
Ashbourne	2,000
Dunshaughlin	3,500
Dunboyne	6,500
Other	4,117
Total	35,617

Table 4.6 Indicative Comparison Floorspace Potential

	2022
Navan	10,000-24,000
Trim	1,750-5,000
Kells	1,500-4,000
Ashbourne	1,000-3,000
Dunshaughlin	1,250-3,000
Dunboyne	3,500-7,000
Other	1,368-2,446
Total	20,368-48,446

Tables 4.5 and 4.6 set out the indicative potential for additional convenience and comparison floorspace in the main towns within the County in accordance with the role of each settlement within the County Retail hierarchy, its population, trends observed from the household survey and existing retail floorspace provision. Having regard to the deficit in capacity for bulky household floorspace set out within Table 4.4 a split between the individual towns is not considered appropriate. Applications for bulky goods floorspace within



the County will be considered on their merits, taking into account the DoECLG's 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines'.

The range of comparison floorspace allocation as set out in Table 4.6 above reflects the capacity assessment above under Scenario 1 and Scenario 2.

In considering the potential for additional retail floorspace within the County, the figures contained in Tables 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 above should not be considered as upper limits, merely as indicative of the scale of new floorspace required to meet the needs of existing and future population and expenditure within the county. The figures represent the potential additional floorspace over that existing and do not include unimplemented permitted retail schemes in the County. The figures set out within Tables 4.5 and 4.6 may be subject to further preparation of individual town development or local area plans. Additional new floorspace may be proposed and this could replace some existing outdated or poorly located retail floorspace. These figures should be seen as minimum rather than maximums. The key consideration is the location of new floorspace.

The lower set of figures for comparison floorspace, Scenario 1 in the capacity assessment, are based on a continuation of high leakage of expenditure from the catchment area to competing centres. The level of retention of this expenditure has potential to increase over the lifetime of the strategy in line with an enhanced provision of comparison floorspace within the County as set out within Scenario 2 of the capacity assessment.

4.5.8 Criteria for the Assessment of Retail Developments

In accordance with the 'Retail Planning – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (April 2012) requirements, all applications for significant development should be assessed against a range of criteria. As a general rule, developments in excess of 1,000m² (gross) of convenience floorspace and 2,000m² (gross) of comparison floorspace located outside of established retail cores will be assessed by the following criteria.

- Compliance with the 'Sequential Approach';
- Impact on the town and village centres, including cumulative impact;
- The relationship of the application to any Development Plan or Local Area Plan allocation;
- The development's contribution to town / village / centre improvement;
- The development's contribution to site and / or area regeneration;
- The quality of access by all modes of transport and by foot and bicycle;
- The development's role in improving the competitiveness of the County and sub areas of the County;
- The extent to which it is relevant to consider the imposition of restrictions on the range of goods permitted for sale.

4.5.9 Design Quality

The 2012 Retail Planning Guidelines are accompanied by the Retail Design Manual (April 2012). The Manual provides planning authorities, developers and designers with

evidence based quality principles to ensure that future planning for the retail sector is focussed on the creation of vibrant, quality places. Meath County Council will seek to promote quality design in all retail developments supported by the necessary policy frameworks. This is of particular importance due to the visual dominance role which retail plays in a town or village streetscape. Section 11.7 (of Development Management Guidelines and Standards) provides guidance on Retail Development whilst individual Town Development Plans and Local Areas Plans include a range of design principles and policies which respond to local circumstances.

It is essential that the following issues are also addressed:

- Visual Integration – this relates to the integration of retail developments, including their car parking requirements, into streetscapes and roofscapes at town or village level. This is of particular importance for Architectural Conservation

Areas, historic areas, protected structures or areas which have a fine grained building pattern.

- Access and Mobility – this relates to all modes of transport including goods vehicles, workers, customers, tourists, cyclists, pedestrians, etc. The County Development Plan includes policies which encourage and facilitate the greater use of public transport where it is available and encourage greater pedestrian and cycling usage through appropriate linkages to other parts of the town or village.
- Use Integration – This seeks to integrate large scale retail developments with other appropriate uses which may include office, leisure, community and residential use.

General Policies and Objectives

The Retail Strategy identifies a number of general policies which are intended to shape and guide retailing in the County over the period of the County Development Plan and beyond.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

ED POL 21	To implement the Meath County Retail Strategy 2013 - 2019.
ED POL 22	To promote and encourage the major enhancement of retail floorspace, primarily comparison goods and town centre functions in Navan to sustain its competitiveness and importance as a Primary Growth Centre in the Greater Dublin Area.
ED POL 23	To support the vitality and viability of existing designated centres and facilitate a competitive and healthy environment for the retailing industry into the future by ensuring that future growth in retail floorspace responds to the identified retail hierarchy.
ED POL 24	To support the development of Core Retail Areas as identified within the County Retail Strategy and reinforces the role and function of the Core Retail Areas.
ED POL 25	To adhere to the provisions of the Sequential Approach in the consideration of retail applications located outside of core retail areas.

ED POL 26

To have regard to the policies and objectives of the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008-2016.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

ED OBJ 8

To implement the following specific objectives for County Meath, as identified within the County Retail Strategy, in order to ensure the continued vitality and viability of town centres, including:

- Facilitate the identification, promotion and development of key town centre opportunity sites;
- Promote the revitalisation of vacant and derelict properties/shop units;
- Encourage infill development and the redevelopment of derelict and obsolete sites;
- Promote ongoing environmental improvements to the public realm;
- Prevent overdevelopment of particular non retail uses such as takeaways in Core Retail Areas;
- Promote activities including festivals, events, street markets and farmer's/ country markets in each town.

4.6**Tourism****4.6.1 Existing Resources**

Meath, the Heritage Capital of Ireland, has much to offer as a tourist destination, in particular its rich heritage, quality rural landscape, attractive towns and villages, and its appealing coastline. Meath has one of Europe's best collections of prehistoric sites and monuments and a unique blend of history and culture. As a result, the county has a large number of visitor attractions, the most famous being the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne incorporating the passage tombs at Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth. The Battle of the Boyne site (now incorporating Oldbridge House and Estate), Trim Castle and the Hill of Tara have also a high profile in both the domestic and overseas markets. Loughcrew, the Royal site of Tara, Tailteann, the Hill of Ward, Christian sites at Kells, Slane, Donaghmore, Killeen, Dunsany and Duleek, monastic ruins at Bective and Trim, grand

country houses from the 18th Century onwards and associated prestigious gardens throughout the county all bear testimony to Meath's rich historic past and the county's inexhaustive list of attractions.

Visitors attracted by outdoor pursuits are well catered for with options such as:

- 16 golf courses including Killeen Castle which hosted the 2011 Solheim Cup and Knightsbrook, Trim which hosted the 2011 Junior Solheim Cup event;
- Four race courses – Fairyhouse, Navan, Bellewstown and Laytown Strand;
- A large number of approved equestrian centres;
- 3 Heritage Walking Routes – Kells Girley Bog Eco Walk, Boyne Ramparts Heritage Walk and Trim Castle River Walk;
- Forest Walks such as Loughcrew Gardens and Mullaghmeen Forest (Oldcastle),

- Littlewood Forest (Slane), Balrath Wood (Kentstown), and Dalgan Park (Navan);
- Historic Town Walks in Trim, Slane, Kells, Navan and Gormonston / Stamullen with Heritage Trails in Athboy, Duleek, Dunshaughlin & Moynalty;
- Anglers can fish the Boyne and its tributaries for wild brown trout and Atlantic salmon whilst coarse angling is facilitated in the Royal Canal (Enfield), Lough Sheelin and the North Meath lakes with sea angling along the coast;
- Swimming, walking and kiting along the 10 kilometre coastline.

The expansion of the tourism sector is positively influenced by the following:

- The wealth of the county's cultural and natural heritage;
- The range of activities catering for outdoor pursuits;
- The county's accessibility and proximity to the national Gateway (the primary access point to the country and home to the largest domestic market).

According to the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (*End of Year Review 2011 and Outlook for 2012*), "the positives of the past year, including movement to recovering competitiveness, growth in visitor numbers from Ireland's top source markets and some improvement in the fortunes of businesses in the sector, provide a sound foundation for further recovery. The industry has yet again proved its resilience." The upturn in tourism reaffirms the industry's capacity to assist in an export led economic recovery.

4.6.2 National Tourism Development Strategy 2010-2012

The Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland marketing strategies for international and national markets seek to develop, promote and market the key destinations within the country as the main attractors to entice visitors. Fáilte Ireland, through the Discover Ireland marketing campaign, is implementing

a strategy to develop up to 10 world class tourism destinations in Ireland. The Boyne Valley has been identified as one of these 10 destinations. The Boyne Valley has one of the best landscapes of its kind in Europe in terms of archaeology, with prehistoric sites and monuments, all within close reach. This places Meath in a significantly advantageous position to attract significant visitor numbers to the county.

4.6.3 Louth and Meath – Tourism Development Study 2010

Fáilte Ireland commissioned the 'Louth and Meath – Tourism Development Study' (2010) which examined the performance of tourism in each county, the strength and depth of its tourism products and infrastructure, and highlighted the potential for further tourism development. The Study provides a series of recommendations for the future development of the tourism product, marketing and investment to maximise the economic returns from tourism. The Boyne Valley is identified as the project with the greatest opportunity and potential to drive significant new tourism business to the counties of Meath and Louth. The continued collaboration between both counties will ensure a strategic and targeted approach towards the creation of a world class tourism destination.

Figures collated by Fáilte Ireland outline that in 2010, 135,000 overseas visitors came to Meath with more than half from Britain and approximately a quarter from mainland Europe and from North America respectively. The overseas revenue was estimated at €54 million. It is estimated that an additional 126,000 domestic visitors also visited the county. The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre was the top visitor attraction in the East & Midlands Region with 209,270 visitors followed by Trim Castle which attracted 59,416 visitors and the Battle of the Boyne Site which followed with 40,334 visitors.

4.6.4 “Past Now Future” Meath Tourism Strategic Review 2005 – 2010 and Strategic Plan 2011-2013

The Strategy highlights the major tourism achievements in Meath between 2005 – 2010 in relation to infrastructure, marketing and communications, product development and training whilst the achievements of Meath Tourism should be further developed upon. These achievements include the improved accessibility of Meath, additional quality hotels, improvement in the appearance of towns and villages through ‘Pride of Place’ initiative, development of ‘Meet in Meath’ to attract business tourism, Meath Marketing & Tourism awards and the setting up of Economic Development Unit of Meath County Council.

The Strategic Plan recommends that Meath Tourism channels its focus of activity into two main areas to make a national and international impact:

1. Heritage and Culture Tourism as Ireland’s Heritage Capital – regard to the Boyne Valley Development Plan & the Louth and Meath Tourism Development Strategy.
2. Business Tourism – using the ‘Meet in Meath’ brand as a communication vehicle which ties into ‘Meet in Ireland’ business proposition. ‘Meet in Meath’ is acknowledged as the ‘business tourism’ arm of Meath Tourism.

All promotional activities should fall under these two main headings to ensure Meath achieves greater penetration in the heritage and culture arena and the concenitive (conference and incentive) market, Ireland’s two most lucrative visitor areas.

The Strategy advocates the retention of the single brand proposition namely ‘Meath, Irelands Heritage Capital’. However, it is timely to review and strengthen the county’s heritage proposition and also to build and showcase the culture proposition thus increasing the value of the overall experience. It is considered

that Meath’s cultural offering is as strong as its heritage, which it should package to showcase its strengths. The Strategy advocates the development of a University of Culture to link the culture offering with the heritage proposition for Meath. Navan is suggested as a suitable opportunity to develop a suitable campus setting. A University would bring vibrancy, employment, housing demands, drive commerce and enhance the environment in which it is situated. The Strategy advocates the carrying out of a feasibility study to examine the potential of this idea and should be undertaken as the Major Product Development project from 2010 – 2013. The provision of a 3rd level music facility as part of this proposal should be considered in the feasibility study.

The Strategy acknowledges that directional signage for main roads and motorways is relatively good in Meath. Signs heralding “Meath / Boyne Valley” from motorways must continue to be exploited in a safe and branded manner. However, the Strategy criticises signage in secondary and tertiary roads which is considered weak and that an action plan should be drawn up. The Strategy requests that a complete review of Meath’s directional signage needs should take place by the Local Authority assisted by marketing experts inclusive of a maintenance programme.

The Strategy recommends that the county needs to assert itself in terms of its acquisition of national and international sporting events to complement its heritage and culture remit. The hosting of the Solheim Cup was a major coup for Meath. However, the county needs to continue to attract similar standard large scale events related to sport, music, equestrian, motorsports, cycling, etc. Meath needs to continue to capitalise on its experience, ability, access, location and proximity to Dublin to host additional big events.

4.6.5 Rural Tourism and the LEADER Programme

Through the LEADER Programme, Meath Partnership provides a range of services and

funding support for tourism enterprise and community activities that can support the tourism economy. Investment in tourism includes direct support for the development of tourism accommodation, facilities and infrastructure and indirect provision for the conservation and upgrade of built and natural heritage features, support for festival development and cultural activities and works to enhance and upgrade village and rural environments.

Meath County Council will continue to support Meath Partnership in its work with rural communities and will seek to promote and encourage tourism activity and projects and initiatives involving the improvement of amenities, facilities and infrastructure, which can contribute to a strong, high potential rural tourism offering with maximum economic and social opportunity for local communities. Tourism-related developments should take account of opportunities to showcase the wealth of built and natural heritage assets existing in the County, in addition to the strong potential for eco-tourism development, environmental improvement, passive and active recreation, culinary tourism and creative industries which can help to support the tourism economy.

4.6.6 Integrated Rural Tourism Complexes

The location of the county largely in the hinterland of the largest Metropolitan area in the state has generated considerable demand over the past decade for golf course and leisure estate type developments with major complexes developed at Killeen Castle, Oldbridge Estate and Carton Demesne. The development of significant family attractions such as Tayto Park at Curragha, Ashbourne has had a positive impact in attracting a different target market to the county, who, when visiting these sites, create spin off revenue for local shops, hotels and other commercial businesses. The addition of Tayto Park has provided a new national tourist attraction in the county deviating from the traditional attraction

based on its heritage and cultural offer.

The Development Plan acknowledges this regional amenity and tourism role for the county and will endeavour to support the development of these parks, farms and complexes at suitable locations throughout the county.

4.6.7 Tourist Infrastructure

Managing the provision of tourist accommodation is essential to ensuring the delivery of a sustainable tourism strategy. The provision of new tourist facilities should respect the outstanding quality and variety of the natural and built environment in Meath and should not damage the resource or prejudice its future tourist value in any way. The provision of such accommodation within existing towns and villages can contribute to the economic performance of these settlements. The important role that towns and villages throughout the county play as tourist centres and the facilities and services they can provide are recognised by Meath County Council.

Meath County Council will endeavour to facilitate new tourist attractions which have regard to the rural character or heritage of the area, such as the opening of historic houses or gardens to the public, farm visits, museums and interpretation centres.

Meath County Council recognises that in some sensitive landscapes, where development must be carefully managed, there may be a need, exceptionally, for a 'one-off' unique facility to meet a particular tourist need. Such unique proposals will be considered on their merits taking into account need, location, siting, the need for an Appropriate Assessment and an assessment of potential environmental impacts. In assessing such proposals regard will be had to the Landscape Character Assessment for the County.

Town & Village Enhancement

Meath County Council has sought to improve the overall appearance of the County's towns and villages in recent years through Pride

of Place Initiatives, Tidy Towns Initiative and through policies contained within Local Area Plans and through effective development management and enforcement. The proposed Renaissance Programme being developed by Meath Partnership under the Rural Development Programme will further enhance the physical appearance of a number of towns and villages across the County and is generally welcomed. The Council will include a policy to work closely with local communities in implementing village design plans that have been prepared in a public consultation process whilst ensuring that such plans are consistent with adopted Local Area Plans and development objectives contained in the County Development Plan.

Hotels

It is an objective of Fáilte Ireland to increase overnight stays in Meath and the wider Boyne Valley. The Meath Tourism Strategic Review 2011-2013 states that Meath has satisfied its need for quality hotels and recommends that the county should now actively promote this accommodation. It is generally accepted that a high quality hotel stock with many new rooms have been developed in the last number of years. In addition, the County has a range of other options ranging from high quality B & B's and Guesthouses to more budget conscious options including hostels.

Holiday Homes

With the possible exception of the coastal strip, County Meath is not under significant pressure for second home or holiday home development in rural areas. The application of the rural housing policy allied to the proximity of the county to the Metropolitan Area is considered causal factors in this regard.

Caravan and Camping Sites

The Council recognises that the provision of sites for caravans, motor homes and camping is an important element in the overall accommodation provision of all holiday makers satisfying all price ranges and for a variety of lifestyles. However, caravan sites can be visually obtrusive features in the landscape

detracting from its scenic quality and amenity and for this reason Meath County Council will ensure that the design, operation and impact of such tourist and visitor accommodation does not unreasonably affect the amenity of the surrounding landscape.

Tourist Signage

Improvements to the roads infrastructure over the past decade have made Meath more accessible. However, if unmanaged, it also offers the opportunity for tourists to pass through Meath even quicker with the threat that Meath could become a 'corridor county'. The County must continue to be vigorously marketed and promoted as a quality tourist destination. This can be achieved in association with the NRA through the provision of service signs, heritage signage and attraction signage. Once off the primary routes, the signage must continue to be clear, concise, uniform and easily followed. This should not necessarily mean more signs in rural areas as it is considered that a proliferation of signage detracts from the rural character.

The "*Louth Meath – Tourism Development Study*" (2010) recommends a number of actions to be carried out with regard to signage within the Boyne Valley.

1. Develop and implement a common look and feel to the interpretation at all sites around the Boyne Valley. This will require investment in an audit of sites requiring interpretation and signage to determine gaps, the development of common interpretative story, and the need for signage and display panels
2. Re-signing of the 120km Boyne Valley Driving route. This requires an audit of the requirements for signage of the Boyne Valley driving route and investing in signage and determining gaps on the route in terms of stop off points for visitors and addressing these.

Fáilte Ireland provided funding to allow the commissioning of consultants to undertake these actions and their work is nearing completion.

4.6.8 Walking and Cycling Routes

The “Louth and Meath – Tourism Development Study” (2010) identified key product development needs. In particular, the audit noted that there is a very limited cycle route network within County Meath. This Development Plan recognises the important role that suitable cycle and pedestrian routes have in the attraction of tourists to the County. Meath County Council will endeavour to

assist in the delivery of such routes and, in particular, the delivery of the Trim – Navan – Slane - Drogheda cycle / greenway along the River Boyne and the Navan – Kingscourt cycle / greenway.

Pedestrian walks, such as the Royal Canal, will also be facilitated and maintained. Other routes that arise from time to time will also be supported. Public rights of way which contribute generally to the amenities of the county and local areas will be protected and maintained. See Section 6.9 in the Transportation Chapter for additional policies and objectives on walking and cycling.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

ED POL 27	To promote the development of sustainable tourism and encourage the provision of a comprehensive range of tourism facilities, subject to satisfactory location, siting and design criteria, the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and areas identified as sensitive landscapes in the Landscape Character Assessment for the county.
ED POL 28	To encourage new and high quality investment in the tourism industry in Meath with specific reference to leisure activities (such as golf, equestrian, walking, cycling, angling, outdoor pursuits and family orientated activities) and accommodation in terms of choice, location and quality of product.
ED POL 29	To protect and conserve those natural, built and cultural heritage features that form the basis of the county’s tourism attraction and to seek to restrict development which would be detrimental to scenic and identified natural and cultural heritage assets.
ED POL 30	To co-operate with Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Meath Tourism, Louth County Council, the Boyne Valley Tourism Officer and any other relevant bodies in the implementation of the Boyne Valley Destination Development Strategy.
ED POL 31	To enable, facilitate and encourage the growth and sustainability of the tourism sector through the provision of tourism enterprise developments in rural areas including open farm and integrated rural developments subject to the provision of adequate infrastructure and compliance with normal planning considerations.

ED POL 32

To facilitate, where appropriate, the conversion of former demesnes and estates and their outbuildings into resort type developments subject to good planning and architectural conservation practice.

ED POL 33

To ensure that the provision of dwellings, which form part of an integrated tourist development, will not be occupied as permanent places of residence and that they will in any event only be considered favourably in the case of refurbishment and adaptation of a Protected Structure or group of structures within attendant grounds into modern day use.

ED POL 34

To promote Tayto Park in Curragha as a flagship family visitor attraction in the county, subject to the normal development management standards. Meath County Council will support and encourage further appropriate development of the integrated tourism product at Tayto Park subject to the provision or upgrade of the requisite physical infrastructure.

ED POL 35

To facilitate the development of high-quality tourist accommodation such as hotels, hostels, B & Bs / Guesthouses, etc. at suitable locations, in both urban and rural settings throughout the County subject to ensuring a high standard of architecture, the provision of adequate infrastructure and compliance with normal planning considerations.

ED POL 36

To consider the provision of caravan, camping and motor home sites at suitable locations throughout the County in both urban and edge of urban settings or as part of integrated rural tourism complexes. In all instances, Meath County Council will seek to ensure a high standard of layout, design and amenity in such proposals whilst safeguarding the landscape character in sensitive areas.



ED POL 37	To encourage new holiday home developments to locate within either established villages or small towns or in distinct clusters in rural areas capable or absorbing such developments.
ED POL 38	To encourage proposals to reinstate, conserve and/or replace existing ruinous or disused dwellings for holiday home purpose subject to normal planning considerations relating to design, safe access and provision of any necessary wastewater disposal facilities.
ED POL 39	To accommodate appropriately sited holiday home development, subject to normal planning considerations in relation to design, access and environmental matters.
ED POL 40	To support developments which will enable and encourage countryside recreation and an increased appreciation of the natural environment, through facilitating the development of community walks, off road trails / rural trail developments, parks and other outdoor amenities and recreational infrastructure. All proposals will require screening to determine if a full Appropriate Assessment of the likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites is required.
ED POL 41	To facilitate and support the implementation of Village Design Plans and other community led projects to enhance village environments that have been prepared through a public consultation process whilst ensuring that such plans are consistent with adopted Local Area Plans for such centres and town/village development objectives contained in the County Development Plan.
ED POL 42	To encourage and support sensitive development which provides for the appreciation, interpretation, upgrade and provision of access to natural habitats, scenic vistas and heritage features for the benefit of rural tourism subject to normal planning and nature conservation considerations.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

ED OBJ 9	To explore the provision of sustainable medium and long distance walking routes.
ED OBJ 10	To support Meath Tourism and other relevant bodies to identify, develop and implement a common brand of signage in the county.

4.7

Prevention of Major Accidents

The Seveso II Directive, 96/82/EC (and extended under Directive 2003/105/EC) relates to the prevention of major accidents that involve dangerous substances and the limitation of their consequences for humans and the environment. It applies to establishments where dangerous substances are produced, used, handled or stored. The European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations S.I No. 74 of 2006 transposes this Directive into Irish Law. The National Authority for Occupational Safety has been designated as the central competent authority for enforcement of these regulations.

The Directive aims to prevent major accident hazards involving dangerous substances and chemicals and the limitation of their consequences for both people and the environment. These objectives must be pursued through the control of the following;

- The siting of new establishments;
- Modifications to existing establishments, and;
- Development in the vicinity of an establishment which, by virtue of its type or siting, is likely to increase the risk or consequence of a major accident.

Article 12 of the Directive (2003/105/EC) provides that appropriate consultation procedures must be put in place to ensure that before decisions are taken, technical advice is available to Planning Authorities in respect of relevant establishments. The Health and Safety Authority (or the National Authority for Occupational Health and Safety, NAOSH) provides such advice where appropriate in respect of planning applications within a certain distance of the perimeter of these sites. The distance varies depending on the nature of activity at the site. Such technical advice will be taken into account in the consideration of applications for planning permission.

Table 4.7: List of Seveso Sites in County Meath or Sites where Consultation Distances extend into County Meath

Name of Company	Seveso Location	Seveso Tier	Consultation Radius Distance from Facility	County
Grassland Fertilizers Limited	The Pound Road, Slane	Lower Tier Site	700 metres	Meath
Marsh Oil Products Limited	Marsh Road, Drogheda	Lower Tier Site	400 metres	Louth
Flogas Ire. Ltd	Marsh Road, Drogheda	Upper Tier Site	600 metres	Louth
Mallinckrodt Medical Imaging	Damastown Industrial Estate, Mullhuddart	Upper Tier Site	1,000 metres	Fingal
Aestellas Ireland Co. Ltd	Damestown Road, Damastown Industrial Park, Mullhuddart	Lower Tier Site	1,000 metres	Fingal
Contract & General Warehousing Limited	Westpoint Business Park, Navan Road, Mullhaddart	Upper Tier Site	700 metres	Fingal

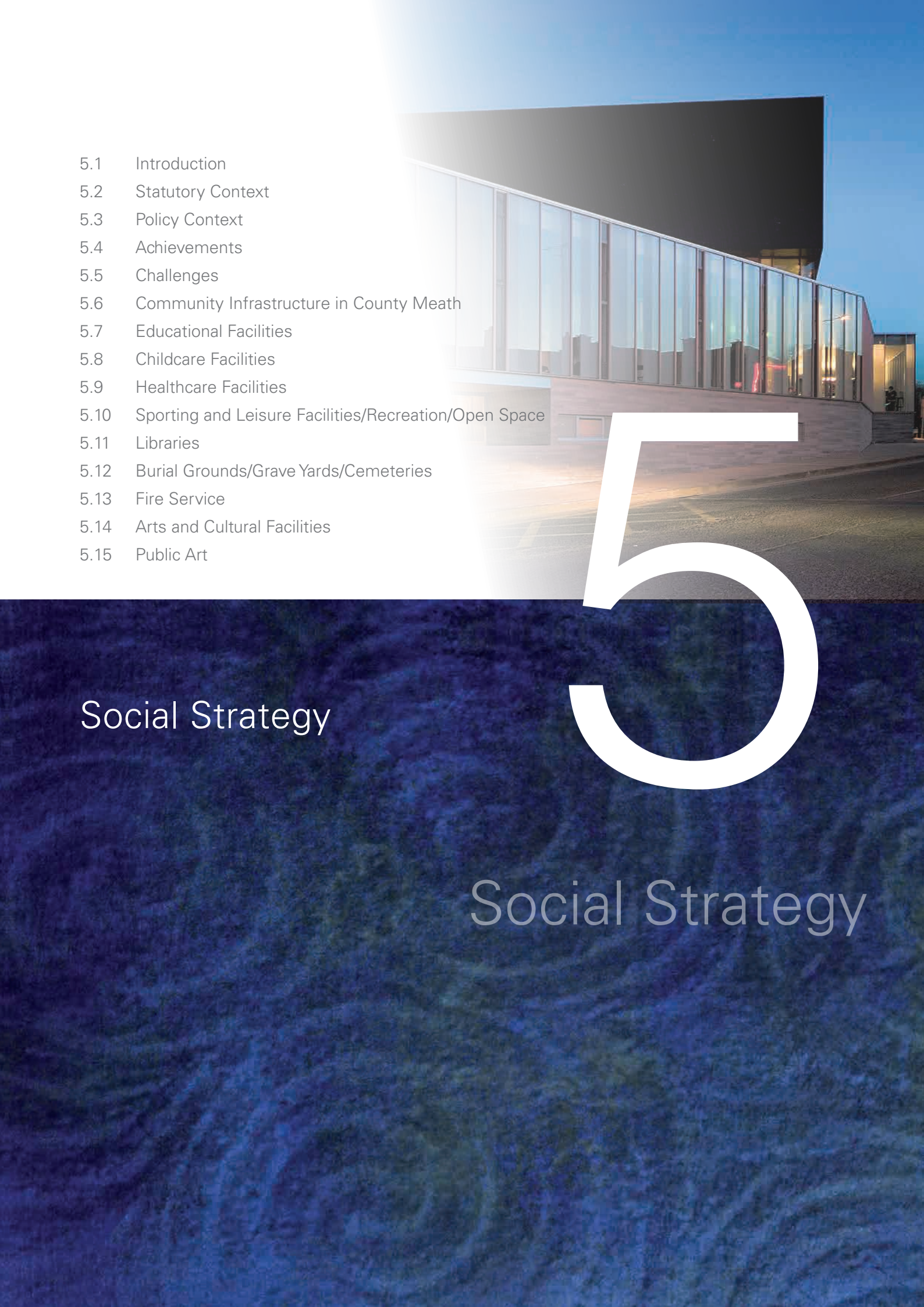
At present there is one Seveso II site in County Meath and this is outlined in Table 4.7. In addition, there are 5 no. Seveso II sites in neighbouring counties Louth and Dublin where

the 'Seveso Consultation Distance' extends into County Meath or whose consultation distance overlaps with the consultation distance of adjoining sites which extend into the county.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

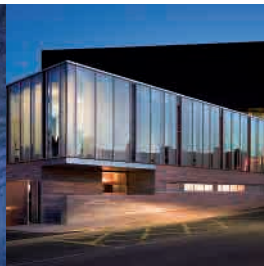
ED POL 43	To comply with the Seveso II Directive in reducing the risk and limiting the potential consequences of major industrial accidents.
ED POL 44	To permit new Seveso development only in low risk locations within acceptable distances from vulnerable residential, retail and commercial development.
ED POL 45	To ensure that land use policies take account of the need to maintain appropriate distances between future major accident hazard establishments and residential areas, areas of substantial public use and of particular natural sensitivity or interest.
ED POL 46	To have regard to the advice of the Health & Safety Authority when proposals for new SEVESO sites are being considered or modifications to existing Seveso sites are being considered.
ED POL 47	To have regard to the advice of the Health & Safety Authority when proposals for development within the consultation zone of a SEVESO site are being considered.

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- 5.1 Introduction
 - 5.2 Statutory Context
 - 5.3 Policy Context
 - 5.4 Achievements
 - 5.5 Challenges
 - 5.6 Community Infrastructure in County Meath
 - 5.7 Educational Facilities
 - 5.8 Childcare Facilities
 - 5.9 Healthcare Facilities
 - 5.10 Sporting and Leisure Facilities/Recreation/Open Space
 - 5.11 Libraries
 - 5.12 Burial Grounds/Grave Yards/Cemeteries
 - 5.13 Fire Service
 - 5.14 Arts and Cultural Facilities
 - 5.15 Public Art

Social Strategy

Social Strategy

5



Social Strategy

5.1

Introduction

Meath County Council recognises the important role community infrastructure plays when forming sustainable communities. A community's quality of life does not solely depend on housing, employment and infrastructure support, but also on access to social, community and cultural facilities that are fundamental to social cohesion and promote a sense of community and personal enhancement. The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 reiterate this fact: "The timely and adequate provision of educational, health care, retail and other community facilities are central to enhancing the quality of

life for the citizens of the Greater Dublin Area".

Community infrastructure is an umbrella term that is usually understood to include buildings and other facilities related to serving the needs of the public for social, cultural, health, educational, childcare, religious, recreational and leisure needs. The facilities and services are generally provided by public sector bodies or by the community themselves, but can also be provided by the private sector. Community infrastructure may also encompass small retail outlets such as local shop, pub or post office as these can also help maintain and nurture a sense of community at local level.

5.2

Statutory Context

Section 10(2) of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011 as amended sets out a list of mandatory objectives to be included in a Development Plan. A number of these objectives relate to social infrastructure, either directly or indirectly. (Please refer to Appendix 1 which lists the relevant mandatory objectives to be included in the Development Plan.)

It should be noted that while the policy context for the achievement of the community infrastructure throughout the County will be contained in the County Development Plan, the specific objectives relating to the reservation of land for such purposes will generally be contained in the individual Local Area Plans, as appropriate.

5.3

Policy Context

The National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (NSS) and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 (RPGs) emphasise the importance of developing strong, vibrant and sustainable communities. The Social Strategy of this Plan reflects the principles of these over-arching documents.

Appendix 2 sets out detailed information on the relevant policy context for this strategy.

Development standards with respect to the provision of community infrastructure are set out in detail in Chapter 11 Development Management Guidelines & Standards'.

5.4

Achievements

Progress has been made in recent years with significant improvements in residential amenity with new mixed-use neighbourhoods and communities emerging throughout the county, with access to neighbourhood centre facilities and necessary social infrastructure. On a smaller scale, a number of new playgrounds in parks and residential areas have been provided throughout the county.

There has also been a greater emphasis on the provision of arts and cultural facilities.

Meanwhile, the provision of community facilities, amenities and open spaces have been key considerations in the preparation of the Local Area Plans.

In terms of recreational and sporting profile the county was promoted on the international stage in September 2011 when Killeen Castle Golf Club in Dunsany successfully hosted the most prestigious event in ladies golf, the Solheim Cup.

5.5

Challenges

Creating sustainable neighbourhoods requires sustainable densities that make the necessary facilities and services viable, as well as good public transport connections. Whilst County Meath continues to develop a stronger urban structure, there are still parts of the county, principally in the north west, west, north east and south west that have a primarily rural

structure. The dispersed nature of the rural population limits the economic viability of providing public, social and cultural services. Meath County Council is committed to strengthening the settlement structure and service integration across the County and aims to eliminate gaps in facility and service provision where these exist.



Furthermore, having regard to the increases in population during the lifetime of the previous Development Plan (13% increase for Meath in the last census period), and given the increases in the national birth rate reported by the CSO, the provision of additional childcare and educational accommodation continues to be a challenge. The scale of the increased demand for additional related services is as great as ever.

The provision of a range of facilities and services to cater for all, such as schools, care centres, cultural spaces and transport, involves a number of agencies and will require an inter-agency response to ensure the timely provision of such social infrastructure. It will also be essential to ensure the optimum use of community facilities and services between neighbourhoods and communities throughout the county.

5.6

Community Infrastructure in County Meath

A strong social foundation exists in County Meath with its long standing history of community organisations. This is reflected in the presence of voluntary agencies and community initiatives that continue to play a central role in contributing to the delivery of a wide variety of local social services. A key component of the overall community facilities strategy is to encourage and assist in the formulation, development, guidance and co-ordination of community organisations, local interest and self-help groups. Co-operation between these groups and the Local Authority can ensure that better use is made of existing facilities and resources to meet current and future needs.

Different levels of service provision are appropriate to settlements of different sizes, it is therefore imperative that special care is taken with the siting of community facilities and careful consideration should be given to locating appropriate facilities and services within towns and villages as the need arises and which are accessible to all sectors of the community.

The primary role of the Council is to reserve sufficient lands within the settlement centres to meet likely future demands for community infrastructure. A recurring problem relating to the provision of this infrastructure, in particular education and health facilities which are mainly provided by public bodies, is that the reservation of such sites by appropriate zoning is not in itself a guarantee of the timely provision of a necessary community facility. The Town Development Plans and Local Area Plans will seek to resolve this difficulty by linking the provision of community facilities to increases in residential population within large residential areas by means of phasing arrangements. Meath County Council has an obligation under Section 15 (1) of the Planning & Development Act to “take such steps within its powers as may be necessary for securing the objectives of the development plan”. This will include the appropriation of land by CPO by Meath County Council and/or the Town Councils of Navan, Trim and Kells to make it available for a particular purpose or use.

GOAL

Meath County Council is committed to developing a society based on equality, inclusion and participation for all, with each individual having a right to live their life in a pleasant, safe environment with access to necessary services and facilities to fulfil their aspirations and potentials.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

SOC POL 1	To support the provision and distribution of a range of social infrastructure facilities in accordance with the Settlement and Core Strategies to meet the needs of the County's population in liaison with other statutory, voluntary, private sector and community groups.
SOC POL 2	To ensure that, where practicable, community, recreational and open space facilities are clustered, with the community facilities being located in local centres or combined with school facilities as appropriate. Community facilities should be located close to or within walking distance of housing, accessible to all sectors of the community and facilitate multi-use functions through their design and layout.
SOC POL 3	To consult with relevant communities in the development of any significant public space by the Council.
SOC POL 4	To seek to ensure the efficient and timely delivery of community and social facilities commensurate with the needs of the resident population and to assist in the delivery of such facilities.
SOC POL 5	To require as part of all new large residential and commercial developments, and in existing developments where appropriate, that provision is made for facilities including local/neighbourhood shops, childcare facilities, schools and recreational facilities, and to seek their provision concurrent with development.

5.6.1 Social Inclusion

Everyone should have the right to fulfill their potential, through access to high quality public services, education, and employment opportunities, adequate housing and an attractive and safe environment. It is, therefore, important that our living, working and leisure environments are designed and maintained in a manner that is accessible to all.

Social inclusion is important in creating sustainable neighbourhoods. The Development Plan with its range of strategies to create a better physical environment and to promote access to housing, community facilities, public transport, etc., has an important role in promoting social inclusion in the county. This

chapter of the Development Plan includes policies that seek to ensure that the social, community and cultural needs of all persons and communities are catered for through the provision of well dispersed and easily accessible social and community infrastructure contributing to and ensuring the delivery of a high quality of life.

5.6.2 Meath County Development Board

The role of Meath County Development Board which is statutorily recognised is to co-ordinate the delivery of services provided by a large number of statutory, private, community and voluntary agencies with responsibility for supporting economic, social and cultural

development in the County. It also has a key role in the facilitation of the integration of local government and local development.

Meath County Development Board (CDB) launched its ten-year integrated strategy for the county 'Le Chéile - An Integrated Strategy for Meath to 2011' in January 2002. A review of this strategy was undertaken in 2005 entitled 'Meath in Transition.' In 2008, the CDB commenced a second review of both Le Cheile-An Integrated Strategy for Meath to 2012 and 'Meath in Transition 2005-2008. The revised Strategy entitled 'An Mhi ag Obair Le Cheile/Meath Working Together 2009-2012' was published in 2009. Social Inclusion is an overarching theme in all of the actions contained within the plan. A Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) Group has been established, which is a sub-group of Meath County Development Board, (CDB), to contribute to the better co-ordination of social inclusion services/activities at local level.

5.6.3 Groups with Specific Design/Planning Needs

There are several groups considered to have specific planning and design needs. These include children, young people, people with a disability or illness, lone parents with young families, older people, travellers and members of ethnic minority groups. It is a policy of the council to recognise that people with special needs should enjoy an appropriate living environment and to support the provision of facilities for people with special requirements. The Barcelona Declaration aims to encourage local government to make provision for the inclusion of people with disabilities in the community. The Declaration contains agreed actions to be undertaken by Local Authorities in pursuit of barrier-free design in all environments.

The aforementioned groups with special requirements, to a large extent, overlap with the list of target groups of those at risk of social exclusion as defined by Pobal and which are

explored in detail in the Meath Partnership Local Community Development Programme (LCDP) Strategic Plan.

5.6.4 Community Participation

The community and voluntary sector has always played a considerable and positive role in Irish society. The community and voluntary sector in County Meath is well established with over 1,000 groups who participate in the Community Fora facilitated by the Community Department of Meath County Council involved across a range of areas including health, environment, education, sports and recreation, arts, music, community development and residents associations. Meath County Council supports and encourages volunteerism, local action and more participation by citizens and community-based groups in society.

Meath County Council is dedicated to promoting local public participation in all issues that affect each area. It recognises that active community participation is crucial to building an empowered community.

Meath County Council operates an annual "Pride of Place" Initiative, with the aim to work in partnership with communities to encourage best practice, innovation and leadership in providing vibrant sustainable communities that improve the quality of life for all through environmental improvements to towns and villages.

5.6.5 RAPID Programme

RAPID stands for *Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development* and investment for this programme comes under the remit of the National Development Plan. The Navan RAPID programme was launched in August 2002 with the aim of promoting community participation, service integration and investment in the designated RAPID estates of Navan. There are 14 such designated estates in Navan. The needs analysis for the Rapid Area and also for the Windtown Area have been completed.

5.6.6 Age Friendly Strategy

Meath County Council is engaging in the Age Friendly County Initiative. The aim is to engage older people in making their communities better, healthier and safer places in which to live and thrive. As part of this initiative, the Age Friendly Alliance was established and following extensive consultation, the Meath Age Friendly County Strategy has been completed based on the eight World Health Organisation themes of:

1. Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Respect and Social Inclusion
5. Social Participation
6. Communication and Information
7. Civic Participation and Employment
8. Community Support and Health Services.

5.6.7 Comhairle na nÓg

Meath Comhairle na nÓg comprises a group of young people from across County Meath aged between 12 and 18 years, represents all backgrounds and is fully inclusive. Meath Comhairle na nÓg is represented on a number of boards locally and at Dail na nÓg nationally and is under the direction of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Meath Comhairle na nÓg provides a forum for young people to discuss local and national issues of relevance to them and Comhairle na nÓg is recognized as the official structure for participation by young people in the development of policies and services.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

SOC POL 6	To recognise the needs of people with special needs and to support the local communities, health authorities and other bodies involved in the provision of facilities for such persons.
SOC POL 7	To promote a more inclusive society through awareness of social exclusion, poverty and deprivation in order to create sustainable communities.
SOC POL 8	To continue to co-operate with all relevant agencies to counter disadvantage and social exclusion, to secure improvements in the quality of life and to promote equality of access to public and social services.
SOC POL 9	To continue to support the concept of integrated service delivery with other state agencies.
SOC POL 10	To promote the retention of existing community services, particularly in disadvantaged areas.
SOC POL 11	To encourage and promote the renewal of disadvantaged areas, with specific reference to the principle of targeting investment.
SOC POL 12	To provide for an inclusive approach to service provision in line with relevant legislation and strategies.

SOC POL 13	To promote universal equality of access to public spaces, buildings and community services through good design leading to a safe and barrier free environment.
SOC POL 14	To support the implementation of the Age Friendly Strategy in consultation with the relevant agencies and authorities.
SOC POL 15	To consult with and support Meath Comhairle na nÓg in the development of local services and policies that may impact on the lives of young people.

OBJECTIVE

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

SOC OBJ 1	To assist in the provision of community and resource centres and youth clubs / cafes and other facilities for younger people by the identification and reservation of suitably located sites, including sites within the landbanks of the Local Authorities and by assisting in the provision of finance, where possible.
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5.7

Educational Facilities

Schools traditionally have an important role to play in developing sustainable and balanced communities and encouraging families to participate fully in life within the County. School facilities along with other community facilities are fundamental to the well being of a thriving community and help to maintain and nurture a sense of community at both local and countywide level. Central to Ireland's economic success was the economic importance of education and this has encouraged and continues to deliver an increased output of high quality graduates into the labour force.

Meath County Development Board's 'Le Chéile – An Integrated Strategy for Meath 2012' stressed that

"Education and training are fundamentally important to achieving the full potential of the people of Meath, the County's most important resource".

The growth in Meath's population in recent years continues to present new challenges in meeting the needs of all children including those in new communities, in relation to planning with particular reference to the provision of necessary physical and social infrastructure.

The changes in demographic trends that have occurred in the recent past, have far reaching effects for Meath. Due to the high percentage of those in the 0-14 age group, County Meath has a high dependent cohort. This has implications for social infrastructure provision in the county, particularly in relation to childcare facilities and primary school provision.

In addition to catering for those within the 0-14 age cohort, Meath County Council recognises the need and benefits of providing access to education for all its residents. Life long learning will increasingly become a feature of an individual's life. This will have direct implications

for the use and demands placed upon educational facilities and the need to improve access to such facilities by socially deprived sections of the community.

These factors have affected and impacted upon the composition of education and training in the County. It is imperative that County Meath adapts to, and works towards, meeting the growing demands of its population if it is to remain progressive.

5.7.1 Primary and Post Primary Sectors

There are 112 primary schools in the county. The total number of students attending Meath primary schools in 2009/10 was 23,153. There are 20 post primary schools in Meath catering for 10,890 pupils (this figure includes students from Drogheda Grammar School and Gormanstown College.) Please refer to the background paper entitled 'Distribution of Education and Childcare Facilities' for additional information on the distribution of primary and post primary facilities throughout the County. (Please refer to www.meath.ie to view all Background Papers)

5.7.1.1 Additional Primary and Post Primary Educational Requirements

The increase in population during the lifetime of the previous Development Plan (13% increase for Meath in the last census period), and given the increases in the national birth rate reported by the CSO, the provision of additional school accommodation continues to be a challenge. The scale of the increased demand for additional education facilities and school accommodation is significant.

The Minister for Education and Skills announced in January 2012 significant proposed capital investment in educational facilities with 40 new schools (20 primary schools and 20 second level schools) to be opened over the next six years to cater for growth in the school going population in the Country. The proposed schools are to cater for a predicted increase

of more than 40,000 primary school pupils and 24,900 post-primary pupils by the start of the 2017/2018 school year. The majority are proposed within the area of Dublin and its commuter belt. 15 new schools as well as extensive renovation/extension works are proposed within Meath. Please refer to the background paper entitled 'Distribution of Education and Childcare Facilities' for additional information on the distribution of proposed new primary and post primary facilities and proposed extension/renovation works throughout the County. (Please refer to www.meath.ie to view all Background Papers).

The Department of Education and Skills has identified the following additional educational requirements for County Meath as priority:

- 1 site in Ashbourne (north/west side of town) to accommodate 1 new post primary school and 2 no. primary schools on a 7ha site.
- 1 site in Navan to accommodate Navan Educate Together National School.

The provision of additional schools is being pursued in other centres throughout the County including the Enfield Johnstownbridge area in line with the Department of Education and Skills Programme.

Meath County Council will actively assist and liaise with the Department of Education and Skills (DoES) in relation to the provision of schools with particular regard to forecasting demand and the timely identification of suitable sites and phasing arrangements.

There is a growing movement within the county to promote other models of educational provision, such as the Educate Together Model and the Gaelscoil Movement.

5.7.2 Third Level Education

Great effort has been made on the part of Meath County Council and various other organisations within the county to develop third level educational initiatives e.g. The Economic

Development & Innovation Unit, Meath County Council established M.I.L.L. (Meath Initiative for Lifelong Learning) and facilitated the delivery of business related 3rd level courses in Meath (in partnership with 3rd level institutions such as NUIM, Dundalk I.T., Blanchardstown I.T. etc.). It is imperative that this sector continues to be developed during the plan period, with further outreach and joint ventures delivered into County Meath.

5.7.3 Adult & Further Education

County Meath Vocational Educational Committee (VEC) is a local statutory education and training authority whose remit includes the construction and operation of second level schools. The organisation has also been recently been tasked with a new patronage model for primary school provision. The VEC is also committed to providing adult education in County Meath. Initiatives such as Adult Literacy Classes, Community Education programmes, Vocational and Training Opportunities Schemes (VTOS), and Adult Day/Night Classes provide opportunities for those wishing to re-enter the job market to advance their career potential or as a means of building confidence.

County Meath VEC continues to increase the scope of the courses it provides for adults in order to address the growing needs and expectations of the population of County Meath. Courses are offered on a full-time and part-time basis to accommodate needs.

5.7.4 Role of Meath County Council

Decisions on the future requirements for educational facilities are primarily a matter for the educational authorities. However, the 'Provision of Schools and the Planning System, A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities' (2008) outlines that the planning system plays a critical role in anticipating future development and co-ordinating the provision of the essential supporting infrastructure such as transport, water services, schools, amenity and community facilities through the actions of the planning authorities, the investment

programmes of Government Departments and their agencies and through the private sector.

The primary role of the Council is to reserve sufficient land within the identified development centres to meet likely future demands for community facilities including education. The provision of educational facilities should be planned and implemented in concert with residential development, especially where this is undertaken in the context of Local Area Plans and Framework Plans. Where new schools are required they should be located close to, or within, the main residential areas of the town so that as many children/students as possible can walk or cycle to school. The opportunity should be taken to locate schools so that they naturally contribute to the development of a sense of community in new neighbourhoods. Where possible, these schools should be served by a dedicated and safe footpath and cycle-way network.

The current Local Area Plans and Town Development Plans have reserved adequate land for educational facilities throughout each of the urban centres for which written statements and detailed objectives were produced. However, an emerging problem for educational and other community facilities as outlined in the introduction to this section of the Development Plan is that the reservation of such sites by appropriate zoning is not in itself a guarantee of the timely provision of a necessary community facility. Meath County Council will continue to liaise with the Department of Education and Skills and Meath VEC and all providers of education, both denominational and non-denominational, to assist where possible in the development of adequate education centres. The potential for sharing facilities either between educational facilities, or with public open spaces and community facilities will also be pursued with the Department of Education and Skills.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

SOC POL 16	To facilitate the development of primary, post primary, third level, outreach, research, adult and further educational facilities to meet the needs of the county.
SOC POL 17	To ensure the provision and implementation of primary and secondary education facilities in conjunction with the planning and development of residential areas in order to maximise the opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport.
SOC POL 18	To ensure that adequate lands and services are zoned and reserved to cater for the establishment, improvement or expansion of primary and post-primary educational facilities in the County. The Council supports the concept of multi-campus educational facilities.
SOC POL 19	To co-operate with all relevant agencies in the preparation of an integrated county strategy for education and training provision.
SOC POL 20	To encourage, support and develop opportunities to open up schools to wider community use.

OBJECTIVE

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

SOC OBJ 2	To facilitate the Department of Education & Skills, Meath VEC, other statutory and non-statutory agencies in the necessary provision of primary, post primary and third level educational facilities throughout the County by reserving lands for such uses in the respective Local Area Plans.
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5.8

Childcare Facilities

The provision of childcare facilities is recognised as a key piece of social infrastructure required to enable people to access employment, education and social networks. With significant demographic and social changes occurring in County Meath, access to good quality childcare facilities is a high priority for many families.

Government policy seeks to increase the

number of childcare places and facilities available and to improve the quality of childcare services for the community. To assist Planning Authorities to this effect, the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government produced 'Planning Guidelines on Childcare Facilities' (2001) which sets out guidance on policies and objectives to be included in Development Plans.

The 'Planning Guidelines on Childcare Facilities' document identifies appropriate locations for childcare facilities including in the vicinity of concentrations of work places, of schools, of neighbourhood, district and town centres and adjacent to public transport corridors, park-and-ride facilities, pedestrian routes and dedicated cycle ways.

The Meath County Childcare Committee has been established to advance childcare at a local level and to support the development of quality childcare services within the county for all children aged 0-14. The role and function of the committee is to develop and implement a six-year strategic plan that will support the development of existing and new services. Meath County Childcare Committee (M.C.C.C.) continues to implement the 'National Strategic Plan 2011-2013 Early Childhood Care and Education Programmes' in the delivery of childhood care and education programmes which support children and families.

Childcare provision in Meath has grown dramatically over the last decade with the support of Government Investment. There are now 221 childcare services providing a total of 5,641 Childcare places compared with 1,353 places just under 10 years ago. These

places provide for a range of age groups from babies up to school age. The largest areas of growth have been in the provision of community and sessional childcare. There are currently 21 Community services in County Meath, providing approximately 547 places. Please refer to the background paper entitled 'Distribution of Education and Childcare Facilities' for information on the distribution of childcare facilities throughout the County at www.meath.ie.

Due to the downturn in the economy, services in Meath are under pressure to remain open and continued national funding is required to ensure that the sector is sustainable. Meath County Council will continue to be proactive in promoting and sustaining childcare facilities in the county. The Council will consider the "National Strategic Plan 2011-2013 Early Childhood Care and Education Programmes" in the future provision of childcare facilities in the County and also have regard to the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government's Planning Guidelines on Childcare Facilities (2001). Guidelines on the provision of childcare facilities in residential developments are set out in Chapter 11 'Development Management Guidelines and Standards' of this Development Plan.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

SOC POL 21	To encourage, promote and facilitate the provision of quality affordable childcare facilities in accordance with national policy and relevant guidelines.
SOC POL 22	To permit childcare facilities in existing residential areas provided that they do not have a significant impact on the character or amenities of an area, particularly with regard to car parking, traffic generation and noise disturbance. Where proposed facilities relate to properties which have been designed and built as dwellings, and are surrounded by other houses, a significant residential element should be retained.
SOC POL 23	To promote and encourage the provision of a network of childcare facilities that reflects the distribution of the residential population in the county and to minimise travel distance and maximise opportunities for disadvantaged communities.

SOC POL 24

To permit childcare facilities of appropriate size and scale in rural locations adjacent to development clusters, community and educational facilities provided that they do not to have a significant impact on the character or amenities of an area, particularly with regard to car parking, traffic generation and noise disturbance and subject to satisfying environmental standards and the needs of the community. Such facilities must generally:

- be required to locate within community/educational campuses, where purpose built childcare facilities are being provided;
- retain a significant residential element where proposed facilities relate to properties which have been designed and built as dwellings.

SOC POL 25

To require the provision of childcare facilities of an appropriate type and scale in suitable locations throughout the County. In particular, the development of childcare facilities at the following locations will normally be required:

- areas of concentrated employment and business parks;
- neighbourhood centres;
- large retail developments and retail warehouse parks;
- in schools or major educational facilities;
- adjacent to public transport nodes, and;
- within new and existing residential developments.

5.9**Healthcare Facilities**

Healthcare and medical facilities are provided by public, private and voluntary agencies within Co Meath. The Health Service Executive is the primary organisation responsible for the delivery of health care and personal social services to the people of Meath. Our Lady's Hospital in Navan is an acute hospital for the north-east region whilst St. Joseph's Hospital in Trim is a district facility. The residents of the county also have access to hospitals in the surrounding counties – Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda, the Midland Regional Hospital in Mullingar, Cavan General Hospital, Tullamore General Hospital and the numerous hospitals in Dublin.

The Department of Health and Children published "The Primary Care Strategy" in 2001 and this promotes a team-based approach to service provision, designed to make available a fully integrated primary care service.

Consequently, practices wishing to develop their premises are encouraged to provide a

"one stop" primary health and community care service integrated into one building. Healthcare facilities may include health centres, day centres, community nursing units, family resource centres, nursing homes / convalescent homes, community residences, sheltered workshops, activation centres and residential facilities for children and adolescents. These facilities require locations which are integrated with new and existing communities and which are easily accessible.

There is a move towards more community care based health services and the Health Service Executive operate a number of community care health centres throughout the County. Five Primary and Social Care Networks have been identified in Meath and each includes a range of community health care facilities in the following settlements:

- 1) Navan & Slane Network (Navan and Slane), 2) Kells and North Meath Network (including Kells,

Nobber, Drumconrath and Kingscourt), 3) Trim Network (Trim, Summerhill, Enfield, Athboy, Ballivor and Clonard), 4) Dunshaughlin Network (Dunshaughlin, Ashbourne and Dunboyne), Ratoath Network (facility currently not in place) and 5) East Meath Area Network (Duleek and Laytown).

The HSE offer numerous services in Meath to different sectors of society including disability services and services for older people which include day care and residential facilities including St. Joseph's Hospital Trim and Beaufort House in Navan which offers residential care and respite. Child Care services include child protection, fostering and long term care and child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). Mental health is part of the Louth-Meath mental health services which include day services, community mental health teams and acute care in Our Lady's Hospital Navan.

Meath County Council resolved at its March 2012 Council meeting to propose to the Minister of Health that the new proposed national children hospital be provided in the metropolitan area within the administrative boundary of Meath County Council.

5.9.1 Regional Hospital

The Health Partnership Report published in 2008 identified Navan as the optimum location for the development of a regional hospital for the North East region. Navan's selection is based on a number of key assets: its demographic and infrastructural attributes and also its favourable planning and development environment. Meath County Council and Navan Town Council appointed consultants to examine potentially suitable sites throughout the town and identify the optimum location to accommodate the proposed Regional Hospital. The location of the hospital in Navan is also acknowledged in the Regional Planning Guidelines. Meath County Council is committed to facilitating and assisting the Health Service Executive and the Department of Health in the

provision of a Regional Hospital in Navan. In particular, the RPGs state the following "*it is noted that a HSE study identified Navan as the optimum location for a new hospital to serve the north east region. Local level planning should address facilitating the delivery of this type of project.¹ Close consultation between the HSE and Planning Authorities in the development management process for example in the assessment of proposals which include healthcare, childcare and related projects, or appropriate siting of primary care centres, is also supported.*"

5.9.2 Role of Meath County Council

With the scale of increase in population in recent years, there has been an increase in demand for healthcare and medical facilities within the county to cater for the resident population. Future funding of health care facilities is a direct function of Central Government.

The primary role of Meath County Council in relation to health care is to ensure that there is an adequate policy framework in place inclusive of the reservation of lands should additional services be required and that health care facilities are permitted subject to good planning practice. Future provision should be planned and implemented in concert with residential development, especially where this is undertaken in the context of Local Area Plans and Framework Plans. The Council will reserve sites within development centres for health care facilities in consultation with the HSE NE.

Many factors such as environmental, educational, economic and social status also influence the health status of a population. The Council has a role to ensure that the natural environment, such as air, water and soil quality, is protected. A good quality built environment is also an important factor with the design of buildings, sufficient open space, playgrounds, pedestrian and cycle ways among others assisting in achieving the overall goal of promoting a healthy lifestyle.

¹ The North East Regional Hospital Study 2008, commissioned by the HSE.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

SOC POL 26	To co-operate with the Health Service Executive and other statutory and voluntary agencies and the private sector in the provision of appropriate health care facilities covering the full spectrum of such care from hospitals to the provision of community based care facilities subject to proper planning considerations and the principles of sustainable development.
SOC POL 27	To encourage the integration of healthcare facilities within new and existing communities and to discourage proposals that would cause unnecessary isolation or other access difficulties, particularly for the disabled, older people and children.
SOC POL 28	To ensure that adequate lands and services are available for the improvement, establishment and expansion of health services.
SOC POL 29	To consider change of use applications from residential to health care facilities / surgeries only where the privacy and amenity of adjacent occupiers can be preserved and the proposal does not have a detrimental effect on the local amenity. The full conversion of semi-detached or terraced type dwellings will not normally be permitted.
SOC POL 30	To encourage, support and facilitate the provision of a range of services for the aged population. The Council is committed to accommodating the needs of older people in rural areas by the provision, or facilitation, of nursing homes and sheltered housing developments. These facilities should be located within settlements in order to enhance overall quality of life, increase their links with, and accessibility to, local amenities, and therefore reduce the likelihood of social isolation.
SOC POL 31	To facilitate the Health Service Executive and the Department of Health in the provision of a new Regional Hospital in Navan.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

SOC OBJ 3	To facilitate the Health Service Executive and the Department of Health in the provision of health centres and other health related facilities throughout the County through various initiatives including the reservation of lands for such uses in the respective Local Area Plans.
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SOC OBJ 4

To investigate and reserve in consultation with the Health Service Executive - Dublin North East, other statutory agencies and Navan Town Council a suitable site for a Regional Hospital in Navan.

5.10**Sporting and Leisure Facilities/Recreation/Open Space**

Sporting, leisure and recreational facilities are essential to social cohesion, promoting a sense of community and can enhance a person's quality of life. One of the effects of the dramatic increase in population levels and significant housing demand and supply which has occurred in Meath in recent years is that a growing emphasis is being placed on the requirement for quality designed open space and recreational opportunities for residents, especially those living in urban areas.

The provision of facilities for sports and recreation has become an increasingly important planning issue in recent years. Increasing prosperity together with lifestyle and health considerations contribute significantly to increases in demand for all kinds of formal and informal recreation facilities. In recent years a growing emphasis is being placed on the requirement for quality designed open space and recreational opportunities for residents, especially those living in urban areas. Thus, the appropriate provision of these facilities is a key issue for Development Plans.

A Green Infrastructure Strategy has been prepared for the County. This Strategy promotes the integrated development of a Green Infrastructure network across the County to create greater access to, and linkages with, parks and informal recreation spaces. Please refer to Chapter 9 'Cultural and Natural Assets'.

Meath Local Authorities adopted a "Play Policy" in 2008. The preparation of this co-ordinated multi agency County Play Plan was led by the Community & Enterprise Department of Meath County Council. It involved carrying out an assessment to include disability access, of play facilities in each Electoral Area

identifying the level, range and standard of public and community play facilities available to children of all ages. It also identified the range of actions necessary to support the play activities of children from marginalised groups within the County. The play policy underpins the principle of a child friendly county, for children this means safe, attractive neighbourhoods where they can play, socialise and move from place to place. The principles of the Play Policy have been implemented in the Local Area Plan preparation process under the current Meath County Development Plan (2007-2013).

Meath Local Sports Partnership (LSP) was established in July 2002 under the direction of the Irish Sports Council to plan, lead and co-ordinate the development of sport and physical activity in Meath. Meath LSP's mission is to increase the level and quality of participation in sport and physical activity. Meath LSP has also published a 'Disability in Sport Strategic Plan 2009-2012'. The plan builds on the progress achieved to date and clearly defines the role of the sports partnership, agencies and associated networks in encouraging sport and physical activity for all.

The long term vision of this plan is 'a county where sport is part of the normal way of life for people with a disability' It is estimated that



approximately 12,000 people in Meath have a physical, intellectual, emotional or sensory impairment who may, as a result, encounter difficulties getting involved in sport.

5.10.1 Existing Sport and Leisure Infrastructure in County Meath

There is a long tradition of sport in County Meath, ranging from a proud Gaelic football tradition (resulting in seven All Ireland senior football titles) to horse racing at Fairyhouse, Navan, Bellewstown and Laytown. Meath is also home to some of the country's finest championship golf courses and this was demonstrated on the international stage in September 2011 when Killeen Castle Golf Club in Dunsany successfully hosted the Solheim Cup.

The presence of equestrian and related activities along with golfing facilities has a growing and an important role to play in the tourism economy. County Meath possesses many fine watercourses and water bodies throughout its area and many are rich in terms of the angling potential that they possess. Angling plays an important role in the passive recreation offer of the county.

Most villages have facilities for some organised field based sports. In addition there are 16 equestrian facilities and 16 golf courses within the county. There are also a number of walking routes such as the Boyne towpath and for swimmers, there are extensive beaches at Bettystown-Laytown. There are public swimming pools at Navan, Trim and Kells as well as private facilities in hotels.

The settlement strategy and core strategy pursued in the Development Plan are based on a hierarchy of settlements ranging from large growth towns to villages. A hierarchy of community, sporting and leisure facilities commensurate with the needs of the resident population will be pursued accordingly. It is imperative that development provides for and, if necessary, leverages the necessary sports and recreation facilities which will be accessible to all sectors of the community. These facilities are critical to the achievement of balanced sustainable development. Specific objectives will be contained in the Local Area Plans where the provision of such facilities is to be directly linked to the development of certain areas and to remedy any deficiencies identified in the audit of Sporting and Community Facilities.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

SOC POL 32	To promote the development of high quality open space areas, for both active and passive use, and formal and informal activities in accordance with the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy.
SOC POL 33	To encourage and support local sports, community groups and other groups in the provision and development of outdoor and indoor sporting and community facilities.
SOC POL 34	To support local sports groups, community groups and other groups in the development of facilities through the reservation of suitable land and the provision of funding where available and appropriate.
SOC POL 35	To cater for the sporting and recreational needs of all sectors and ages of the community and promote the integration of those with special needs into the sporting and recreational environment.

SOC POL 36	To seek alternative open space, leisure and sporting facilities provision where existing such facilities are being discontinued as part of development proposals.
SOC POL 37	To ensure that new leisure facilities where possible, are located in proximity to public transportation routes and where they can best meet the needs of the community that the facility is intended to serve.
SOC POL 38	To protect the integrity of Natura 2000 sites during the identification of suitable sites for recreation, in particular in terms of their design and use.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

SOC OBJ 5	To implement the recommendations of Meath Local Authorities Play Policy in conjunction with all relevant agencies.
SOC OBJ 6	To support Meath Local Sports Partnership in the delivery of relevant strategies and plans.

5.10.2 Public Open Space

Public open space is a critical element to the creation of a quality and distinctive urban environment, offering opportunities for both passive and active recreation, contributing to

the quality of life of residents and visitors alike and offering environmental and ecological benefits. Private open space provision is a fundamental tenet of residential amenity,



offering the resident an opportunity for safe and private recreation.

Public open space has an important function and serves a variety of purposes. Accessible, useable, dedicated open spaces and recreational facilities to meet both passive and active recreational needs are vital for residential and recreational amenity.

In new development areas, local area plans should identify the preferred location of larger open spaces including, if considered appropriate, locations in adjoining non-development areas.

Development Plans have tended in the past to emphasis detailed quantitative standards,

but there is now an increasing focus on the quality of public open space, which ensures that the reasonable expectations of users are more likely to be fulfilled. The qualitative standards set out in the 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government) relating to design, accessibility, variety, shared use, biodiversity, sustainable urban drainage systems and the provision of allotments and community gardens should be adhered to.

Public and private open space standards are set out in Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Guidelines.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

SOC POL 39	To resist the loss of existing public open space, unless alternative recreational facilities are provided in a suitable location.
SOC POL 40	To encourage where possible local community involvement in the upgrading and improvement of open spaces.
SOC POL 41	To facilitate the development of children's play areas and playgrounds in proximity to existing and proposed neighbourhood centres, where feasible.
SOC POL 42	To maintain free from development lands that are subject of a deed of dedication or identified in a planning permission as open space to ensure the availability of community and recreational facilities for the residents of the area.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

SOC OBJ 7	To examine existing public open spaces and carry out improvements where necessary to increase their usefulness as recreational spaces.
SOC OBJ 8	To provide for appropriate play provision in accordance with the Meath Local Authorities Play Policy 2008-2012 and any revisions there of.

5.11

Libraries

The library service provided by Meath County Council is playing a very important community, information, cultural and outreach role within the county. The public library service has for many years provided an important means of access to information and to (leisure) reading facilities and has played a major role in the advancement in education and literacy throughout Meath. It has also become an important venue for cultural activities.

Meath County Council manages and operates the county public library service from its headquarters in Navan. In addition there are 12 branch libraries throughout the county.

Membership of the library service currently stands at 22,589 and free membership ensures that the library service is available to all. The internet service is an additional tool of communication available to the residents of Meath and thereby has the potential to support a more inclusive society.

Meath County Council encourages groups and individuals to use the library service facilities for a wide range of activities. Most of the libraries can be accessed by community groups, free of charge, for a range of activities including exhibitions, displays, meeting areas, lectures and adult education classes etc.

In April 2005, Meath County Council approved the Library's "Development Plan 2005-2009" for the Library Service which set out a number of measures to be implemented. It provided for the expansion of the service with new facilities, upgrades and initiatives. Major upgrades of the libraries at Ashbourne and Navan have been implemented. Planning is underway for libraries at Bettystown and Ballivor and minor works are planned for other locations. The Council intends to commence a review of the Five Year Development Plan in the near future coinciding with the review of the National Plan 'Branching Out – Future Directions', 2008-2012.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

SOC POL 43

To continue to expand and improve the library service to meet the needs of the community, in line with the objectives and priorities of the Library Development Plan and subject to the availability of finance.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

SOC OBJ 9

To examine the adequacy of the existing level of public open space and recreational facilities and provide additional space and facilities as required, in Large Growth Towns I & II and Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns, subject to the availability of the necessary resources. Large areas of public open space shall include recreational facilities for families including but not limited to walkways, new and/or increased playground facilities and alternative facilities for older youths as appropriate.

SOC OBJ 10	To enhance library facilities in Navan, and to retain and develop its function as library headquarters for the county.
SOC OBJ 11	To investigate and if feasible to provide a new library in the Laytown/Bettystown area.
SOC OBJ 12	To provide a library facility at Ballivor. To explore the restoration and renovation of St. Kinneth's church to accommodate such a use.
SOC OBJ 13	To provide and improve access to library facilities and services and to encourage an integrated approach to the delivery of library, arts and other related services.

5.12

Burial Grounds / Grave Yards / Cemeteries

Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to provide for burial facilities, although the majority of facilities in Meath are provided by religious bodies.² Under the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011, the Council can include objectives to reserve land for burial grounds. The individual Local Area Plans will examine the adequacy of the existing facilities to cater for the plan period and will reserve lands within each development centre for burial facilities as required.

Changes in society have resulted in the Local Authorities providing multi-denominational grave yards in their jurisdiction. There are approximately 115 graveyards in total in Co Meath. There are three recently provided Local Authority burial grounds in Meath in Ashbourne, Duleek and Navan. Permission has been granted for a new burial ground in Dunshaughlin and extensions to burial grounds in Dunboyne and Kilcloon. These projects are at design stage. The Council

has also identified an impending shortage of burial space in Stamullen and Kilmessan. The Council's Environment and Water Services Department is presently completing a survey/needs analysis of burial ground requirements throughout the county. A preliminary analysis was presented to the Environment Strategic Policy Committee in 2012. The Council may have to consider, in the context of the scarcity of environmentally suitable land and the availability of funding, possible regional solutions to the provision of burial space at some time in the future.

In recent years there has been a tendency to remove outdated central control over the provision and operation of burial grounds and to devolve responsibility to the local level. It is becoming the norm to designate responsibility for the management of these to local community groups with the Local Authority providing funding on an annual basis to purchase equipment.

² The powers and duties of Local Authorities in relation to Burial Grounds are derived, in the first instance, from the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878 (Part III), as amended by the Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act, 1948 and more recently, the Local Government Act, 1994 and the Rules & Regulations for the Regulation of Burial Grounds 1888 and amendments thereto.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

SOC POL 44	To facilitate the provision of new burial grounds, facilities and the extension of existing cemeteries as appropriate to cater for the needs of the county.
SOC POL 45	To protect the cultural heritage of historical burial grounds within County Meath and encourage their management and maintenance in accordance with best conservation practice.
SOC POL 46	To encourage local community groups to develop, manage and maintain new burial facilities.

5.13

Fire Service

Fire fighting and other rescue services are an important public safety service provided by the local authority. There are seven fire stations at strategic locations throughout the county. Navan (the headquarters of the network), Trim, Kells, Oldcastle, Nobber, Dunshaughlin and Ashbourne.

The role and functions of the fire service are intertwined with other core services of Meath County Council such as planning, housing, water services and roads:

- planning decisions can have a major effect on the risk level in a particular area;
- good housing maintenance practices can impact significantly on the level of chimney fires;
- housing personnel liaise regularly with tenants and can be a conduit for fire safety messages;
- fire services water supply requirements need to be taken into account in designing water supply systems, and;
- the quality of roads and traffic management systems can affect fire brigade incident response times.

It is important, therefore, for the benefit of the community, that there are effective working

relationships and co-operation between the fire service and the other local authority services on a continuous basis.

Meath County Council adopted a 'Fire and Rescue Services, Strategic Plan 2009-2014' and this plan sets out a number of recommendations in relation to the fire service. The purpose of this plan was to determine whether the current Fire Service arrangements are adequate to allow Meath County Council to discharge its statutory functions under the Fire Services Act 1981 and 2003 and to bring forward an integrated plan for the effective and efficient delivery of the Fire Services Act 1981 and 2003 and associated statutory responsibilities. A total of 39 recommendations are included in the Plan. Capital funding for the development of the Fire Service and the purchase of capital equipment is provided by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

The Council has adopted the national framework for emergency planning. The Council's Major Emergency Plan is regularly updated and tested.

The County Council's Civil Defence service provides almost 200 volunteers who assist the

local authority and communities throughout the county at community events and also

in responses by Meath County Council to inclement weather and other emergencies.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

SOC POL 47

To ensure communities are adequately serviced by a modern and effective Fire Service for the county and to facilitate the accommodation of fire service facilities in locations that allow ease of access and safe functioning with respect to the road network.

SOC POL 48

To facilitate the implementation of the 'Fire and Rescue Services, Strategic Plan 2009-2014', or as otherwise amended.

5.14

Arts and Cultural Facilities

Arts and cultural facilities not only contribute to the artistic, social and general quality of life of residents but also attract visitors and investment to the area. Arts and cultural facilities are wide ranging and include community and arts centres, museums, theatres and music venues. Libraries can also serve as arts and cultural outlets. Through the appointment of a County Arts Officer and the development and implementation of two County Arts Development Plans to date, Meath County Council has affirmed its belief in the importance of the arts to individuals and communities. It recognises the importance of the arts in the areas of personal development, community development, employment and tourism. Meath County Council has long recognised the pivotal role that the arts play in society, and, increasingly, their role in assisting Local Authorities achieve their development objectives.

The arts sector in Meath is a vibrant one, which encompasses a broad range of people, places and activities. Artists of many disciplines live and work in Meath, and, together with professional arts organisations, amateur groups and community groups engage in artistic activity. There is a considerable pool of artistic talent and enterprise in the county.

The County Arts Development Plans set out the measures to further formalise support structures and create opportunities for the arts both within the local authority and the county. They aim to increase access to the arts for all sectors of the community, encourage and increase awareness and interest in the arts and increase participation in the arts by all sectors of the community. The Council will continue to devise and implement County Arts Development Plans to further facilitate the advancement and provide for strategic development of the arts in the county.

The provision of the Solstice Arts Centre in Navan as a facility to serve the whole county has had a major impact in the provision of access to, and participation in, arts events in Meath. This facility consists of a three hundred and twenty seat theatre, visual art exhibition spaces, studio and workshop space and café-bar facilities. The Council will continue to explore possibilities for the development of further cultural facilities across the county and will endeavour to support local agencies and communities in exploring the development potential for facilities such as the proposed Trim Theatre Project, Dunboyne Theatre Project, Slane Cottages development and Ashbourne Civic Offices Development. There is an active and vibrant arts' community throughout the county.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

SOC POL 49	To continue to enhance the range and quality of arts provision in County Meath and to support the ongoing development of cultural infrastructure throughout the County.
SOC POL 50	To continue to recognise the importance of the arts in areas of personal development, community development, employment and tourism and to endeavour to create opportunities in each of these areas.
SOC POL 51	To support the development and provision of arts and cultural facilities at appropriate locations throughout the County.

5.15

Public Art

Public art can assist in developing a sense of place and provides an identity and character to a community that is distinctive and unique. Public art has many advantages – increasing environmental quality, enhancing the built environment/public realm, creating a sense of place, nurturing civic pride, promoting



tourism and providing additional employment opportunities for artists.

The Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism in 2004 prepared a document entitled “Public Art Per Cent for Art Scheme General National Guidelines”. The Per Cent for Art Scheme is implemented by major government departments in connection with capital works such as the construction of public buildings, roads and renovation and regeneration projects.

It defines public art as the following:

“Public art, broadly defined, can take many forms and perform many functions. It may be an object of civic pride or a cause of stimulating debate. It may provide edification or entertainment. It may be a source of private pleasure and solace or popular self-recognition and inclusion”.

While public art has traditionally been conceived primarily in terms of permanent outdoor sculpture – a broader range of possibilities has been fruitfully explored in recent years.

The scope of public art has widened to include not just sculpture’s close relations, architecture

and painting, but also music, literature, film, video, multimedia and sound art, as well as the various performing arts including theatre, dance, opera, performance and live art.

Public art can be of any duration, temporary or permanent, and can be centred in a rural or urban context.


The Meath Arts Development Plan 2005-2007 includes a section on public art. To date,

Meath County Council has commissioned twenty seven permanent public art features and two music commissions. It is the Council's policy to continue to explore possibilities and opportunities for public art under the Per Cent for Art Scheme. It is also the Council's stated policy to identify those major private capital investment schemes which provide an opportunity to include a public art feature as an aspect of the overall development.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

SOC POL 52	To promote the provision of public art, including temporary art and sculpture, through such mechanisms as appropriate.
SOC POL 53	To incorporate works of public art into the overall scheme of major new commercial and private residential developments in the County in order to enhance the amenities of the local environment.
SOC POL 54	To encourage and support the creation and display of works of art in public areas, including appropriate locations within the streetscape, provided no unacceptable environmental, amenity, traffic or other problems are created.

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- 6.1 Background
 - 6.2 Statutory Content
 - 6.3 Policy Context
 - 6.4 Achievements
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6

Transportation

Transportation

6



Transportation

6.1

Background

The maintenance and delivery of an efficient, integrated and coherent transport network in line with national and regional policy is essential to the future economic, social and physical development of Meath. The emphasis will be on developing a model where an increased proportion of residents of the county are within reasonable walking/cycling distance of local services and public transport. There will also be a focus on making the optimum use of existing and proposed transport infrastructure.

The attractiveness of particular locations depends on their relative accessibility and connectivity¹ which in turn depends on the quality and quantity of the transport infrastructure. Although Meath County Council is only directly responsible for the development of some transportation modes, the Council will continue to provide those elements of the transportation system which are within its

remit and to facilitate the development of those elements provided by others.

Meath County Council recognises that the current trends in transportation are unsustainable, in particular the domination of the private car as the preferred mode choice. The Council is strongly committed to the promotion of sustainable means of travel including public transport, walking and cycling, and the encouragement of modal change from private car, where possible. In planning for transport development, the Council will ensure that the needs of people with differing abilities are taken into account. The Council is also committed, as outlined in the Economic Development Strategy, to reduce the degree of commuting in the first instance by promoting the creation of additional jobs within the county for the resident population.

GOAL

To promote and facilitate the provision of the necessary transport infrastructure to fully accommodate existing and future population needs as well as the demand for economic development in an environmentally sustainable manner.

6.2

Statutory Context

In 2008, new legislation affecting the governance of transport policy was adopted in the form of the Dublin Transport Authority (DTA) Act 2008. Under the Act, the Dublin Transport

Authority (now the National Transport Authority (NTA) on foot of Public Transport Regulation Act 2009) become the principal agent for delivery of transport policy and development

¹ Accessibility is the ease with which a destination can be reached based on the choice and frequency of travel modes that can be used. Connectivity is the degree to which there is a choice of direct or indirect travel linkages between one location and another. Accessibility and connectivity are strongly linked and are mutually reinforcing.

in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). The DTA Act, which gives the NTA a role in the planning process for the GDA, sets requirements for the integrated planning of transport and land use at regional and county level to achieve mutual consistency between NTA strategies, Regional Planning Guidelines and Development Plans. Meath County Council is committed to working with the NTA on the delivery of strategic transportation projects and infrastructural improvements.

Section 10(2) of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011 sets out a list of mandatory objectives to be included in a Development Plan. A number of these objectives relate to transportation, either directly or indirectly. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the full list of mandatory objectives.

6.3 Policy Context

Transportation policy in Meath is influenced by international policy such as The International Panel on Climate Change Report 2007 and The Barcelona Declaration 1995, and national and regional policy such as, the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022. Transportation policy in Meath is also influenced by the policies of the NTA.

The transportation objectives of this Plan reflect the principles of these over-arching documents and the following specific transportation documents outlined below:

- National Development Plan (2007-2013) & Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2012-2016 Medium Term Exchequer Framework;
- Greater Dublin Area Draft Transport Strategy 2011-2030 -2030 Vision;
- Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012;

- National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012;
- Smarter Travel-A Sustainable Transport Future- A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020;
- National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020 (NCPF), and;
- Progressing Rural Public Transport in Ireland 2006.

Appendix 2 outlines more detailed information on the documents listed above.

The clear message from these statutory and guidance documents for the County Development Plan is that there is a need to implement land use policies that support and protect the investments currently being made in public transport to ensure that maximum benefit is gained economically, socially, environmentally and in relation to overall health.

6.4 Achievements

Since 2007, notable achievements and progress have been made in the delivery of transport infrastructure serving the county and providing connectivity to other parts of the country and beyond, as follows:

- The opening of the Clonsilla to Dunboyne Navan Rail line (Phase I);

- The development of the Quality Bus Corridors, and;
- The completion of the M3 motorway between Clonee and the Meath-Cavan border.

These achievements have resulted in significantly improved transport connections

within, and to and from, the county. Furthermore, the success of the 'cycle to work scheme' has raised the profile of cycling in the county, increasingly helping to encourage a shift to more sustainable modes of transport.

The success of Navan Town Council's bid in the National Smarter Travel Areas competition reflects the commitment of Meath Local Authorities to the promotion of sustainable means of travel and the encouragement of modal change from the private car. Navan was

one of 11 areas shortlisted to progress to stage two of the Department of Transport's Smarter Travel competition. Despite ultimately being unsuccessful in the competition, the work done on the Stage 2 bid will inform the development of transport networks in Navan in the years ahead. The development of a sound strategy for sustainable transport networks in the above competition has meant that Navan has already been able to avail of funding from the NTA's Sustainable Transport Grants scheme.

6.5

Challenges

Transport has an important contribution to make in shaping and achieving a sustainable county. Less dependency on the private car for routine trips and replacement by public transport, walking and cycling will result in a reduction

in consumption of non-renewable resources and CO₂ emissions. To this end, Meath County Council will seek to achieve an increase in the modal share for public transport, for cycling and for walking over the life of the plan.

6.6

Integration of Land Use and Transportation Planning

National and regional transport policy emphasises the need to reduce the demand for travel and the reliance on the private car in favour of public transport, cycling and walking. The concept of an integrated transport policy encompasses not only integration within and between different modes of transport, but also integration with environmental, social, recreational, economic, educational and health policies and objectives. No longer can the provision of transport facilities be considered or decided upon in isolation.

It is a strategic aim of this Development Plan to co-ordinate transport and land use

planning. This places a requirement on both the transport and settlement strategies to be mutually consistent, not only with each other, but with national direction as per the National Spatial Strategy, the Smarter Travel policy and the NTA's draft Transport Strategy. Decisions on land use and development must take account of existing and public transport networks and support the emergence and development of new integrated transport systems. The effective integration of land-use and transportation will generate and reinforce sustainable settlement patterns that make the most efficient use of land, and that minimise the need for travel by car.

6.7

Transport Plans

The NTA's draft Transport Strategy sets out the requirement to include in the Development Plan an objective to undertake local transport plans for 'Designated Towns', as well as

more detailed local transport plans for 'Designated Districts' (see Measure LU3 of the NTA's draft Transport Strategy). Navan and Drogheda Environs are designated towns,

while Dunboyne, Kells, Trim, Ashbourne and Dunshaughlin are designated districts. These plans will address the implementation of the relevant measures contained in the NTA's draft

Transport Strategy (when finalised) and will be integrated into the relevant Town Development Plan or Local Area Plan.

STRATEGIC POLICIES

It is a strategic policy of Meath County Council:

General

TRAN SP 1	To support the sustainability principles set out in national and regional policy documents and guidelines and to ensure that land use and zoning are integrated with transportation, especially along public transport nodes/ corridors and at accessible urban sites as recognised in the Core Strategy.
TRAN SP 2	To promote the sustainable development of walking, cycling, public transport and other more sustainable forms of transport as an alternative to the private car, together with the development of the necessary infrastructure and promotion of the initiatives contained within 'Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020'.
TRAN SP 3	To provide for the efficient movement of goods and people in the interest of commerce and enterprise.
TRAN SP 4	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.
TRAN SP 5	To promote the location of quality employment and residential developments in proximity to each other in order to reduce the demand for travel and dependence on private car transport whilst development must be increasingly related to a significantly enhanced public transport system.
TRAN SP 6	To promote higher residential development densities within the Large Growth Towns I and II and Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns, as promoted by the Department of Environment Community and Local Government's 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' so as to support viable public transport services.
TRAN SP 7	To support the Road Safety Authority in the implementation of the 'Road Safety Strategy 2007-2013' in conjunction with the National Roads Authority, An Garda Síochana and other relevant agencies.

Public Transport

TRAN SP 8	To facilitate the economic provision of public transport by seeking to ensure that the development of Large Growth Towns I and II and Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns located on strategic transportation corridors, occur in a compact and self sustaining manner.
TRAN SP 9	To promote a high quality, sustainable and integrated transport system and to work with agencies involved, directly or indirectly, in the provision of transport services.
TRAN SP 10	To facilitate alternative transport modes to the private car, including good public transport links between Designated Towns (as defined in the NTA's draft Transport Strategy) and Dublin city centre; frequent local bus services linking residential areas to District Centres and Designated Towns, and which serve shopping areas, employment areas and other activity centres, and connecting to key transport interchange points.
TRAN SP 11	To support the implementation of recommendations presented in the NTA's draft Transport Strategy when finalised and any subsequent reviews thereof.
TRAN SP 12	To work with the NTA and public transport operators to improve public transport infrastructure and services in the county.
TRAN SP 13	To ensure that the design and planning of transport infrastructure and services accords with the principles of sustainable safety, in order that the widest spectrum of needs, including pedestrians, cyclists and those with differing levels of ability are taken into account.

Road Network

TRAN SP 14	To ensure the protection of the existing roads infrastructure while improving the capacity and safety of the road network to meet future demands.
TRAN SP 15	To protect investment in the capacity, efficiency and safety of national roads by applying the guidance contained in the 'Spatial Planning and National Roads - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' and collaboration with the NTA and the NRA.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

It is a strategic objective of Meath County Council:

TRAN SO 1	To prepare local transport plans for Navan, Drogheda Environs, Dunboyne, Kells, Trim, Ashbourne and Dunshaughlin, in accordance with the NTA's draft Transportation Strategy, in consultation with the NTA.
TRAN SO 2	To promote the development of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas which include measures to — (i) reduce energy demand in response to the likelihood of increases in energy and other costs due to long-term decline in non-renewable resources; (ii) reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, and; (iii) address the necessity of adaptation to climate change; in particular, having regard to location, layout and design of new development.

The development of transport policy for the county is based around three broad headings; public transport (including rail and bus), walking and cycling and roads. Map no. 6.1 illustrates key transportation corridors, nodes and networks in Meath.

Two noise zones are shown in the Development Plan maps, an Outer Zone within which the Council will continue to restrict inappropriate development, and an Inner Zone within which new provisions for residential development and other noise sensitive uses will be actively resisted.

6.7.1 Dublin Airport

Parts of County Meath are located within the noise zones and the outer public safety zone for Dublin airport. There is a need to minimise the adverse impact of noise without placing unreasonable restrictions on development.

Public safety zones were drawn up in 2003 by ERM for the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Transport. The Council will follow the advice of the Irish Aviation Authority regarding the effects of proposed development on the safety of aircraft and the safe and efficient navigation thereof.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

TRAN POL 1	To strictly control inappropriate development and require noise insulation where appropriate within the Outer Noise Zone, and actively resist new provision for residential development and other noise sensitive uses within the Inner Noise Zone, as shown on Map 11.1. Under no circumstances shall any dwelling be permitted within the predicted 69 dB LAeq 16 hours noise contour. Comprehensive noise insulation shall be required for any house permitted. Any planning application shall be accompanied by a noise assessment report produced by a specialist in noise assessment which shall specify all proposed noise mitigation measures together with a declaration of acceptance of the applicant with regard to the result of the noise assessment report.
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TRAN POL 2	Restrict development which would give rise to conflicts with aircraft movements on environmental or safety grounds on lands in the vicinity of Dublin Airport and on the main flight paths serving Dublin Airport, and in particular restrict residential development in areas likely to be affected by levels of noise inappropriate to residential use.
TRAN POL 3	Promote appropriate land use patterns in the vicinity of the flight paths serving Dublin Airport, having regard to the precautionary principle, based on existing and anticipated environmental and safety impacts of aircraft movements.
TRAN POL 4	Implement the policies to be determined by the Government in relation to Public Safety Zones for Dublin Airport.
TRAN POL 5	Take account of the advice of the Irish Aviation Authority with regard to the effects of any development proposals on the safety of aircraft or the safe and efficient navigation thereof.

6.8

Public Transport

This section outlines the strategic policy approach of Meath County Council with respect to the promotion of public transport as alternates to the private car.

6.8.1 Rail

At present, rail services are available at stations located in Dunboyne, Pace (M3 Parkway), Enfield, Laytown and a limited service provided from Gormanston. There are stations located immediately adjoining the County which are also used by Meath residents – Maynooth, Clonsilla, Drogheda and Balbriggan.

The DTO 'Platform for Change' document first recommended re-opening the Navan - Dunboyne - Clonsilla railway line. Re-opening the line was also included in the Transport 21 programme published in 2005. The project was intended to be delivered in two phases. The first phase provided for a spur from the Maynooth line at Clonsilla to serve Dunboyne / Pace Interchange. A Rail Order for Phase I was granted and this section of the line was

opened in September 2010. The delivery of this critical infrastructure strengthens the transport links in the County and complements the M3 Motorway scheme.

The second phase of this scheme will extend the service to Navan. Iarnród Éireann has examined route options for Phase II of the Navan Railway line project. The project involves the extension of the Dunboyne (M3) commuter rail project from Pace onwards to the north side of Navan. This will provide for approximately 34km of double track, including other infrastructure such as signalling and bridge works. Four stations are proposed as part of the project at Dunshaughlin, Kilmessan, Navan Town Centre, and a terminus station at the northern edge of Navan. Two route options were placed on display by Iarnród Éireann in January 2009 for members of the public to consider and provide feedback as to their preferred route alignment. The two options were:

- Route Option A - an alignment largely in keeping with the historic Navan rail

- alignment, with minor alterations, and;
 • Route Option B - which was similar to Route Option A except that it ran to the east of Dunshaughlin.

Route Option A was selected as the preferred route alignment by the Department of Transport.

The preparation of the Railway Order application for Phase II of the Navan Rail project was substantially completed including the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement and Natura 2000 Appropriate Assessment. Extensive consultations had taken place over the previous 2 years with officials of Meath County Council including the preparatory work for a variation to the Navan Development Plan 2009-2015 and amendment to the Dunshaughlin Local Area Plan 2009 – 2015 to facilitate the detailed design of the route.

The NTA Draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin supports the provision of Phase II of the Rail Line. It highlights that *'Navan is the only Designated Town in the Hinterland that does not currently have a rail service to Dublin city centre.....A new rail line linking Navan to Dublin city centre would support regional planning objectives and facilitate Navan's sustainable development.'* Furthermore, it is noted that Navan is the only administrative capital in the mid-east region which currently does not enjoy rail access. In particular, Measure RAIL 4 (see NTA's draft Transport Strategy) is of relevance which is to seek *'the provision of a new rail line from Navan to join the recently constructed spur to Dunboyne and Pace, for onward travel to Dublin city centre. The timing of this line construction and the roll out of services will be subject to economic assessment and the timing and scale of development in the Navan area.'*

The 'Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2012 – 2016 Medium Term Exchequer Framework' published in November 2011, deferred certain rail projects from the planning and design stages. Reference to the Navan Rail project is contained on Page 19 of the document, which

states, *'Given the constraints on the capital programme, the extension of heavy rail to Navan, Luas to Lucan and Bray and Metro West will also be deferred for consideration in 2015 in advance of the next Public Capital Programme.'* The Framework indicates that *'these projects (referring to larger public transport projects proposed for the GDA) are being deferred, not cancelled: they remain key elements of the overall integrated transport strategy for the GDA and will be progressed when fiscal and market conditions improve.'* The NTA have formally confirmed in writing to Meath County Council that the construction of this project has been postponed.

Meath County Council will continue to actively promote the development of the railway line from Pace on to Navan. The NTA has indicated that it intends to formally request Meath County Council to include an objective in its Development Plan to protect and preserve the identified Navan Rail corridor once the NTA's draft transport strategy is adopted. Pending this, the NTA have requested that Meath County Council continue to protect the corridor free from development that might compromise the future delivery of the rail scheme to Navan.

The provision of a heavy rail link to Dublin is considered to be critical for the sustainable development of the county, and for Navan to achieve its objective as a Large Growth Town I in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022. Meath County Council is strongly committed to its delivery. Therefore, a strong policy stance is set out in this Development Plan to ensure that the detailed designed alignment is protected from further development, and that this protection also extends to potential stations and park and ride sites along the route. This Development Plan will ensure, through the designation of a specific zoning objective R1 Rail Corridor which seeks *'to provide for a strategic rail corridor and associated physical infrastructure'* (as illustrated on Map Series No. 6.2 in Volume 3) that the design route of Phase II of the Navan Rail Line (as confirmed by the NTA) will be reserved free from development.

6.8.2 Bus

There have been significant improvements to the quality and frequency of bus services to and from the urban centres of the county to Dublin and to other regional centres. Presently there are two Quality Bus Corridors (QBC) in the Meath area - the Dunshaughlin QBC and Bracetown QBC. Further improvements to the Quality Bus Corridor network should be prioritised and implemented to enhance the capacity and journey-time reliability in the Metropolitan Area. The Blanchardstown/Navan Road QBC is identified as a Priority 1 Quality Bus Corridor in the NTA's draft Transport Strategy.

Bus Éireann currently operates both Commuter and Expressway services to and from all major employment centres in the County to Dublin. The high level of service also reflects the fact that other national expressway services to the north west and west are routed through the county. Bus Éireann also provides public transport services linking population centres in the county and adjoining counties such as Drogheda to Navan, Navan to Kells and Navan to Trim. Bus Éireann's commuter network into Dublin City Centre is constantly evolving and improving to meet the changing demographic profile of the Greater Dublin Area. A number of private services are in operation which play an important role in meeting the overall demand for transport services. These compete with, and complement, the existing public transport provisions of Bus Éireann.

Notwithstanding this high level of service, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 draw attention to the fact that changes are required to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of bus services in the region, including changing passenger demands, passenger information, greater connectivity/interlinking of services and ticketing improvements.

Navan town is served by a relatively good local bus service connecting the ever expanding environs of the town to the town centre. The NTA's draft Transport Strategy supports the retention of this service (see Measure Bus 3 of the NTA's draft Transport Strategy), and this support is welcomed.

The NTA's draft Transport Strategy advocates that '*local bus services (including those serving Hinterland villages) should integrate with longer distance (generally Dublin focused) bus and rail services, by linking to intercity/commuter bus stops and rail stations. Local bus timetables should match longer distance bus and rail arrivals and departure times as closely as possible*'.

There have also been increased frequencies of local bus services largely as a result of the establishment of Flexibus, Meath Accessible Transport Ltd.² Flexibus run a daily route between Trim and Navan to assist passengers who wish to access education, training or employment. Regular weekly services run between a number of towns and villages while Dial-A-Ride services are available from a number of centres. The improvement in public transport between larger towns and between villages and towns is of paramount importance to reduce isolation and improve linkages between the towns and outlying areas.

Given the decision to defer the delivery of Phase II of the Navan Rail Line the bus network will be the predominant public transport alternative serving the County. It is therefore vital that bus services and facilities are enhanced to make travel by bus more attractive to existing and potential users.

In recognition of the increased importance afforded bus transportation in the hierarchy of this chapter dealing with public transport, in particular to the town of Navan, lands shall be identified which would serve as a public transportation hub for Meath to accommodate

² Flexibus is one of the projects around the country, which are funded by the Department of Transport under the Rural Transport Initiative. Flexibus carried over 98,000 passengers in 2010.

national, commuter, regional and local bus services. Meath County Council will engage with the NTA, the Department of Transport and Bus Éireann / private operators to realise such an objective within the lifetime of this plan.

6.8.3 Park and Ride Facilities

The purpose of 'park and ride' is to integrate the car with public transport and to help those in outer areas who are not well served by public transport to access public transport connections. It is important that park and ride facilities improve public transport accessibility without unduly worsening road congestion, or increasing the total distance travelled by car. Park and ride sites should not be located where they might encourage people who would otherwise access public transport locally to drive further to access a site, thereby adding to congestion.

It is considered appropriate to include a policy to provide park and ride schemes which improve public transport accessibility without worsening road congestion, or which increase car travel distances. This is in line with the NTA's draft Transport Strategy which supports exploring the potential for bus-based park and ride sites close to high quality road corridors, and providing such facilities where appropriate and feasible.

6.8.4 Taxi and Hackney Services

Accessible taxi and hackney services are a vital element in the public transport offering providing a demand-responsive 24 hour door-to-door service. Accessible taxis are often the only means of public transport available for those using wheelchairs or with mobility impairments. An accessible integrated public transport service is an essential prerequisite to enable people with disabilities to participate in the normal activities of daily living i.e. work, education, leisure and social activities. Factors such as inclement weather, physical barriers resulting from a poorly designed pedestrian environment and ageing, mean that for many people with mobility impairments, door-to-door transport by taxi is the preferred option. An accessible and affordable taxi and hackney service has the potential of being the most efficient and economic means of meeting this need. It is desirable that taxis are modern and suitable for the needs of all users, and that they do not have an undue impact on local air quality or CO₂ emissions.

The NTA have included a range of measures in their draft Transport Strategy which recognise the important role taxis can perform. These include supporting the provision and retention of ranks at rail and bus stations and examining the potential for incorporating taxi fare payment into integrated ticketing.

POLICIES (*See also Strategic Policies*)

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

TRAN POL 6	To promote, facilitate and advance the development of Phase II of the Navan railway line project and rail services in co-operation with other relevant agencies.
TRAN POL 7	To support the improvement of existing rail transport infrastructure including the Dublin/Sligo route with increased suburban services to Enfield and Kilcock, the existing Dublin – Drogheda rail service which serves the urban settlements of Laytown and Gormanston and to seek to have the proposed electrification of this rail line extended to Drogheda.

TRAN POL 8	To work with the NTA and Íarnród Éireann to continue to improve facilities at existing stations and to seek the provision of a railway station at Bettystown with associated park and ride facilities.
TRAN POL 9	To actively seek to utilise Section 49 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011 to secure contributions from developers towards the capital costs of providing and/or upgrading of strategic public transport infrastructure services or projects in the County.
TRAN POL 10	To co-operate with the NTA and other relevant agencies on reviewing the network of bus services in Meath, and work with public transport operators to provide improved bus services in, and through, the county.
TRAN POL 11	To ensure that new developments in Large Growth Towns I and II and Moderate Sustainable Grown Towns are laid out so as to facilitate the provision of local bus services.
TRAN POL 12	To provide public transport interchange facilities, including facilities for taxis, at appropriate points on the public transport network, particularly in the main urban centres and adjacent to the proposed bus based transport hub in Navan, in co-operation with the NTA.
TRAN POL 13	To promote and support the provision of park and ride facilities which improve public transport accessibility without worsening road congestion, or which cause increased car travel distances, at appropriate locations within the county.

OBJECTIVES (See also Strategic Objectives)

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

TRAN OBJ 1	To protect and safeguard the detailed designed alignment of Phase II of the Navan rail route and surrounding lands (including identified station locations), as illustrated on Map Series No. 6.2 in Volume 3, free from development and any encroachment by inappropriate uses which could compromise its future development as a rail facility. Land Use Zoning Objective R1 Rail Corridor also refers.
TRAN OBJ 2	To facilitate and encourage the upgrading of existing railway stations, and protect as required lands needed for the upgrading of existing railway lines or stations or the provision of new railway stations throughout the County. Any such proposals for developments in Bettystown and south of Drogheda, will have to ensure that there are no adverse effects on the integrity of SPAs.

TRAN OBJ 3	To facilitate the provision of adequate lands to provide for park and ride facilities at appropriate locations in the County. In the event of further growth in the south Drogheda area, the Council will explore the need for park and ride facilities and the reservation of land for this purpose as appropriate.
TRAN OBJ 4	To provide bus priority measures on existing and planned road infrastructure, where appropriate, in collaboration with the NTA, Bus Éireann and NRA (where relevant).
TRAN OBJ 5	To require Mobility Management Plans and Traffic Assessments for proposed trip intensive developments.
TRAN OBJ 6	To facilitate the development of properly designated taxi ranks and an accessible taxi and hackney service within the County particularly in the main urban centres and adjacent to the proposed bus based transport hub in Navan.
TRAN OBJ 7	To identify and reserve lands centrally in Navan for the provision of a public transportation hub for Meath to accommodate national, commuter, regional and local bus services. Meath County Council will engage with the NTA, the Department of Transport and Bus Éireann / private operators to realise this objective within the lifetime of this County Development Plan.

6.9

Walking and Cycling

Meath County Council recognises cycling and walking to be healthy, safe, ecologically-sound and socially-just forms of movement. Walking and cycling are the most sustainable modes of transport available in terms of their low environmental impacts. An essential element of any integrated transport system is to provide for the needs of cyclists and pedestrians. The increased provision of cycle lanes and safer facilities for pedestrians is identified as a key action in the Government's 'Sustainable Development – A Strategy for Ireland', 'Smarter Travel-A Sustainable Transport Future-A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020', the NTA's draft Transport Strategy, the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government's 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' and the European Charter of Pedestrian Rights.

Walking constitutes the majority of trips for non-car owners. At distances less than 0.5 km, the vast majority walk, but at a distance of 1km, which non-car users generally walk, most car users rely on their vehicles. Quite modest changes in walking habits can have an impact on overall energy use. Walking requires relatively little investment to make it attractive, particularly if planned and designed into a new development from the outset. In providing for pedestrians, Meath County Council will design for, and ensure accessibility for, the mobility impaired in keeping with the Barcelona Declaration and the European Charter for Pedestrian Rights.

Planning can encourage walking to become the principal method for shorter journeys through the arrangement of land uses and by utilising

good urban design. Providing a comprehensive network of safe, well-lit and convenient footpaths (both road-side and segregated) within new residential areas with links to schools, local neighbourhood centres, public transport stops and workplaces will encourage people to walk.

The Green-Schools programme is an environmental themed education programme, environmental management system and award scheme that promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole school action for the environment. The aim of Green-Schools is to increase the students' and participants' awareness of environmental issues and transfer this knowledge into positive environmental action in the school and wider community. One of the themes of Green-Schools is focused on Travel. Walking buses consist of adults walking groups of pupils to and from school along set routes, with children joining the walking bus at various pick-up locations along the route. Many schools start the Walking School Bus on a one-day per week basis and increase its schedule over time. Initiatives such as Walk to School Week/ Walk on Wednesdays can also be used to enable children to become more active in their communities. These programmes encourage children to walk to and from school, and so get used to this means of travel.

The National Cycle Policy Framework, NTA's draft Transport Strategy and the National Cycle Manual will be the reference point for the promotion and development of cycle facilities throughout the county. The policy aims of 'the National Cycle Policy Framework' are not only



to deliver a five-fold increase in cycling for commuting purposes, but to also recognise the need to support and encourage all other types of cycling, including recreational and tourist cycling. From the perspective of the National Cycle Policy Framework, 'encouraging recreational cycling is a key element of creating a cycling culture in Ireland and recreational routes in and around urban areas, which, in turn link to rural areas are very important'.

In response to this objective, and at the request of the Minister for Transport, the NRA undertook to carry out a scoping study into the delivery of a National Cycle Network that would encourage cycling as a transport mode, leisure activity, and tourist attraction in Ireland. An advisory group, under the auspices of the National Trails Advisory Committee assisted in the project. The outcome was the 'National Cycle Network Scoping Study' which was produced in August 2010.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

TRAN POL 14

To co-operate with the NTA on the development of a cycle network for the Greater Dublin Area and to promote, enhance and provide the development of cycling and walking facilities in the County in accordance with relevant national policy and guidelines.

TRAN POL 15	To identify and seek to implement a strategic, coherent and high quality cycle and walking network across the county that is integrated with public transport and interconnected with cultural, recreational, retail, educational and employment destinations and attractions.
TRAN POL 16	To encourage, where appropriate, the incorporation of safe and efficient cycleways, accessible footpaths and pedestrian routes into the design schemes for town centres/neighbourhood centres, residential, educational, employment, recreational developments and other uses.
TRAN POL 17	To require that adequate facilities for the secure parking of bicycles be provided at convenient locations close to public transport nodes and public transport interchanges.
TRAN POL 18	To require a full range of facilities for cyclists such as convenient and secure bicycle parking, showers and lockers in substantial new commercial / office developments and other people intensive attractors.
TRAN POL 19	To prioritise the movement of pedestrians and cyclists in proximity to public transport nodes.
TRAN POL 20	To improve facilities for pedestrians and access facilities for people with special mobility needs in line with the aims of the European Charter of Pedestrian Rights.
TRAN POL 21	To make provision for cycle lanes as part of road improvement / redesign schemes on identified cycle networks, consistent with the NTA National Cycle Manual.
TRAN POL 22	To ensure, where possible, that cycleways and footpaths are effectively delineated from major vehicular carriageways.
TRAN POL 23	To require planning applications for major developments to demonstrate proposals to address accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

TRAN OBJ 8	<p>To promote and explore the development of the following linkages within the lifetime of the Development Plan subject to the appropriate environmental assessments, including Appropriate Assessment of the likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EC Habitats Directive;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) To explore the feasibility of developing former disused transportation corridors for cycle / greenways. (ii) To provide the development of a cycle / greenway on the disused Navan – Kingscourt rail line in conjunction with Cavan County Council subject to the completion of a feasibility study obtaining the necessary statutory planning consent, landowner co-operation and the securing of the necessary funding. (iii) To provide for the development of the Trim – Navan – Slane – Drogheda cycle / greenway along the River Boyne subject to obtaining the necessary statutory planning consent, the carrying out of Appropriate Assessment, landowner co-operation and the securing of the necessary funding. (iv) To develop a system of cycle / greenways, subject to the availability of resources, along the banks of the Boyne and Blackwater Rivers, in such a manner so as not to significantly negatively impact on the conservation status of the Natura 2000 site either alone or in combination with other objectives in this or other plans. (v) To explore the development of the following cycle/greenway options as part of the Dublin Galway cycle network a) along the Royal Canal located within the administrative area of Meath County Council in consultation with relevant agencies or b) along the former N4 (R148) located within the administrative area of Meath County Council in consultation with relevant agencies or c) Combinations of the above.
TRAN OBJ 9	<p>To encourage pedestrian access to certain areas of Natura 2000 sites for their appreciation and in a manner so as not to impact negatively on the sites' integrity or long term conservation status.</p>

6.10

Road Infrastructure

Whilst Meath County Council is committed to the promotion of sustainable means of travel, and the encouragement of modal change from the private car, it is recognised that road infrastructure retains a central position in the overall transportation network, catering

for the movement of buses, goods vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, as well as the private car. In undertaking transport policies, the Council will strive to provide, maintain and enhance the road infrastructure to ensure the sustainable and economic development of the County.

County Meath is well serviced by the national road network with the M3 Cavan-Dublin (formerly N3, now R147), M1 Dublin - Belfast (formerly N1, now R132), the N2 Dublin - Derry, and M4 Dublin to Galway, Castlebar and Sligo (formerly N4, now R148), all traversing through the county linking the Dublin metropolitan area to the regions. The national secondary roads, N51 and N52, are medium distance through-routes connecting important towns. The N52 is a particularly important strategic route, linking the two gateways of Dundalk and Mullingar-Athlone-Tullamore. County Meath is very reliant on its road infrastructure for intra and inter county movement and access.

Since the adoption of the 2007 County Development Plan, there have been marked improvements and progress in the delivery of key strategic transport road links;

- The completion of the M3 Motorway providing for bypasses of Dunboyne, Dunshaughlin, Navan and Kells;
- The advancement of the Slane bypass project to the planning stage. An oral hearing was held between February and April 2011, however, in March 2012 An Bord Pleanála refused permission for the scheme as proposed;
- The existing N2, N51 and N52 (National Primary Roads and National Secondary Roads) are subject to ongoing improvements in terms of overlays for pavement strengthening, junction improvements, traffic calming, low cost safety measures, etc.

During the lifetime of this County Development Plan (2013 – 2019), it is expected that further progress will be made to improve the existing road network.

In addition to the physical improvements and progress above, Meath County Council was presented with an award by the Road Safety Authority for its commitment to engineering, education, enforcement and evaluation as the basis for improving road safety and reducing the numbers of people killed and injured on Meath

roads. Meath County Council has produced two road safety plans, the most recent from 2010 to 2012. Annual road fatalities in the County have decreased from 30 in 2005 to 6 in 2010.

6.10.1 National Roads

The development of the national road network is critically important for national inter-urban traffic in order to provide ready access to ports, airports and other strategic locations. Although responsibility for National Roads comes under the auspices of the National Roads Authority, Meath County Council is responsible for providing and carrying out major upgrading and improvements to National Roads in the County. These works include the provision of pavement overlays to existing roads, the provision of new sections of road and the provision of bypass roads or relief routes to towns on routes where their provision is necessary on planning, traffic, safety or environmental grounds. The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 highlight 'that it is national policy that the carrying capacity and efficient operation of the strategic road network within the GDA is safeguarded to ensure the investment in the road network returns value for money and longevity of the information provided'. Furthermore the 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities' require Developments Plans to include policies which seek to maintain and protect the safety, capacity and efficiency of national roads and associated junctions, avoiding the creation of new accesses and the intensification of existing accesses to national roads where a speed limit greater than 60kmh applies.

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010 - 2022 recognise that future transport demands cannot be delivered by the public transport system, and that the road network will continue to be critical to transport management and the efficient movement of buses, people, goods and other services in the GDA and beyond. Similarly while the strong emphasis of the NTA's draft Transport Strategy is firmly based around sustainable public transport modes, it

is appreciated that some improvements to the road network will be needed over the coming years to provide access to some development areas and to address road safety. The NTA will support the provision of local bypass schemes for towns and villages where the key objectives of such schemes are to address safety issues or to facilitate more sustainable transport provision within the town or village.

The proposal to develop an outer orbital route (Leinster Outer Orbital Route) extending from Drogheda to the Naas/Newbridge area with intermediate links to Navan and other towns is included as a key objective of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. Its importance is given significant prominence within the context of the sustainable regional planning strategy and the importance attached to providing improved accessibility and connectivity between large growth towns in the Hinterland Area. The NTA Draft Strategy recommends the finalisation of a preferred route corridor and its protection from development intrusion. However, it is acknowledged that the full development of the proposal is unlikely to be required during the Draft 2030 Strategy period and, accordingly, it is recommended that an incremental approach to its delivery is adopted. It also recommends that

the most deficient sections on the existing road network should be targeted for investment in terms of road accident records, or congestion.

A bypass for Slane has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council and has the support of the majority of the local residents, who have campaigned for its construction for many years. In December 2009, Meath County Council submitted an Environmental Impact Statement and Compulsory Purchase Order for a bypass of the village to An Bord Pleanála. The proposed bypass was routed to the east of Slane, between the village and the World Heritage Site at Brú na Bóinne. Following an Oral Hearing, held between February and April 2011, An Bord Pleanála subsequently refused permission for the construction of the bypass in March 2012.

In citing its reasons and considerations for refusal, the Board stated that having regard to the importance and sensitivity of the location, a bypass of the type proposed could only be considered where it had been demonstrated that no appropriate alternative was available. The Board indicated that it was not satisfied that alternatives to the bypass were adequately explored. In this context, they considered that:



- the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the setting of the Brú na Bóinne archaeological complex which would be contrary to the heritage protection provisions of the County Development Plan.
- the bypass would be contrary to proper planning and sustainable development, as it would tend to undermine the investments that had been made improving the M1 and M3 corridors, and would have negative implications for the quality of the environment and road safety along the N2 route.

There is unanimous agreement that the potential safety risks that affect the future well-being of all road users and communities, particularly the Slane community, must be addressed. In seeking a solution, Meath County Council has always recognised that a balance must be struck between environmental, historical and archaeological considerations, and the safety and other issues caused by the present traffic through the village. The Council is committed, in conjunction with the NRA, to reviewing its proposals in light of the Board's decision. However, it will seek to protect the corridor of the bypass as submitted to An Bord Pleanála in December 2009 pending the outcome of its investigations.

6.10.2 Regional and Local Roads

Regional and local roads serve an important economic role and also have valuable social and community functions. These roads are often the sole means of access for local economic activity, for example, designated towns such as Trim.

Non-national roads play a very important economic role because of:

- the dispersed nature of the population and industrial development;
- the importance of tourism and agriculture as generators of wealth and employment, and;

- the increasing attention being given to rural development and urban regeneration.

The origins of the extensive road network are clearly linked to the low density and dispersed nature of the population in a predominantly agricultural based economy. Traditionally, there was also a low level of urbanisation; however, there have been moves away from agriculture over recent decades, with a trend towards increased urbanisation over the last 10 - 20 years. The result is that there is an extensive length of roads which have to be maintained by Meath County Council.

The network of non-national roads provides mobility within and between local economies and provides vital links to the strategic national road network and the ports and airports which are our links with the wider European economy.

Meath County Council has responsibility for carrying out of maintenance and improvement works on these roads financed from their own resources and/or supplemented by State grants.

6.10.3 Demand Management

The NTA's draft Transportation Strategy envisages that there will be limited provision of new road capacity in the Greater Dublin Area up to 2030. While investments in public transport networks will free up road space, the forecast for growth in population and employment will negatively affect congestion in the Greater Dublin Area. The NTA acknowledge that, even with all the planned improvements aimed at reducing the dependency on car travel, it will not be possible to meet the targets in the Smarter Travel Policy without significant demand management measures of a fiscal nature.

Management of demand for road use is broadly grouped into three categories:

1. Control measures where access to, and use of, the road infrastructure or on and off street parking spaces is controlled e.g.

on street parking controls, ramp metering, dedication of road space to certain transport modes, better development management to reduce demand and need to travel.

2. Fiscal measures where pricing mechanisms are utilized to achieve road usage modification.
3. Other complementary measures used in combination with 1 and 2 above e.g. mobility management plans, car clubs, lift sharing, marketing and promotion of non-car modes of transport.

still operating on Irish railways today, for the transportation of zinc ore from Navan to Dublin (via Drogheda). Up to four trains a day are operated, and each of these is estimated to take the equivalent of forty lorries off the road. There is a need for research into freight movement to support the planning process. This will help identify appropriate locations for freight generating developments and freight intensive activities. It is also important that the movement of freight does not unduly impact on people living in the urban areas through which it passes.

6.10.4 Freight

Efficient freight transport is essential to support economic activity. Currently, 98% of Ireland's internal freight is carried on the road network, and it is of primary importance that freight can be moved reliably and quickly to key destinations including ports and airports. Tara Mines have one of the few freight flows

Facilities for truck parking are desirable to prevent nuisance and annoyance, and for safety reasons. It must be borne in mind that the road network represents the working environment for many people involved in the movement of goods and services. It is therefore important that service facilities and truck parking is provided in appropriate areas to cater for their needs.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

TRAN POL 24	To promote road and traffic safety measures in conjunction with Government Departments, the Road Safety Authority and other agencies through the provision of appropriate signage, minimising or removing existing traffic hazards and preventing the creation of additional or new traffic hazards.
TRAN POL 25	To support major road improvements by reserving the corridors of any such proposed routes free of developments, which would interfere with the provision of such proposals. (See Map 6.3)
TRAN POL 26	To implement a programme of road construction / improvement works and local measures to improve road safety closely integrated with existing and planned land uses.
TRAN POL 27	To co-operate with the NRA, NTA and other Local Authorities to provide the Leinster Outer Orbital Route as proposed in the Regional Planning Guidelines and the NTA's draft Transport Strategy.

TRAN POL 28	To safeguard the capacity and safety of the National road network by applying the provisions of the Department of Environment Community and Local Government's – 'Spatial Planning and National Roads-Guidelines for Planning Authorities'
TRAN POL 29	To provide for and carry out improvements to sections of national, regional and county roads that are deficient in respect of alignment, structural condition or capacity, where resources permit, and to maintain that standard thereafter.
TRAN POL 30	To regulate, control and improve signage throughout the county and avoid proliferation of roadside signage, especially outside the 50-60kmh speed limit areas in a manner that would reduce the effectiveness of essential signage such as directional and other authorised road traffic signs, create visual clutter and distractions for road users and/or reduce visibility at junctions, interchanges and bends.
TRAN POL 31	To promote the carrying out of Road Safety Audits on new road schemes, road and junction improvements and traffic management schemes in accordance with the NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and advice contained in the DTO Traffic Management Guidelines.
TRAN POL 32	To ensure that all road plans and project proposals in the County which could, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, undergo an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6 (3) of the EC Habitats Directive.
TRAN POL 33	To balance the requirement for an appropriate level of off-street car parking facilities against the need to provide transport alternatives to the private car, in the overall interest of sustainable land use practice.
TRAN POL 34	To co-operate with and support the NTA and NRA (where appropriate) on measures designed to improve freight transport in and throughout the county.
TRAN POL 35	To liaise with the NTA and NRA (where appropriate) on appropriate control measures within its remit, designed to better manage the demand for road space to allow the efficient movement of essential traffic.
TRAN POL 36	To address traffic problems on the N2 through Slane.

TRAN POL 37

To improve the visual quality of landscaping at roundabouts in various locations throughout the County by seeking sponsorship from interested parties having regard to signage policy.

TRAN POL 38

To ensure that all road and rail project proposals in the County do not either individually or in combination with other plans and projects have an undue adverse impact on the County's fisheries resource either through pollution, interference with the passage of migratory fish species or through interference with fisheries habitat.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

TRAN OBJ 10

To develop and implement, in consultation with the NRA, a programme for the upgrading, improvement and maintenance of the national road network within the county.

TRAN OBJ 11

To develop and implement, in consultation with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport a programme for the upgrading, improvement and maintenance of the non national road network in the county.

TRAN OBJ 12

To implement a programme of traffic and parking management measures in towns and villages throughout the county, as resources permit.

TRAN OBJ 13

To secure the provision of an appropriate level of vehicle parking facilities in new developments in accordance with the standards set out in Chapter 11 Development Management Standards and Guidelines.

TRAN OBJ 14

To facilitate and secure the provision of the proposed national road schemes in County Meath as set out in the Annual Roadwork's Programme and for which funding is provided by the NRA.

TRAN OBJ 15

To investigate the effectiveness of, and if appropriate, progress the implementation of, traffic management options, including the removal of non-local heavy goods vehicles from the N2 through Slane village, in conjunction with the NRA and other relevant authorities with a view to providing an enhanced and safer environment for the village.

TRAN OBJ 16

To proceed with an N2 bypass for Slane should the investigations referred to in TRAN OBJ 15 conclude that there is no appropriate traffic management alternative.

TRAN OBJ 17

To support, where appropriate, major road improvements, bypasses of local towns and villages and proposed national road schemes by reserving the corridors of any such proposed routes free of developments, which would interfere with the provision of such proposals. Such road schemes include:

Scheme Name	Description of Works
N2 Slane By-pass	N2 Slane Bypass incorporating new bridge over the River Boyne
N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon Cross	Investigate and progress online upgrading of this section of the National Primary Route
M3 Junction 4	Upgrading of this junction to improve capacity.
M1 Junction 7	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity inclusive of the facilitation of vehicular access to / from Stamullen via the City North Business Campus to the M1 Interchange.
M1 Junction 8	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity
M1 Junction 9	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity
M3 Junction 5	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity
M3 Junction 9	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity
N2 Rath Roundabout	Possible upgrading of this junction to improve capacity
M3 South of Junction 4	Introduce an additional lane on both M3 carriageways in co-operation with planned M3 upgrades with Fingal County Council and the National Roads Authority.
N52 Fringestown	Re-alignment of approximately 3km of the existing N52
N51 Dunmoe	Realignment of N51 between Dunmoe and Cruicetown
N51 Halltown	Construction of junction improvement and re-alignment of minor roads.
N51/R164 Junction	Re-alignment of N51 and amendment of junction arrangement to give priority to National Road Traffic.
N51 Slane to Louth County boundary	Re-alignment including widening of Mattock Bridge, and junction improvements.
N52/R162 Junction	Re-alignment of N52 and amendment of junction arrangement to give priority to National Road Traffic. Including re-alignment necessary to remove height restriction at crossing of Navan - Kingscourt Railway.
N52/R154 Junction	Improve junction and re-align regional road to introduce a staggered arrangement.
N52 Balrath Junction	Re-align N52 and improve junction layout.
Local Bypasses/Relief Roads	Examine feasibility and progress where appropriate local bypass and relief roads as indicated on Map No. 6.3 and identified in Local Area Plans and Town Development Plans.

NB: The above list is for guidance purposes. It is not exhaustive, and other schemes may be advanced during the lifetime of the plan and at the discretion of the Council in consultation with relevant agencies.

TRAN OBJ 18	To upgrade, improve, strengthen and re-align the road network in the County as set out in the Annual Roads Programme for each year of the Development Plan.
TRAN OBJ 19	To liaise with Kildare County Council in the identification, design, reservation and delivery of the section of the Maynooth Outer Relief Road located within the administrative area of Meath County Council.
TRAN OBJ 20	To have regard to the NRA's Policy Statement on 'Service areas on motorways and high quality dual carriageways' in the assessment of proposals for such developments.
TRAN OBJ 21	To co-operate with the NRA, NTA and other Local Authorities in clarifying and finalising the route of the Leinster Outer Orbital Route (linking Drogheda, Navan, Trim and Naas) proposed in the 'Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area' and the NTA's draft Transport Strategy. This is particularly important in the vicinity of proposed major junctions along the route in order to protect the identified corridor from development intrusion.
TRAN OBJ 22	To prepare updated Road Safety plans in line with the National Road Safety Strategy and in consultation with the Road Safety Authority and relevant stakeholders.

6.10.5 Development at Motorway Junctions

The recent investment in the national road network will enhance the attractiveness of County Meath for inward investment and new employment opportunities, and contribute to enhanced competitiveness by reducing transport costs. The "*Spatial Planning & National Roads Guidelines*" set out planning policy considerations relating to the development affecting national primary and secondary roads, including motorways and associated junctions, outside of the 50 – 60 km per hour speed limit zone for built up areas. The Guidelines state that following the considerable investment in the national road network / inter urban motorways, and with future investment being focused on public transport, it is therefore important that the efficiency, capacity and safety of the national road network is maintained. The planning system must ensure that the strategic traffic function of national roads is maintained by

limiting the extent of development that would give rise to the generation of short trip traffic on national roads (retail development specifically referred to in this regard), or alternatively, by ensuring that the trip demand from future development will primarily be catered for on the non national network.

This Development Plan acknowledges the publication of the Spatial Planning & National Roads Guidelines and endorses the key messages contained therein.

6.10.6 Development at National Road Junctions

Care must be exercised during the preparation of individual Town Development Plans or Local Area Plans when assessing development objectives and / or land use zoning of locations at or close to junctions, where such development could generate significant additional traffic with potential to impact on

the national road. Meath County Council must ensure that such development, consistent with planning policies, can be catered for by the design assumptions underpinning such junctions and interchanges. This evidence based approach would avoid compromising the capacity and efficiency of the national road/ associated junctions, and avoid the premature and unacceptable reduction in the level of service available to road users.

The Spatial Planning & National Roads Guidelines, acknowledge in Section 2.7 that *"in certain circumstances, additional junctions, or enhancements to existing junctions on national roads, may become necessary to service development needs of national and strategic importance or in cases where a proposed development is demonstrated by the planning authority to be more appropriately located proximate to such junctions."*

The Guidelines indicated that in such circumstances, the NRA will support such

capacity enhancements and development proposals where all of a number of specified criteria are met. It is the intention of the Meath County Council to identify appropriate strategic land uses at specified urban centres (consistent with the Economic Development Strategy of this Development Plan) which would benefit from high quality access such as proximity to junctions, through the Town Development Plan / Local Area Plan process subject to adhering to the criteria specified in Section 2.7 of the *Spatial Planning & National Roads Guidelines*. In any event, development at or in proximity to junctions will only be considered in Town Development Plans or Local Area Plans in an urban context in the interests of protecting the rural landscape and advocating an integrated land use and transportation plan led approach. In all instances, the identification of lands for specific purposes shall be based on an evaluation and assessment of transport infrastructure at these junctions including a capacity assessment of the junction and national road concerned.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

TRAN POL 39

To review, as part of the town development and local area plans processes, land at strategic locations adjoining urban related motorway junctions which has previously been identified for employment generating uses, subject to compliance with the Spatial Planning and National Roads – Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

In this regard, the following junctions will be examined:

M1 Motorway	Junction 7 (Julianstown)
	Junction 8 (Duleek)
	Junction 9 (Drogheda)
M3 Motorway	Junction 4 (Clonee)
	Junction 5 (Dunboyne)
	Junction 9 Navan (North)
N2	Rath Roundabout

The Planning Authority will continue to support development proposals in such circumstances where all of the criteria specified in Section 2.7 of the "Spatial Planning & National Roads Guidelines" are adhered to.

6.10.7 Access to National Roads in Exceptional Circumstances

Appendix 2 outlines the official policy regarding access onto national roads as provided for in the “Spatial Planning & National Roads Guidelines” which seeks to avoid the creation of any additional access point from new development / intensification of traffic from existing entrances onto national roads outside the 60 kph speed limit. Section 2.6 of the Guidelines provides for exceptional circumstances to the above general policy provision. Planning Authorities may identify stretches of national roads where a less

restrictive approach may be applied as part of the Development Plan preparation. Two scenarios arise, firstly, in relation to developments of national and regional strategic importance and secondly, in relation to lightly trafficked sections of National Secondary Routes. The NRA confirmed to Meath County Council during the course of pre draft consultations that there are no sections of the N51 or N52 National Secondary Roads in Meath which would adhere to the qualifying criteria (traffic volumes being forecast to remain below 3,000 AADT for the next 20 years). The policy considerations advanced in this Plan refer to the former scenario only as a result.

6.10.8 Developments of National and Regional Strategic Importance

The Guidelines provide that a less restrictive approach may be adopted in the case of developments of national and regional strategic importance which by their nature are most appropriately located outside urban areas, and where the locations concerned have specific characteristics that make them particularly suitable for the developments proposed.

This Development Plan proposes a two pronged approach to dealing with this requirement as set out in the Guidelines. Firstly, the Plan has identified a number of locations close to and within designated Economic Growth Towns where exceptional circumstances to the general policy may be considered, as follows:

- N52 south of Balrath Cross to facilitate bioenergy manufacturing plant and CHP plant;
- N2 at Knockharley in the vicinity of existing regional landfill facility (Greenstar Recycling Ltd.);
- N2 at Slane in the vicinity of the existing Grasslands Fertilizers facility (Seveso Site);
- Navan South (Junction 8) to Kilcarn Roundabout on R147 (New Junction Only);
- Navan North (Junction 9) to Mullaghboy Roundabout on N51 (New Junction Only);
- N2 at Rath Roundabout to Junction of Curragha Road (L-50161).



Secondly, it will be an objective of this Plan to prepare a Thematic Spatial Strategy for industrial development and enterprise. This strategy will identify and support the development of areas where significant clusters of power, broadband, roads, water and gas could be harnessed to become regionally important areas to accommodate very large scale, value added, employment while avoiding

potential for future environmental and planning conflicts. Upon the preparation of this Strategy, the extent of locations to which the Exceptional Circumstances provisions may apply, if any, and as agreed with the NRA, shall be advanced as a Variation to the County Development Plan. It is considered that this approach is consistent with Section 2.6 of the Guidelines which refers to the review or varying of a Development Plan.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

TRAN POL 40

To avoid the creation of any additional access point from new development / intensification of traffic from existing entrances onto national roads outside the 60 kph speed limit, except as indicated on Maps No 6.4.1 - 6.4.7 which identifies a number of locations close to and within designated Economic Growth Towns or existing / proposed developments of a regional significance.

OBJECTIVE

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

TRAN OBJ 23

To prepare a Thematic Spatial Strategy for industrial development and enterprise which would identify and support the development of areas where significant clusters of power, broadband, roads, water and gas could be harnessed to become regionally important areas to accommodate very large scale value added employment while avoiding potential for future environmental and planning conflicts. Upon the preparation of this Strategy, the extent of locations to which the Exceptional Circumstances or Development at National Road Interchanges or Junctions, provisions may apply, if any, and as agreed with the NTA and the NRA, shall be advanced as a Variation to the County Development Plan and Maps No. 6.4.1 - 6.4.7 amended accordingly.

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- 7.1 Background
 - 7.2 Statutory Context
 - 7.3 Policy Context
 - 7.4 National Context
 - 7.5 Regional Context
 - 7.6 Local Context
 - 7.7 Progress
 - 7.8 Challenges
 - 7.9 Water Services Assessment of Needs
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Water, Drainage & Environmental Services

Water, Drainage & Environmental Services

7



Water, Drainage & Environmental Services

7.1

Background

Water supply and wastewater treatment and disposal are critical infrastructure requirements for any development, especially developments of an urban nature. The provision of such services should complement and facilitate the sustainable development of the county in

line with the Council's adopted settlement, economic and core strategies. The strategic assessment for water services must also be cognisant of water quality status in surface waters designated to serve development centres.

GOAL

To develop, protect, improve and extend water, wastewater, surface water and flood alleviation services throughout the county and to prioritise the provision of water services infrastructure to complement the overall strategy for economic and population growth and to achieve improved environmental protection.

Meath County Council is currently the designated 'Water Services Authority' for County Meath. The provision of water and wastewater services in County Meath is the responsibility of the Council. In addition to drinking water treatment and distribution, Meath County Council is also responsible for waste water collection and disposal and stormwater management. The drainage

systems collect foul sewage, industrial effluent and rainwater, all of which must be managed while minimising flood risk and/or environmental impacts. The government has announced that Irish Water, a new public utility, will be established in the latter part of 2012. Please refer to section 7.4 for additional details on Irish Water.

7.2

Statutory Context

Section 10(2) of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011 as amended sets out a list of mandatory objectives to be included in a Development Plan. A number of these

objectives relate to water services and waste management infrastructure either directly or indirectly. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the list of mandatory objectives.

7.3

Policy Context

A number of EU, Department of Environment Community and Local Government (DoECLG),

OPW and EPA policy documents have been published in recent years which will have a

significant impact on the development and delivery of environmental and water services in County Meath.

- The main documents are as follows:
- EU Water Framework Directive (2000)
- Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS) (2005)
- European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations, (2007)
- Waste Water Discharge Licences/

Authorisations (2007)

- Water Services Act (2007 as amended)
- Strategic Water Plans (Water Services Act 2007 as amended)
- Waste Management Acts 1996-2008
- The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Nov 2009)

Please refer to Appendix 2 for more detail on the above policy documents and guidelines.

7.4

National Context

The Department of Environment Community and Local Government (DoECLG) plays a major role in the provision and development of the country's physical infrastructure. The legislative and policy framework in place is to ensure the delivery of water services infrastructure in a cost-effective manner to achieve sustainable, economic and social development. As previously stated, the actual provision of water and wastewater services is the responsibility of the Local Authorities, and in some instances co-operation is required from neighbouring authorities.

A new public utility, Irish Water, is to acquire statutory responsibility for water services in mid 2013, with ownership of assets transferred from Local Authorities from that date. Local Authorities will act as agents for Irish Water for a period with Irish Water taking over their operations on a phased basis from January 2015. The full transfer of operations is to be complete by the end 2017.

7.5

Regional Context

The Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 (RPGs) identify key areas of investment in public water supply and waste water for the GDA to allow future growth to happen in a sustainable integrated manner. Priority areas include:

- Continuation of investment in pipeline rehabilitation and water conservation across all growth GDA towns, to increase available supply and meet growth in demand;
- Investment in improved water demand management from business, agriculture and domestic users through metering,

monitoring, education and support services, reducing levels of water wastage;

- Upgrade and expansion of the Navan Water Supply Scheme;
- Improvement of the East Meath, Drogheda and South Louth Water Supply Scheme;
- The provision of a new Regional Wastewater Treatment for the Greater Dublin Area.

The Regional Planning Guidelines outline that an 'agreed protocol should be put in place between local authorities to ensure the optimum allocation of sanitary and other services for priority investments'.

7.6

Local Context

The Environment and Water Services Department of Meath County Council oversees a number of programmes, including;

- Capital Schemes (for both water services and waste water);
- Rural Water;
- Water Conservation, and;
- Water Monitoring – Water Quality.

7.6.1 Capital Schemes

Substantial progress has been made in upgrading and improving water services infrastructure in County Meath. Since 2007, under the Water Services Investment Programme, several major schemes have been progressed and completed. The level of population growth that has been experienced over the past five to six years would not have been possible without this very substantial investment in water services projects.

7.6.2 The Rural Water Programme

Meath County Council is presently responsible for maintaining the public watermains systems and ensuring the quality of the water they distribute. Local Authorities are also responsible for water quality within the group water scheme sector.

In response to poor water quality in many rural water supplies, the Government set up the Rural Water Programme with the aim of improving the quality and efficiency of Ireland's many group schemes. More and more group schemes are being taken over by Local Authorities in an attempt to improve the quality of the water supply. A subsidy is also available to members of both public and private group water schemes towards the costs of running the schemes.

The Rural Water Programme in County Meath covers two sectors, namely group schemes

and small schemes. There is an active group scheme sector in Meath with many such schemes developed in the past five years typically involving the extension of public supplies to rural communities. The small schemes involve essential water services infrastructural improvements and up to 50 such schemes have been carried out in the past five years.

7.6.3 Water Conservation

Water Conservation is a key to the sustainable use of water resources. Apart from environmental gains, the delivery of additional water supply through leakage control and proper supply systems management is a viable economic alternative to capital expenditure on new infrastructure provision.

The 'Meath Countywide Water Conservation Project' commenced in November 2005 with funding of €18m. Very substantial success resulted from this project. Over 5,000 leaks were found and fixed and unaccounted for water (UFW) has been reduced from 58% to 34%. Such improvement works resulted in increased water supply capacity.

The Meath Countywide Watermains Rehabilitation Strategy Report was produced in 2011 and includes 4 phases (phases 2–5 inc.) at an estimated cost of €25m for the replacement/rehabilitation of approximately 128km of defective watermains. Approximately 14km of defective watermains together with associated connection pipes, in 8 separate locations in the County, were replaced under Phase 1 which was an advance phase and was completed in 2012 at a cost of approximately €3.6m. Phase 1 was included in the Water Services Investment Programme 2010 – 2013.

Phase 2, which is also included in the Water Services Investment Programme 2010 – 2013,

is due to commence construction at the end of 2012 and will involve the replacement/rehabilitation of approximately 43km of defective watermains at an estimated cost of €2. The construction of Phase 2 is expected to be complete in 2014.

7.6.4 Water Monitoring

This is dealt with in Water Quality Section of this Plan. (See Section 7.14)

7.7

Progress

Meath County Council, in partnership with other organisations and Local Authorities in the region, has been working to improve the delivery of water services and waste disposal throughout the County. Over the last number of years various plans and projects have been completed or undertaken:

- Two Water Services Investment Programmes have been rolled out since the adoption of the 2007-2013 County Development Plan. The Water Services Plan 2010 summarises the current strategic plans for water supply, wastewater, drainage and storm water developed over past decades.
- As noted in the foregoing section, the Council has further progressed the delivery of a number of water services projects through the ongoing implementation of the Water Services Investment Programme. Such projects include Summerhill Water Supply Scheme, Navan AC Watermains Replacement Scheme – Phase 2, Trim Water Treatment Plant Augmentation, Kiltrough Water Augmentation Scheme, Navan & Mid Meath Water Supply Scheme – Contracts 2 & 3, Rath Augmentation, Dunshaughlin Water Supply Scheme, Ashbourne/Ratoath/Kilbride Sewerage Scheme Phase 2, Sewerage Schemes for, Athboy, Donore, Duleek, Kilcloon, Kilmainhamwood, Kiltale, Moynalty, Rathcairn, Rathmolyon, and Summerhill. The advancement of the Meath Water Conservation Project and the resultant reduction in UFW to 35%
- 16 no. waste water authorisations were certified and 11 waste water authorisation licenses were granted by the EPA. A further 13 discharge licenses will be granted by the EPA during 2012.
- The adoption of the Eastern, Neagh Bann and Shannon River Basin District-River Basin Management Plans (2009-2015). The Plans set out detailed programme of measures to achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive.
- Mornington beach was awarded the Green Coast Award in 2011.
- In response to the high levels of existing flood risk in the Fingal/East Meath Area, Meath County Council in conjunction with the OPW and Fingal County Council commissioned the Fingal/East Meath Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (FEM FRAMS), a catchment-based flood



risk assessment and management study of twenty three rivers and streams and their catchments.

- The adoption of the Meath Local Authorities Major Emergency Plan (June

2011) in accordance with the National Framework for Emergency Management aims to respond to flood and other environmental risks.

7.8

Challenges

Notwithstanding the advancement of plans and projects, as outlined above, Meath Local Authorities continue to face a number of infrastructural challenges particularly in the supply and demand for high quality drinking water and for waste water treatment.

- The main challenge to be addressed regarding drinking water supply and wastewater treatment is centred on providing sufficient capacity to serve planned future industrial, commercial and residential growth whilst improving the efficiency of the existing networks and encouraging water conservation and, at the same time, complying with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive.
- The servicing of certain urban centres in the county depends, to a large extent, on the allocation of agreed capacity or volume from adjoining Local Authorities. Providing these services is difficult on both economic and technical grounds necessitating regional solutions involving the co-operation of adjoining Local Authorities.
- The county needs to develop additional water sources, treatment, storage and distribution capacity in order to protect security of supply and provide for planned future growth. The re-engineering and re-modelling of some of the county's water and wastewater facilities may also be necessary.
- Progress in the development of the Greater Dublin Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, Marine Outfall and orbital sewer to be located in the northern part of the Greater Dublin Area is essential to the future growth of the region.
- In some cases where the county's water services infrastructure has been upgraded or replaced, there is a resultant lead in time for development corresponding with the construction phases.
- A sustainable approach is required in relation to the management of the essential engineering and water services with the emphasis on conservation and efficient use of resources.
- It is critical to respond to the issue of climate change and the impact of increased flood risk due to extremes of weather by flood risk management. Given the onset of climate change and increased flood risk from extreme events, flood risk assessment and management is required in relation to all aspects of the Development Plan.
- In terms of waste management the main objective is to fully implement the waste hierarchy and to particularly facilitate the development of recycling in order to minimise the use of landfill. It is a target of the North East Regional Management Plan to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill to 18% by 2015/2016.

7.9 Water Services Assessment of Needs

The Meath Water Services Assessment of Needs contained a ranked list of 31 water services capital works projects totalling an estimated cost of €250.2 million which were identified as requiring substantial investment in the short to medium term, for the purpose of addressing existing serious infrastructural deficiencies while also providing for the

continued sustainable advancement and development of County Meath. The 2010 - 2013 'Water Services Investment Programme' set out an allocation for Meath of €187.7m and only included 6 of the 31 schemes listed in the adopted Water Services Needs Assessment. Therefore, the need to prioritise projects is critically important.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

It is a strategic objective of Meath County Council:

WS SO 1	To advance the water supply and wastewater collection and treatment infrastructural requirements of the County by reviewing the Assessment of Water Services Needs as required, and implement the Water Services Investment Programme, the Rural Water Programme and the Water Conservation Programme.
WS SO 2	To improve and extend the County's water supply and wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure to serve the planned levels of growth, during the lifetime of this plan, in order to facilitate development.
WS SO 3	To secure the provision of water, wastewater treatment and waste management initiatives to accommodate the future sustainable economic and residential growth of the County in accordance with the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy and in consultation with statutory agencies and adjoining Local Authorities.
WS SO 4	To upgrade existing water and wastewater facilities, where deficient, in order to meet the Drinking Water Regulations, the Urban Wastewater Directives/Regulations, the discharge license regulations and the EU Water Framework Directive, or any future amendment thereof.
WS SO 5	To develop a Water Services Strategic Plan under Section 36 of the Water Services Act 2007, to ensure that adequate provision of drinking water and wastewater treatment is made to meet existing and future planned development needs in the County.
WS SO 6	To support the development of an agreed protocol and/or other arrangements between local authorities in the Greater Dublin Area to ensure the optimum allocation of sanitary and other services for priority investments.

WS SO 7

To undertake Appropriate Assessment of the likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EC Habitats Directive for proposals for the abstraction of water from Natura 2000 sites.

WS SO 8

To ensure that in so far as is reasonably practicable, waste water treatment plants are operated in compliance with their Waste Water Discharge Licenses / Certificates of Authorisation, in order to protect water quality.

7.10**Water Supply**

Meath County Council currently supplies approximately 45,000 cubic metres of potable water each day through 20 main water supply schemes and a watermain distribution network totalling approximately 1,800km. Water for Dunboyne, Clonee and Kilcloon is imported from Fingal County Council. The Meath environs of Drogheda, the coastal villages, Duleek, Stamullen and Kentstown are primarily served by an import from Louth County Council. There are small water imports from Kildare, Cavan and Westmeath to serve Mulhussey/Kilcock, Ballinaclose and Galboystown respectively.

The water supply resources in Meath are provided both from surface water and ground

water abstractions i.e. from rivers, lakes and boreholes. With limitations on abstraction levels from surface water sources within the County, greater dependence will be placed on groundwater to satisfy increasing demand, particularly in the east of the county.

Water Conservation through active leakage control, demand management and pressure management has played and will continue to play a major role in reducing the demand for potable water, thus facilitating additional development and improving the level of service to existing consumers in the county through the existing watermains networks.

7.11**Foul Drainage and Wastewater Treatment**

With over 40 wastewater treatment plants and approximately 1,000km of sewer network, Meath County Council currently collects and treats the wastewater from the majority of urban centres within the County. Wastewater from Ashbourne, Ratoath, Kilbride, Dunboyne and Clonee is discharged into Dublin where it is treated. Meath County Council treats the wastewater from Johnstown Bridge, County Kildare at the Enfield treatment plant.

Outside the main towns and villages, the main method of sewage disposal is by means of individual septic tanks and proprietary systems. These have been identified as a potential

source of pollution of both surface waters and groundwaters. A system of registration and regulation for septic tanks commenced in 2012. There are a large number of watercourses to which treated effluent is discharged by Meath County Council from its municipal waste water treatment plants and trade effluent discharges licensed by the Environment and Water Services section of Meath County Council. The assimilative capacity of these water courses needs to be protected to comply with the Water Framework Directive and facilitate future development within the county.

The Council recognises that there may be value in examining the potential of reusing treated water from wastewater treatment plants for beneficial purposes such as agricultural and landscape irrigation, industrial processes, toilet flushing etc.

7.11.1 Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS)

The development and expansion of the County's wastewater and surface water drainage system is essential to the future sustainable development of the County and to the improvement of water quality in the area. The Council, together with the other Local Authorities in the Greater Dublin region, has completed a major study of the drainage requirements for the entire Dublin region for the period to 2031 and beyond. This study, the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS) was commenced in 2001 to analyse the existing drainage system in the Greater Dublin Area, which includes South East Meath (Ashbourne, Ratoath, Kilbride, Dunboyne and Clonee) and to make recommendations on future drainage policies and needs. One of the key deliverables of the project is recommendations for regional

drainage infrastructure to cater for development up to 2031.

Eight alternative strategies were considered as part of the study, in an effort to resolve and eliminate wastewater treatment constraints. These are outlined in detail in the 'white paper'. The preferred option ultimately considered a new WWTP (to serve 850,000 p.e.) in North County Dublin and ancillary piped network and pumping stations to be the most sustainable way forward. This new regional treatment plant will take effluent from the South Dublin, West Fingal and south-east Meath (Ashbourne, Ratoath, Kilbride, Dunboyne, and Clonee) areas.

Fingal County Council as lead authority on behalf of the seven greater Dublin local authorities (including Meath) is currently progressing the planning and preliminary design of the new regional wastewater treatment plant and orbital sewer with a view to realising same by 2020, the date by which it is projected that the ultimate capacity of the existing greater Dublin treatment plant at Ringsend will be fully utilised. Participation in this project by Meath County Council will necessitate the allocation of significant funding.

7.12

Prioritising of Water and Wastewater Investment

As noted in the foregoing sections, the provision of water and drainage services to meet projected future growth is a very significant challenge for the Environment & Water Services and Planning Departments of Meath County Council. Furthermore, the servicing of certain urban centres in the South East of the county (Ashbourne, Dunboyne/North, Dunboyne/Clonee, Ratoath, Dunshaughlin and Kilcock) and along the East coast (Drogheda Environs, Bettystown, Laytown, Mornington East, Donacarney and Julianstown) currently depends, to a large extent, on the allocation of agreed capacity or volume from adjoining Local Authorities. Therefore, providing services has and continues to create challenges for their continued

development. Providing these services is difficult in economic and on technical grounds, necessitating regional and other possible solutions, involving the co-operation of adjoining local authorities.

The growth of settlements in accordance with the Core, Settlement and Economic Strategies is critical in achieving the strategic development objectives of this Development Plan. The availability of the existing water resources of the Blackwater River, and more importantly, of the River Boyne, to allow for the continued sustainable development of these centres is critical. This may involve the upgrading of the existing facilities serving these centres, subject to the availability of the necessary finances.

An overview of the current service provision in the designated Large Growth Towns i.e. Large Growth Towns I (Navan & Drogheda Environs) and II (Dunboyne) is outlined in a background paper entitled 'Water Services Provision in Navan Drogheda Environs and Dunboyne.'

It is clear from the analysis in this paper that in order for Meath County Council to implement the development strategy contained in the Development Plan, the existing water service constraints which effect Drogheda and Dunboyne, must be addressed. Furthermore, it is adopted policy of Meath County Council as contained in the Corporate Plan to investigate the reduction of the dependence

on adjoining Authorities for critical water services infrastructure, particularly wastewater treatment and disposal. It is clear that a regional solution is required to cater for the medium to long term needs of this strategic area of County Meath. It is accepted that the resolution of wastewater deficiencies are principally dependent on the implementation of the recommendations of the GDSDS and in particular in the shorter term on the duplication of the 9C Sewer to Blanchardstown.

The proposal to establish Water Ireland will have implications for investment in the future provision of water and waste water infrastructure.

7.13

Interim and Permanent Water Services Arrangements

The absence, or inadequacy, of water and wastewater services may curtail the development of some settlement centres in County Meath. Many of these towns and villages will not receive national funding to provide these services within the lifetime of this Development Plan. In order to overcome some of these difficulties, Meath County Council proposes the introduction of a number of initiatives that will allow flexibility in the provision of small scale sewage treatment and water works in towns and villages, where appropriate, that are lacking in adequate treatment facilities.

Meath County Council will only consider such provision where capital funding to provide a permanent solution has been included in the Water Services Investment Programme or where in the opinion of the Council, such capital funding will be included in subsequent Water Services Investment Programme(s) within the life span of this County Development Plan, subject to environmental considerations being respected. Such temporary provision will only be considered in locations which accord with the Regional Planning Guidelines as outlined in the settlement, economic and core strategies of this Development Plan.

Where capital funding to provide a permanent solution has not been included in the Water Services Investment Programme or in the opinion of the Council it is unlikely to be included in subsequent Water Services Investment Programme(s) within the lifetime of this County Development Plan, Meath County Council will consider proposals to provide permanent solutions. The consideration of such solutions will be restricted to where they facilitate significant population and / or economic growth in accordance with the objectives of this County Development Plan and where the scale and location of such growth is such that high quality, sustainable, permanent solutions can be feasibly and affordably delivered to the satisfaction of the Council.

In all instances:

- Developers to bear full cost of interim solutions, with no offset of levies;
- Solutions shall not impinge on the delivery of the objectives of the Water Framework Directive;
- Area based rather than site based solutions are preferred; and
- In relation to water supply solutions:
 - the adequacy and sustainability of the proposed water source must be proven;

- source protection required;
- water produced must consistently meet the requirements of the Drinking Water Regulations;
- provision for security of supply and fire fighting needs is essential, and;
- operational and maintenance agreements, bonds etc. will be required.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

WS POL 1	To continue the development and upgrading of the water supply system so as to ensure that an adequate, sustainable and economic supply of piped water of suitable quality is available for domestic, commercial, industrial, fire safety and other use in accordance with the settlement, economic and core strategies identified in this Plan and as finances permit.
WS POL 2	To protect and develop, in a sustainable manner, the existing groundwater sources and aquifers in the county and to control development in a manner consistent with the proper management of these resources.
WS POL 3	To promote public awareness and involvement in water conservation measures by households, businesses and industries.
WS POL 4	To continue and further develop the Water Conservation Programme, in order to conserve valuable resources by reducing wastage.
WS POL 5	To co-operate with the DoECLG, Louth County Council and Drogheda Borough Council in implementing the key findings and recommendations of the 'East Meath, South Louth & Drogheda Water Improvement Scheme Report (July 2009)', for a water supply scheme to meet the anticipated water requirements to serve this area.
WS POL 6	To utilise the existing water supply in an efficient and fair manner and in the best interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.
WS POL 7	To ensure that in the case of all developments where public mains are available or likely to be available, the development will be required to connect into them.
WS POL 8	To co-operate and advise in the provision of group-water schemes in the County.
WS POL 9	To seek to secure water resources for County Meath from any project supplying water to the Greater Dublin Area from the River Shannon or any other water source.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

WS OBJ 1	To reduce Meath County Council's dependence on the water services infrastructure of adjoining Local Authorities to cater for the projected development needs of Drogheda and Environs, East Meath and the South East urban centres.
WS OBJ 2	To implement the Water Services Investment Programme 2010 - 2013 and all subsequent Water Services Investment Programmes.
WS OBJ 3	To continue the upgrading and rehabilitation of water main networks and to implement Phases 2 to 5 of the Meath Countywide Water Conservation Project – Meath Countywide Watermains Rehabilitation Strategy.
WS OBJ 4	To continue the commitment to water conservation and reduction of leakage and wastage from the water supply systems to the lowest available level with an objective of reducing waste and leakage to less than 30% unaccounted for water during the life of this Plan in the interest of achieving efficiency and sustainability.
WS OBJ 5	To apply water pricing in accordance with water pricing policies as adopted.
WS OBJ 6	To implement the measures under the Rural Water Programme so as to improve the quality, reliability and efficiency of water supplies for rural dwellers.
WS OBJ 7	Meath County Council will seek enhanced capacity to service the East of the County and the Drogheda Environs in conjunction with Fingal and Louth County Councils, Drogheda Borough Council and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government including where necessary the exploration of alternative options.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

WS POL 10	To facilitate the provision of an adequate wastewater collection and treatment systems to all towns and villages in the County to serve existing and planned future populations in accordance with the Settlement and Core Strategies identified in this Plan, the Water Framework Directive 2000, the Water Services Investment Programme and as finances permit, thus improving the quality of Meath's surface, ground, transitional and coastal waters.
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WS POL 11	To develop additional treatment capacity at existing plants where required to facilitate planned sustainable growth.
WS POL 12	To consider proposals in line with the Interim and Permanent Water Services Arrangements outlined in this Development Plan for centres lacking in adequate treatment facilities and where the provision of such a facility/system does not affect the quality status of the receiving water as required under the Water Framework Directive. Such temporary provision will generally only be considered in locations which accord with the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area as outlined in the settlement, economic and core strategies of this Development Plan.
WS POL 13	To co-operate with the DoECLG, adjoining authorities and other statutory agencies to continue the sustainable development and improvement of the wastewater treatment systems throughout the County to meet the anticipated drainage requirements of the County and to achieve ongoing compliance with the requirements of discharge licenses and certificates of authorisation as granted by the EPA.
WS POL 14	To implement the policies developed for the Greater Dublin Area by the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study and to ensure that all developments will have regard to the policies as expressed in the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study.
WS POL 15	To co-operate with adjoining Planning Authorities to increase services capacity where necessary, particularly in relation to the Drogheda Wastewater Treatment and Kilcock/Maynooth Wastewater scheme (i.e. lower Liffey valley sewerage scheme) to service settlements in North-East Meath and the Meath environs of Kilcock and Maynooth. To also jointly investigate proposals for the further upgrade/extension of the treatments plants to provide for a long-term solution for wastewater treatment in the north east region.
WS POL 16	To utilise the capacity allocated to East Meath from the Drogheda Wastewater Treatment Plant in an efficient and fair manner and in the best interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
WS POL 17	To ensure that all new developments have access to or are provided with satisfactory drainage systems in the interests of public health and to avoid the pollution of ground and surface waters.
WS POL 18	To provide for the separation of foul and surface water drainage networks and to upgrade the drainage network so as to reduce foul sewer discharges for treatment by identification and removal of surface water misconnection and infiltration.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

WS OBJ 8	To generally require new developments to provide for the separation of foul and surface water drainage networks within the application site.
WS OBJ 9	To seek to implement pilot projects within the lifetime of the Development Plan, to develop an Inflow/Infiltration/Exfiltration Reduction Procedure to reduce inflow, infiltration and exfiltration flows to economic levels in the most cost-effective manner and to develop a systematic programme of rehabilitation works across the County.

7.14

Water Quality

County Meath has a rich and varied water environment consisting of coastline, rivers, streams, lakes and estuarine waters (surface waters) and ground waters (underground water). The Royal and Boyne Navigation Canals also form part of this environment. Collectively, they constitute an important economic, recreational, ecological and aesthetic resource for the County.

This water environment is sensitive to most forms of development. It can be affected both directly, for example, through river engineering works and water extraction for consumption; and indirectly, for example, through pollution

from surface water run-off, and agricultural and industrial processes. The Council is responsible for the protection of all waters in the County. The planning system has a major role to play in ensuring the protection, maintenance and improvement of water quality through the location and management of development.

Natura 2000 sites are sensitive to changes in water volume and quality. The Council recognises the importance of maintaining the favourable conservation status of aquatic species and habitats that are qualifying interests/conservation interests of these sites.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

It is a strategic objective of Meath County Council:

WS SOBJ 9	<p>To promote compliance with environmental standards and objectives established</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. for bodies of surface water, by the European Communities (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009; ii. for groundwater, by the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010; which standards and objectives are included in river basin management plans.
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7.14.1 Water Framework Directive

The EU Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC is being implemented across Europe, signalling a change of thinking in the way that water issues are addressed. The Directive commits member states to preventing deterioration and achieving at least good status in rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal and ground waters by the year 2015 (subject to extensions of deadlines). The Directive takes a unified approach around the concept of water as a precious natural commodity that must be preserved and regulated to a higher standard.

Since the adoption of the Water Framework Directive in 2003, Ireland has been divided into 8 River Basin Districts to help manage implementation of the Directive and the associated River Basin Management Plans developed for each River Basin District. These plans are the latest in a series of initiatives implementing the Directive in Ireland.

County Meath lies within 3 different River Basin Districts namely the Eastern, Shannon and the Neagh-Bann River Basin Districts, the latter being an International River Basin District (IRBD). Meath County Council is currently implementing the 2009-2015 River Basin Management Plans and associated programme of measures as detailed within each plan.

To date, Meath County Council has successfully adhered to the programme as defined by the EU. Meath County Council is committed to reaching the necessary water quality standards by 2015 as required under the Water Framework Directive. The River Basin Management Plans, prepared pursuant to the Water Framework Directive, are now in place.

The implications of the EU's Common Implementation Strategy for the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)-Guidance Document No. 20, in particular Section 3.5. Strategic Policy Guidance and Legislation

are noted particularly with respect to the assessment of applications.

7.14.2 Surface Waters

7.14.2.1 Rivers

The majority of County Meath (86%) lies within the Eastern River Basin District (ERBD), along with 13 other authorities.¹ The Dee Catchment including Grangegeeth, Rathkenny, Castletown, Nobber and Kilmainhamwood is included in the Neagh Bann River Basin District which drains approximately 10% of the County whilst the remaining 4% of the County around Oldcastle is included in the Shannon River Basin District.

In total 25 rivers are sampled by Meath County Council for the purposes of the Water Framework Directive at 85 river sampling locations. This operational monitoring programme is key to directing the implementation of the River Basin Management Plans and also determines whether the targets and objectives of the Water Framework Directive have been achieved.

Based on the results attained from the monitoring programme which became operational in 2006, a number of applications for the extension of timeframes were made where it was considered that the original objectives of the Water Framework Directive could not be achieved. A number of extensions were granted primarily on the grounds that it was not technically feasible to achieve the 2015 deadline. In total, 14 water management units were granted extensions of timeframes, where timeframes were extended to 2021 and 2027 respectively.

In 2011 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a Water Framework Status Update based on monitoring results for the period (2007-2009). The Water Framework Status Update details the quality of all waters within each River Basin District. In terms of surface waters, Meath has been divided into

¹ Cavan County Council, Drogheda Borough Council, Dublin City Council, Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Council, Fingal County Council, Kildare County Council, Louth County Council, Meath County Council, Offaly County Council, South Dublin County Council, Westmeath County Council, Wexford County Council, Wicklow County Council

a total of 144 river water bodies, 2 lake water bodies, 1 transitional water body and 1 coastal water body. In terms of groundwater status County Meath was divided into a total of 46 ground water bodies. Of the total 144 river water bodies the 2011 EPA Report states that 28 of these water bodies are at good status, 71 are at moderate status, 33 at poor status and 12 at bad status.

Further work is required if the objectives of the Directive are to be achieved within the given timeframes. It is also equally important that where water quality is of good status that this is protected.

7.14.2.2 Lakes

There are 2 lakes within County Meath that are designated Water Framework Directive operational monitoring lakes, namely Lough Bane and Annagh or White Lake. The 2011 EPA report details the findings of monitoring carried out for the monitoring period (2007-2009) on the designated lakes. Water quality within both lakes for the monitoring period was found to be at good status and comply with the objectives of the Directive.

Lough Bane is a drinking water supply for the Kells/Oldcastle Area and therefore a potential exists for the Lough Bane water body to deteriorate in terms of the hydrological demands been exerted on this water-body. The abstraction/recharge rate within this water-body should be considered in order to ensure the status of this lake is protected.

7.14.2.3 Coastal Waters

Meath County Council is responsible for bathing water quality in its area in addition to monitoring bathing water quality and making information available on bathing water quality during the summer bathing water season.

The Meath coastline comprises approximately 10 km of long beachfront, which stretches from Mornington at the River Boyne, bordering County Louth to Gormanston at the River Delvin, bordering County Dublin. Within this 10 km of long beachfront, Laytown/Bettystown

is the only designated Bathing Area which is consequently subject to the requirements of the Bathing Water Quality Regulations, 2008 (S.I. No. 79 of 2008).

Meath's coastline is also part of a designated Shellfish Area namely 'the Balbriggan/Skerries shellfish area'. Article 5 of the Shellfish Directive (2006/113/EC) and section 6 of the Quality of Shellfish Waters Regulations (S.I. No. 268 of 2006) requires the development of Pollution Reduction Plans (PRPs) for designated shellfish areas in order to support shellfish life and growth and to contribute to the high quality of directly edible shellfish products.

In 2011, Meath County Council adopted pollution reduction plans for the purposes of protecting the quality of its shellfish waters, particularly with the view to establishing the potential risk of microbial contamination to the quality of Shellfish Waters from both on site wastewater treatment systems and agricultural sources.

Mornington Beach along the east coast has attained a Green Coast Award in 2011. The Green Coast Award is a symbol of environmental excellence and has been established to acknowledge, to promote and to protect the environment of rural beaches in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Wales. The award is for beaches which meet EC bathing water quality standards, but which are also prized for their natural, unspoilt environment.

7.14.3 Groundwater

The EPA reports on 46 groundwater bodies in County Meath. Overall groundwater quality within the county is very good with only one groundwater body failing to meet with the standards that are set out in the Directive. Meath County Council engages in ongoing consultation with the EPA in this regard.

All existing groundwater water-bodies of good status are to be protected. Groundwater may be also subject to hydrological pressures and a balance between groundwater abstraction and recharge should be achieved.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

WS POL 19	To protect groundwater resources having regard to the County Meath Groundwater Protection Plan.
WS POL 20	To ensure through the implementation of the River Basin Management Plans and their associated programmes of measures, and any other associated legislation, the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters throughout the county.
WS POL 21	To work, in co-operation with relevant organisations and major stakeholders to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the protection and improvement of the county's water resources.
WS POL 22	To continue efforts to improve water quality under the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, as amended and by implementing the measures outlined under the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) and complying with the requirements of the Surface Water Legislation Environment Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 and other relevant regulations.
WS POL 23	To promote public awareness of water quality issues and the measures required to protect both surface water and ground water bodies.
WS POL 24	To manage groundwater resources particularly having regard to the abstraction and recharge rates of ground-waterbodies.
WS POL 25	To protect, maintain and improve the natural character of the watercourses and rivers in the county Meath.
WS POL 26	To seek the continued improvement of water quality, bathing facilities and other recreational opportunities in the coastal, estuarine and surface waters in the County.
WS POL 27	To ensure that proposed septic tanks and proprietary treatment systems, or other waste water treatment and storage systems, and associated percolation areas where required as part of a development, comply with the recommendations of the Environmental Protection Agency and that they are employed only where site conditions are appropriate.
WS POL 28	In the assessment of planning applications for developments within the contributing catchment of the Balbriggan/Skerries Shellfish Waters regard shall be had to the Shellfish Pollution Reduction Plans where appropriate.

OBJECTIVE

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

WS OBJ 10

To develop groundwater protection schemes in line with the recommendations contained within the DoEHLG /GSI/ EPA publication 'Groundwater Protection Schemes, 1999' or any revised or replacement publication.

7.15

Flood Risk Management

Flooding is a natural phenomenon of the hydrological cycle. While there are different types and causes of flooding, the most common in County Meath are the flooding of rivers (and the Boyne Estuary and its tributaries in the case of East Meath) and the inadequacy of existing stormwater pipe networks in response to extreme rainfall events. There are many factors that influence flood behaviour and the degrees of risk that it possesses. Like other natural processes, flooding cannot be completely eliminated, but its impacts can be minimised with proactive and environmentally sustainable management.

The Office of Public Works (OPW) is lead agency for flood risk management in Ireland and is responsible for overall implementation of the Floods Directive. The 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' was published in 2009. The guidelines aim to ensure a rigorous assessment of flood risk at all levels to provide a consistency of approach throughout Ireland. Development at all levels will be required to comply with the recommendations of these guidelines. In achieving the aims and objectives of the Guidelines, Meath County Council must:

- Ensure that development is not permitted in areas of flood risk, particularly floodplains and coastal areas subject to flooding, except where there are no suitable alternative sites available in areas at lower risk that are consistent with the objectives

of proper planning and sustainable development;

- Adopt a sequential approach to spatial planning which aims to avoid flood risk, where possible, substitute less vulnerable uses where avoidance is not possible, and mitigate and manage the risk where avoidance and substitution are not possible;
- A precautionary approach should also be applied to flood risk management to reflect uncertainties in flooding datasets and risk assessment techniques and the ability to predict the future climate, the performance of existing flood defences and the extent of future coastal erosion.

Meath County Council will assess planning applications for development in accordance with the provisions of these Guidelines. The Council will ensure that only developments consistent with the overall policy and technical approaches of these Guidelines will be approved and permission may be refused where flood issues have not been, or cannot be, addressed successfully and where the presence of unacceptable residual flood risks to the development, its occupants or users and adjoining property remains. It should be noted that under the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011 if planning permission is refused for the reason that the proposed development is in an area which is at risk of flooding, compensation is excluded.

The EU Floods Directive was introduced in 2007 and sets out how member states must have a plan for the management of flood risk. The aims of the Directive will be achieved through a series of requirements which will be carried out at river catchment level and also in coastal zones. The Floods Directive required Member States to undertake a national preliminary flood risk assessment by 2011 at river catchment level to identify areas where significant flood risk exists or might be considered likely to occur. Member States are also required to prepare catchment-based Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs), by 2015 that will set out flood risk management objectives, actions and measures. Under the Floods Directive, the EU recognises the importance of land use management and spatial planning as a key tool in flood risk management. 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 in order to minimise and/ or mitigate the potential conflict, by means of alternative land use zoning objectives or discontinuing the land use zoning objective and/ or phasing pending mitigation.

Meath County Council, Fingal County Council and the Office of Public Works (OPW) recognised the high levels of existing flood risk in the Fingal/East Meath area. In response to

this and in recognition of the requirements of the Floods Directive, the Fingal/East Meath Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (FEM FRAMS) was commissioned. The FEM FRAMS is a catchment-based flood risk assessment and management study of twenty three rivers and their catchments, including the Broadmeadow River, the Nanny River and their tributaries was commissioned.

Information gleaned from the FEMFRAMS informed the preparation of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) which has been carried out by JBA Consulting for the purposes of the Development Plan review. Other existing approved FRAM studies, including the Tolka River Flood Study, the Kilcock Flood Study, the Swan River Flood Risk Assessment and OPW flood mapping has also informed this process. Please refer to Appendix 6 for details of the 'Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Meath'. Chapter 4 of the assessment sets out the sources of flood data used and the methodology behind the preparation of the assessment and the flood zone maps and Chapter 10 sets out recommended flood risk policies and objectives. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Meath utilises the most up to date flooding data for the County available at the time of plan preparation. It should be noted that this assessment will be reviewed (as per OBJ 10) following the publication of the flood mapping which is being produced as part of the national Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Studies.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

WS POL 29

To have regard to the "Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (DoEHLG/OPW, 2009) through the use of the sequential approach and application of the Justification Tests for Development Management and Development Plans, during the period of this Plan.

WS POL 30

To have regard to the findings and recommendations of the current Strategic Flood Risk Assessment prepared as part of the County Development Plan review. See Appendix 6.

WS POL 31	To ensure that all developments have regard to the surface water management policies in the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS). Compliance with the recommendations contained in Technical Guidance Document, Volume 2, Chapter 4 of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study shall be required in all instances.
WS POL 32	To ensure that a flood risk assessment is carried out for any development proposal, where flood risk may be an issue in accordance with the "Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (DoECLG/OPW, 2009). This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to the potential development.
WS POL 33	To consult with the Office of Public Works in relation to proposed developments in the vicinity of drainage channels and rivers for which the OPW are responsible, and the Council will, retain a strip of 10 metres on either side of such channel where required, to facilitate access thereto.
WS POL 34	To consult, where necessary, with Inland Fisheries Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant agencies in the construction of flood alleviation measures in County Meath.
WS POL 35	To ensure that flood risk management is incorporated into the preparation of Local Area Plans and Town Development Plans in accordance with 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)'
WS POL 36	To have regard to the recommendations of the Fingal East Meath Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study, the Eastern, North West and Neagh Bann Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study when finalised and approved.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

WS OBJ 11	To undertake a review of the 'Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Meath' following the publication of the flood mapping which is being produced as part of the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Studies.
WS OBJ 12	To design flood relief measures to ensure appropriate protection for alluvial woodland (i.e. a qualifying interest) along the Boyne.

WS OBJ 13	To design flood relief measures to protect the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites and to avoid indirect impacts of conflict with other qualifying interests or Natura 2000 sites.
WS OBJ 14	To promote positive flood relief measures that can enhance habitats in the Boyne floodplain such as swales, constructed wetland basins etc.
WS OBJ 15	To seek to ensure that construction works are designed so as not to result in surface water runoff into cSAC or SPAs either directly or indirectly via a watercourse.

7.16

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

The Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study produced five policy documents including an Environmental Policy, Drainage of New Developments and Climate Change Policy. The aforementioned documents focused on the design approach and criteria for new drainage with the objective of ensuring that any future development did not continue the trend towards increasing flooding and the pollution of rivers.

This approach using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) offers a total solution to rainwater management and is applicable in both urban and rural situations. For future development, Meath County Council will require that all large-scale developments incorporate 'Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems' (SuDS) as part of the development proposals. SuDS are effective technologies which aim to reduce flood risk, improve water quality and enhance biodiversity and amenity.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

WS OBJ 16	To incorporate and promote the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems within County Council Developments and other infrastructural projects as required in the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works.
WS OBJ 17	To require the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems in accordance with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works for new developments (including extensions).
WS OBJ 18	To ensure that all new developments comply with Section 3.12 of the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works V6 which sets out the requirements for new developments to allow for Climate Change.

7.17

Waste Management

The term waste generally refers to an unwanted or unusable material that is deliberately discarded by its users and is classified in accordance with criteria set down by the European Union.

Waste management involves measures to protect the environment and human health by preventing or reducing the adverse impacts of the generation and management of waste and by reducing overall impacts of resource use and improving the efficiency of such use.

Maintaining economic progress in County Meath is contingent on a good environment and the availability of necessary waste management facilities. Waste management policy is predicated on the EU Waste Hierarchy of prevention, preparing for reuse, recycling, energy recovery and sustainable disposal.

Regional and local waste management plans are in place nationwide in accordance with the requirements of the Waste Management

Acts, 1996 to 2005, and the Waste Framework Directive (Council of the European Communities), 1975. This planning procedure represented the first time a comprehensive and holistic approach was applied to waste management and allows the provision of an integrated national network of waste management services and facilities to be developed.

7.17.1 Regional Waste Management Plan

County Meath is the lead authority for the preparation of the North East Region Waste Management Plan which also includes counties Louth, Cavan and Monaghan. The original Waste Management Plan (WMP) for the North East Region was adopted in 2001. The replacement WMP for the North East Region was developed and covers the period 2005 – 2010 and remains the current plan. This plan sets out the current policy to progress the sustainable waste management of waste arising in the Region. In



doing so the overall regional policy objectives encompass the priority order of the EU waste management hierarchy.

Meath Local Authorities are committed to the requirements of EU and National Waste Management legislation and policies transposed at a regional level through the current North East Waste Management Plan 2005 to 2010 and are committed to the requirements of any replacement Plan for this region or any modified region incorporating County Meath insofar as Meath Local Authorities role permits.

In accordance with the requirements of the Waste Management (Framework Directive) Regulations 2011, an evaluation of the current Waste Management Plan (WMP) was completed in 2012. As a result of this evaluation, a replacement Waste Management Plan will be required. The replacement Plan will reflect changes in both legislation and policy direction, regional changes and cross border opportunities and challenges since the original WMP was adopted. It will identify current progress on waste management, the policy vision for future development and the means to implement and monitor future progress.

Progress to date shows that implementation of the two Waste Management Plans have been very successful with a significant increase in recycling rates for numerous waste streams and the expansion of integrated waste management infrastructure throughout the North East Region. Education and awareness of waste management issues has intensified throughout the region following the appointment of Environmental Awareness Officers in each Local Authority and waste awareness initiatives have progressed from primarily focussing on diverting waste from landfill to focusing on higher order waste management techniques such as prevention, minimisation and resource efficiency measures. The waste infrastructure in the region has also grown significantly.

The regional policy objectives included in the Waste Management Plan 2005-2010 are as follows:

- a) Waste prevention and minimisation will be a priority and there will be increased focus on the schools, community and business sectors to reduce waste arisings;
- b) The region will deliver an effective system meeting the 'polluter pays principle' that meets high standards of environmental performance and all legislative obligations;
- c) The region will strive to give access to waste management services across the region, particularly in rural areas;
- d) The region will strive to improve collection coverage and participation for households and businesses, reducing uncollected waste;
- e) The region will continue to improve the infrastructure for recycling and recovery of waste;
- f) The region will maximise positive input of the private sector to help meet plan objectives;
- g) The North East Local Authorities will, if necessary and/or appropriate for environmental or other reasons, direct that certain waste streams must be delivered to a certain tier in the waste hierarchy (e.g. reuse, recycling, biological treatment, energy recovery). This will be achieved by means of the Waste Collection Permit system or other appropriate regulatory or enforcement measures.

7.17.2 Waste Infrastructure

In terms of waste infrastructure, the facilities in the region have grown significantly in recent years. Recycling is a key component of the strategy for a sustainable approach to waste management. Meath County Council has already established a recycling facility in Navan, Trim and Kells. A recycling centre in Dunboyne has been developed by the private sector. The Council increased the diversity of materials accepted at Bring Centres. The Waste Management Plan notes that finding suitable locations for bring banks is a challenging task for all Local Authorities. In 2009, over 75% of occupied households in County Meath were serviced by a kerbside separate collection system for dry recyclables, however significant

additional progress is required in terms of providing a 3-bin collection service to cater for the separate collection of organics.

A waste to energy facility was constructed at Carranstown, Duleek and has a capacity of 200,000 tonnes per annum of municipal waste. The Knockharley Landfill, near Kentstown, off the N2 National Primary Road is a privately operated landfill under licence from the EPA. This regional facility has capacity for in excess of 20 years, accepting 88,000 tonnes per annum for disposal. The landfill site takes both municipal and industrial waste while a former quarry site at Gormonston deals with construction and demolition waste. There are two Waste Transfer Stations in the County, located at Rathdrinnagh on the N2 and at

Clonmagadden, Navan and one materials recovery facility located at Dunboyne.

7.17.3 Litter Management Plan

Each Local Authority is obliged to prepare a litter management plan for its area. The Litter Management Plan 2006-2009 sets out Meath Local Authorities objectives to prevent and control litter as well as measures to encourage public awareness of the problem. Local Authorities are responsible for implementing the litter laws in their own areas. This means they are responsible for the prevention and control of litter and they have the power to take enforcement action against individuals who break or ignore these laws. Gardai also have the power to issue on-the-spot fines for litter offences.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

WM POL 1	To adopt the provisions of the waste management hierarchy and implement policy in relation to the county's requirements under the current or any subsequent waste management plan. All prospective developments in the county will be expected to take account of the provisions of the regional waste management plan and adhere to the requirements of the Plan. Account shall also be taken of the proximity principle and the inter regional movement of waste as provided for under appropriate Minister Directives from time to time.
WM POL 2	To promote and encourage the education and awareness on all issues associated with waste management, at household, industry and community level. This will include the promotion of waste reduction by encouraging the minimisation, re-use, recycling and recovery of waste within the county.
WM POL 3	To seek the provision of quality cost effective waste infrastructure and services, which reflect and meet the needs of the community.
WM POL 4	To seek in the Council's dealings with private companies that all waste shall be undertaken in compliance with the requirement of the EPA and relevant waste management legislation and policy.
WM POL 5	To require the provision of bring banks, bottle banks or other appropriate recycling facilities as part of the overall development in the case of new or extended shopping centre developments and commercial neighbourhood centres, educational, sports, recreational facilities and managed residential developments.

WM POL 6	To encourage the development of waste infrastructure and associated developments in appropriate locations, as deemed necessary in accordance with the requirements of the Regional Waste Management Plan.
WM POL 7	To encourage the recycling of construction and demolition waste and the reuse of aggregate and other materials in future construction projects.
WM POL 8	To promote and facilitate communities to become involved in environmental awareness activities and community-based recycling initiatives or environmental management initiatives that will lead to local sustainable waste management practices.
WM POL 9	To encourage and support the expansion and improvement of the green bin (bio-degradable waste) service in order to increase the quantity and quality of materials collected for recycling.
WM POL 10	To encourage and support the provision of a separate collection of waste in accordance with the requirements of the Waste Management (Food Waste) Regulations 2009, the Waste Framework Directive Regulations, 2011 and other relevant legislation to meet the requirements of the Regional Waste Management Plan.
WM POL 11	To ensure that hazardous waste is addressed through an integrated approach of prevention, collection, and recycling and encourage the development of industry led producer responsibility schemes for key waste streams.
WM POL 12	In examining and assessing the identification, release and development of zoned lands, Meath County Council shall have regard to the recommendations of the Fingal East Meath Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study and the approved Eastern, West and Neagh Bann Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

WM OBJ 1	To facilitate the provision of appropriate waste recovery and disposal facilities in accordance with the principles set out in the appropriate Waste Management Plan applicable from time to time made in accordance with the Waste Management Act 1996.
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WM OBJ 2	To continue to expand environmental awareness initiatives designed to create increased public awareness of waste prevention minimisation, reuse and resource efficiency. This should be encouraged at all sectors of society.
WM OBJ 3	To identify suitable sites for additional recycling centres and bring bank facilities to cater for the projected increase in waste for recycling over the timescale of this Development Plan and subject to appropriate funding, seek the provision of appropriate infrastructure through the public or private sector.
WM OBJ 4	To update the Sludge Management Plan for County Meath and seek to implement the recommendations of that plan.
WM OBJ 5	To continue to tackle littering through the continued implementation and updating of Meath County Councils anti-litter plan.
WM OBJ 6	To seek the effective engagement of local communities in Meath to promote their role in recycling waste and tackling the problems of illegal dumping within the County through liaison with the Environmental Awareness Officer.
WM OBJ 7	To promote the implementation of Waste Management Activities in accordance with 'Best Practice' and national policy.
WM OBJ 8	To facilitate the implementation of national legislation and national and regional waste management policy.
WM OBJ 9	To encourage community/voluntary groups to establish additional waste services or facilities (e.g. small scale facilities for recycling, reuse/repair) in their area and assist them to develop a strategy to provide such facilities for and with the members of their community.
WM OBJ 10	To support the continued expansion of Bring Bank networks to a target density of 1 bank per 500 households. Innovative methods of siting and collection will be supported. Existing and future bring banks should be standardised where appropriate and meet minimum service standards. Existing facilities may be upgraded to accept additional materials.
WM OBJ 11	To ensure that household waste recycling is adequately addressed in all proposed new residential developments, by taking this into account during the Planning Application process.
WM OBJ 12	To support the acceptance of commercial waste on a fee paying basis at existing Recycling Centres where practical.

WM OBJ 13	To support the development of facilities to cater for commercial waste not provided for in the kerbside collection system such as WEEE, C&D type waste and hazardous materials in accordance with the requirements of the North East Waste Management Plan.
WM OBJ 14	To support developments necessary to manage food waste in accordance with the requirements of the Waste Management (Food Waste) Regulations and the Regional Waste Management Plan.
WM OBJ 15	To support the acceptance of WEEE at all Recycling Centres for household waste.
WM OBJ 16	To support the development of infrastructural requirements necessary to meet the objectives and targets Meath's Sludge Management Plan having regard to the relevant siting guidelines.
WM OBJ 17	To require developers to prepare construction and demolition waste management plans for new construction projects over certain thresholds which shall meet the relevant recycling/recovery targets for such waste in accordance with the national legislation and national and regional waste management policy.
WM OBJ 18	To seek to ensure in cooperation with relevant authorities that waste management facilities are appropriately managed and monitored according to best practice to maximise efficiencies and to protect human health and the natural environment.
WM OBJ 19	To provide for the development of a Recycling Centre in the South East Meath Area, subject to appropriate funding.
WM OBJ 20	To co-operate with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, the Environmental Protection Agency and other relevant stakeholders in implementing proposals which discourage illegal or improper disposal of waste and promote the diversion of recyclable items from the waste streams including 'bottle return and refund' schemes.

7.18

Pollution Control

The importance of a clean environment for the economic and social life of the county is recognised. In this regard, continuous effective monitoring and enforcement in relation to

pollution control measures is imperative and will continue over the period of this Development Plan.

7.18.1 Air

The Council's role in relation to air is to monitor and promote a reduction in air pollution, through the implementation of relevant legislation and through the provision of advice and guidance on best practice.

7.18.2 Noise

The Council has prepared a Noise Action Plan (2008) in accordance with the requirements

of the Environmental Noise Regulations (SI 140 2006). This Noise Action Plan is aimed at strategic long term management of environmental noise from transport systems i.e. traffic noise. This Action Plan gives an overview of the main requirements of the Environmental Noise Regulations and the Council's responsibility in this regard. A series of recommendations are set out to limit population exposure to environmental noise pollution.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

PC POL 1

To seek to preserve and maintain air and noise quality in the county in accordance with good practice and relevant legislation.

OBJECTIVE

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

PC OBJ 1

To update Noise Mapping in accordance with revised or updated thresholds for Noise Mapping.



- 8.1 Energy
- 8.2 Communications Technology

Energy and Communications

Energy and Communications

8



Energy and Communications

8.1

Energy

8.1.1 Introduction

The availability of energy is of critical importance to the continued development and expansion of employment in County Meath. The growth in the national economy has placed considerable strain on the national electricity generating capacity. The ESB National Grid, in its Generation Adequacy Report (2006 – 2012), has identified significant generation shortfalls as electricity demand continues to grow between 2.5% to 4.3% per annum. The supply of electricity has been opened up to increased competition and new generation plants may connect to the electricity network to transfer power from where it is produced to where there is a demand for it.

Meath County Council recognises the essential requirement for energy production and distribution. The two main energy networks serving County Meath are electricity and gas. With increased residential development in the county and a drive for more industrial, commercial and employment generating uses, it will be important to ensure that the capacity of the energy networks is sufficient to meet these demands.

In relation to power generation, Meath is well placed to encourage and facilitate the development of power generation facilities in the county, for a variety of reasons, namely:

- the county's proximity to Dublin;
- the passage of a number of gas mains and trunk elements of the national grid through Meath, and;
- the availability of sites.

This chapter sets out objectives for the provision or facilitation of the provision of infrastructure for energy and communication facilities in accordance with the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011.

8.1.2 Electricity and Gas Networks: Achievements and Opportunities

The major existing electricity corridors and potential major new corridors are indicated on Map 8.1. While there is a current slowdown in economic growth, the long term trend is for a return to growth. Eirgrid and the ESB have a list of major electrical infrastructure projects planned for the coming years to cater for normal domestic and commercial supply. The East-West interconnector has gone through the planning process and construction stages. It is energised and is now operational. It provides an electricity link between the electricity grids in Ireland and Britain. The route is undersea from Barkby Beach in North Wales to Rush, County Dublin and underground from Rush to Woodland, County Meath. It is designed to provide 500MW of capacity increasing competition and security of supply. Recently completed electricity infrastructure includes:

- the 110kV/MV station at Baltrasna to serve the Ashbourne and Ratoath areas;
- the new 38kV overhead line between Navan 110kV station and Abbeylands 38kV station in Navan;
- increased transformer capacity at Abbeylands 38kV/MV station in Navan, and;
- the Kingscourt and the Meath Hill-Mullagh 38kV overhead line.

Future projects earmarked by Eirgrid in County Meath include the North-South 400kV interconnector and the construction of a 2nd transformer in the Woodland station. Plans are in place to develop a new 110kV/MV substation which will reinforce the network around Trim and facilitate development in the area. In addition, a new 110kV overhead line between Gorman 220kV and Meath Hill 110kV stations, and an increase in transformer capacity at Slane 38kV station is proposed. The development of a new 110kV station south of Drogheda will be dependent on the pace and scale of load development in this area.

Natural gas is the cleanest of all fossil fuels. There has been a very large increase in the consumption of gas for electricity generation and also for residential and industrial heating and other uses. As demand increased, the Kinsale gas supply was augmented by imports via a pipeline system from Scotland. A second interconnector pipeline was put in place in 2002 to bring additional supplies ashore at Gormanston in County Meath from which a new pipeline was laid to Ballough in north Dublin. A new pipeline to the west was then constructed to connect Dublin-Galway and Limerick which opened up the midlands and the west to the natural gas network. An extension to the existing Gormanston Above Ground Installation (AGI) has been completed since the previous County Development Plan which enables the transmission of gas from Scotland to Belfast.

A number of important gas mains traverse the county. The gas mains and towns connected to the mains supply are shown on Map 8.2. Following the recent completion of the gas connection to Kells, there are no further major developments planned for the gas network in County Meath. However, in terms of gas supply, the County is well served in terms of transmission lines to the primary and secondary economic growth towns. The existing

network has capacity for connections and local distribution network extensions.

8.1.3 Renewable Energy

Meath is committed to pursuing sustainable energy policies in accordance with the White Paper, 'Towards a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland 2007-2020'. The White Paper sets out the Government's ambitious target of 33% of electricity being produced from renewable sources by 2020. This goal was subsequently increased to 40%. As a Planning Authority, it is important to recognise the range of new and developing technologies that can contribute to minimising greenhouse gas emissions and to securing a greater proportion of our energy needs from renewable sources. This document sets out a number of strategic goals which together act as a road map for the delivery of a highly efficient, competitive energy sector characterised by innovation and driven by research and technology-led development.

Renewable energy comes from natural sources that are continuously replenished by nature. The main sources of renewable energy are the wind, the sun (solar energy), water (hydropower, wave and tidal energy), heat below the surface of the earth (geothermal energy) and biomass (wood, biodegradable waste and energy crops).¹ Meath County Council is committed to developing a more diverse range and combination of energy sources including wind energy, micro hydro power, solar energy, biofuels, geothermal (deep and shallow), anaerobic digestion and combined heat and power in order to deliver on the targets set down in the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) IRELAND.

The potential feasible renewable energy options for the county include, but are not limited to, a balanced mix of:

- Bioenergy - crops, forestry;

¹ The incineration of separated municipal waste and any associated energy recovery is not strictly deemed to constitute a renewable energy source. The EU Renewables Directive does however recognise the role of incineration in sustainable waste management and the significant contribution it can make to the provision of renewable energy by recovering energy from waste where such a process does not undermine the waste management hierarchy.

- Biomass - anaerobic digestion, combined heat and power (CHP);
- Geothermal - hot dry rock reservoirs, groundwater aquifers;
- Hydroenergy - small and microhydro systems;
- Solar - passive solar heating, active solar heating;
- Waste - landfill methane gas collection;
- Wave - wave action, and;
- Wind - onshore wind, offshore wind (single turbines and groups).

It will be an objective of the current plan that Meath County Council will investigate the potential of renewable energy identified in the initial assessment areas with a view to developing a renewable energy strategy for the County.

8.1.4 Energy Efficiency and Management: Meath County Council

Meath County Council will endeavour:

- To promote the rational uses of energy;
- To promote renewable energy;
- To promote and disseminate energy information;
- To protect the environment;
- To reduce energy waste in all sectors of society, and;
- To encourage the replacement of imported fossil fuels with regionally generated renewable energy in an effort to ensure security of energy supply where it is feasible.

Meath County Council has signed up to Energy Map training and an Energy Management Action Plan delivered by Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). An Energy team was established under the Energy Map programme consisting of personnel from across the various directorates within Meath County Council. It is acknowledged that only by ensuring that employees from all areas of the organisation are involved that a local authority can successfully integrate Energy Efficiency and Management into its culture.

Meath County Council has adopted a Climate Change Strategy and Energy Management Action Plan 2011-2012 entitled, 'Think Globally Act Locally' which has been developed in line with the National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012.

In 2011, the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government initiated a review of National Climate Policy. The review found that Ireland is on course to meet Kyoto Protocol targets. However, in terms of a long-term national vision of a carbon-constrained world, Ireland is faced with both the challenge of addressing a unique greenhouse gas emissions profile, and the opportunity to position itself as an enlightened society with an environmentally sustainable, competitive, low-carbon economy. Meath County Council will review the progress of its Climate Change Strategy, report on their progress to date and thereafter develop a new strategy and action plan in line with Government Policy.

8.1.5 Wind Energy Development

The Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006) issued by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government indicate that it is important that all development plans incorporate a statement of the Local Authority's policies and objectives in relation to wind energy development, including those matters it will take into account in assessing planning applications for specific wind energy development proposals. The development plan must achieve a reasonable balance between responding to overall Government Policy on renewable energy and enabling the wind energy resources of the Local Authority's area to be harnessed in a manner that is consistent with proper planning and sustainable development.

The assessment of individual wind energy development proposals needs to be conducted within the context of a "plan led" approach which involves identifying areas considered suitable or unsuitable for wind energy

development. The Landscape Characterisation Assessment identifies areas of the County that are sensitive to this form of development from a landscape perspective. All planning applications for wind turbines within Natura 2000 sites require an Appropriate Assessment of the likely significant effects on the Natura 2000 site/s in accordance with Article 6(3) of the E.C. Habitats Directive. The aim of this Development Plan is to promote a policy of preferential avoidance of siting wind energy projects in Natura 2000 sites, or sites that are on the flight lines of wintering birds unless it can be proven that there are no risks to the integrity of the sites (by carrying out Appropriate Assessment).

8.1.6 Hydro Energy

The Council notes that there are two existing small hydroelectric schemes at Slane and Navan producing between 0.1/MW and 0.2/MW of electrical power. The Council encourages the use of rivers, where suitable, within the county for the development of Hydro Energy, and in particular, will be supportive of individual developments along the banks of rivers which propose hydro energy to provide an element of their energy requirements. The Council will not encourage the use of the canal system which is designated for tourist and amenity use for this purpose. In all proposals, Meath County Council will consult with the National Parks & Wildlife Section of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Inland Fisheries Ireland with regard to the impact of such proposals for the free passage of fish, salmonid qualities of the river and ecological impact of any sites of E.U. or national designation.

8.1.7 Geothermal Energy

Geothermal energy refers to heat energy stored in the ground. Heat is supplied to the ground from two sources namely the hot core of the planet and the sun. It can be classified as either 'deep' or 'shallow' depending on the depths involved. The deep geothermal energy can only be accessed when it arrives at the earth's surface through geological processes such as

through fault lines on the earth's crust or by drilling through the surface to access it. The second source of heat in the ground is from radiation from the sun. Solar thermal radiation is absorbed by the surface of the earth each day. This energy can be regarded as stored energy which stays relatively warm throughout the year. This heat can be extracted, for example, by using a ground source heat pump.

Sustainable Energy Ireland commissioned a study in 2004 on geothermal energy in Ireland. This study identified potential resources of geothermal energy in Ireland. The report found



that the most abundant warm springs are found in the Mallow area in north County Cork and the Dublin/Meath/Kildare area. The highest recorded geothermal gradient at 1000 metres in the Republic is 28.4 degrees celsius/km and is located in the vicinity of north County Meath. The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) is currently undertaking a further study on shallow geothermal energy resources of Ireland. This project aims to produce best practice guidance for the geothermal systems in Ireland, suitability maps for the utilisation of shallow geothermal energy resources and a database of existing systems.

8.1.8 Bioenergy

The bioenergy sector is emerging as a viable alternative to the traditional non-renewable energy supply sources of oil and coal. Bioenergy is energy derived from the processing of solar energy that has been bound up in biomass during the process of photosynthesis. 'Biomass' is defined in the Planning and Development Acts as the biodegradable fraction of products, waste and residues from agriculture (including vegetable and animal substances), forestry and related industries, as well as the biodegradable fraction of industrial and municipal waste. There are a number of bio-energy plants in County Meath and it is a growing sector.

8.1.9 Energy from Waste

Proposals for waste to energy development, including anaerobic digestion and dry digestion for farm or other wastes and by-products will be considered by Meath County Council. Anaerobic Digestion (AD) is a means of combating greenhouse gas concerns and increasing renewable energy production in line with national and international targets and commitments. AD is a natural process of decomposition and decay that takes place in the absence of oxygen and by which organic matter is broken down to its simpler chemical components. The digestion process produces biogas, comprising largely of methane (60%) and carbon dioxide (40%), and a digested

material. The biogas produced is a renewable energy source and whether used as a transport fuel or to produce electricity, it displaces fossil fuel energy. AD could potentially provide a valuable revenue stream and keep wealth generated by the agricultural industry within the rural economy. The two cement manufacturing plants in the County have the ability to use waste streams in their manufacturing processes.

8.1.10 Energy Efficiency & Energy Performance for Buildings Directive

In addition to promoting renewable energy developments, the issue of energy efficiency, both on macro and micro scale, must be considered. For example, at the macro level, sustainable land use planning will reduce the number of car trips being generated whilst at the micro level, pedestrian and cycle lanes will encourage people to use alternative forms of development to that of the private car. The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020 sets out a strategy to reduce the country's dependence on imported fossil fuels, improve energy efficiency across a number of sections and ensure a sustainable energy future. Improving Ireland's energy efficiency is a key step in a sustainable energy policy. Energy efficiency is internationally recognised as the most cost-effective means of reducing dependence on fossil fuels. The need to reduce the amount of energy being generated has been to the fore in the proposed Transportation and Settlement Strategies pursued in this Development Plan.

Arising from the Kyoto protocol, the EU has set the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as an important objective. The most significant greenhouse gas is CO₂, almost half of which derives from energy use in buildings. EU research has indicated that CO₂ emissions from buildings could be reduced by 22% through improved energy efficiency. There is now a requirement for all new buildings to become more energy efficient in line with the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 2002/91/EC, which was adopted

on 16th December 2002. The new Building Regulations (Part L Amendment) and the European Communities (Energy Performance of Buildings) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 will aid this requirement. The Building Regulations contain a range of provisions aimed at improving energy performance in residential and non-residential buildings, both new build and existing. Information and advice on energy is provided to building purchasers, tenants and users. The intention is that this information and advice will help consumers to make informed decisions leading to practical actions to improve energy performance. The introduction of the Building Energy Rating certification process, allows for dwellings to be assessed on their energy performance. The use of alternative

forms of heating e.g. geo-thermal and solar panels should be encouraged in the design of buildings.

Meath County Council is committed to developing sustainable building requirements with regard to a shift to energy efficient, low environmental impact buildings in County Meath. The incorporation of good design into developments should be welcomed by all who want to see sustainable building practices becoming mainstream. Good design is the key to achieving the optimum energy performance of buildings at no extra cost. The benefits are clear; lower energy bills for the consumer and a healthier environment for the community.

POLICIES

It is a policy of Meath County Council:

EC POL 1	To facilitate energy infrastructure provision, including the development of renewable energy sources at suitable locations, so as to provide for the further physical and economic development of Meath.
EC POL 2	To support international, national and county initiatives for limiting emissions of greenhouse gases through energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources which makes use of the natural resources of the county in an environmentally acceptable manner, where it is consistent with proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
EC POL 3	To encourage the production of energy from renewable sources, such as from biomass, waste material, solar, wave, hydro, geothermal and wind energy, subject to normal proper planning considerations, including in particular, the potential impact on areas of environmental or landscape sensitivity and Natura 2000 sites.
EC POL 4	To support the National Climate Change Strategy and, in general, to facilitate measures which seek to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.
EC POL 5	To seek to improve the energy efficiency of the county's existing building stock in line with good architectural conservation practice and to promote energy efficiency and conservation in the design and development of all new buildings in the County, in accordance with the Building Regulations Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Energy).

EC POL 6	To encourage that development proposals maximise energy efficiency through siting, layout, design or which incorporate best practice in energy technologies, conservation and implementation of smart technology.
EC POL 7	<p>To encourage the attainment of high standards of energy efficiency and environmental sustainability in development, including the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bio-climatic site design; 2. Water Conservation; 3. Ventilation; 4. Energy efficient strategies; 5. Daylight analysis, 6. High insulation standards, and; 7. Smart technologies.
EC POL 8	To support and encourage pilot schemes which promote innovative ways to incorporate energy efficiency.
EC POL 9	To support the development of innovative energy efficient technologies such as district-heating and combined heat and power.
EC POL 10	To facilitate the provision of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles.
EC POL 11	To support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity and gas supplies, and associated networks, to serve the existing and future needs of the County.
EC POL 12	To co-operate and liaise with statutory and other energy providers in relation to power generation in order to ensure adequate power capacity for the existing and future needs of the County.
EC POL 13	To ensure that energy transmission infrastructure follows best practice with regard to siting and design particularly to ensure the protection of all important recognised landscapes.
EC POL 14	To require that, in all new developments, multiple services are accommodated in shared strips and that access covers be shared whenever possible.
EC POL 15	To ensure any proposal for geothermal or other energy subsurface exploration is accompanied by an assessment that addresses the potential impacts on groundwater quality.

EC POL 16	To require that the location of local energy services such as electricity, be underground, where appropriate.
EC POL 17	To seek to avoid the sterilisation of lands proximate to key public transport corridors such as rail, where future energy transmission routes/pipelines are being designed and provided.
EC POL 18	To generally avoid the location of overhead lines in Natura 2000 sites unless it can be proven that they will not affect the integrity of the site in view of its conservation objectives i.e. by carrying out an appropriate assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the E.U. Habitats Directive.
EC POL 19	To promote the undergrounding of existing overhead cables and associated equipment where appropriate.
EC POL 20	To encourage the development of wind energy, in accordance with Government policy and having regard to the Landscape Characterisation Assessment of the County and the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006).
EC POL 21	To support the preparation of a study on wind energy potential by local authorities jointly in the GDA.
EC POL 22	To facilitate the development of projects that convert biomass to energy subject to proper planning considerations.
EC POL 23	To ensure that development proposals which include the growing of biocrops within the Eastern River Basin District in County Meath and the coastal strip consider the potential for spreads or hybridisation of native flora.
EC POL 24	To ensure that development proposals, including quarrying and operations involving explosives, do not negatively impact on the gas network. Meath County Council may refer applications for developments in proximity to the natural gas network to Bord Gais Éireann and will have regard to their comments in the assessment of the application.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

EC OBJ 1	To ensure that all plans and projects associated with the generation or supply of energy or telecommunication networks will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment Screening and those plans or projects which could, either individually or in-combination with other plans and projects, have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site (or sites) undergo a full Appropriate Assessment.
EC OBJ 2	To support the review and implementation of the actions of the Meath County Council Climate Change Strategy and Energy Management Action Plan 2011-2012, 'Think Globally Act Locally'.
EC OBJ 3	To investigate the preparation of a renewable energy strategy promoting technologies which are most viable in County Meath.
EC OBJ 4	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.

8.2

Communications Technology

8.2.1 Introduction

Ireland and the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) continue to have poor broadband performance relative to many European states. The Government's telecommunication policy aims to place Ireland in the top quartile of OECD economies as regards the availability, price and quality of telecommunication services. Such a high quality and competitive telecommunications service is considered essential to promote industrial and commercial development, to improve personal and household security and to enhance social inclusion and mobility. Telecommunications investment is essential to further the social and economic development of County Meath. Broadband with its resultant high speed provides a considerable advantage to home-users, students, businesses and is an important

asset for attracting new businesses to an area. Government policy acknowledges that there is increasing awareness of the need to deliver high levels of broadband connectivity which is fundamental to strengthen economic and social prosperity. Whilst private sector investment in telecommunications infrastructure has slowed down with the downturn in the international economy and the telecoms sector, Government funding has continued, most notably the development of Metropolitan Area Networks (MAN)², which has been undertaken to encourage further development of the communications infrastructure.

The Council fully accepts the critical importance of a high quality telecommunications service at national, regional and local level and will seek to promote and facilitate the provision and continued development of such a service

² A telecommunications term used to describe a network serving businesses and residences in an urban area.

within County Meath. In this regard, the Council will seek to cooperate with the providers and operators of such services within County Meath, in the national and county interests.

The implementation of broadband is under the auspices of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources. The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources has identified high speed broadband connectivity as a critical element in the development of a competitive Smart Economy and inclusive Knowledge Society. In March 2012, the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources announced that the Irish Government will work with a range of Telecoms companies to ensure a nationwide roll out of fast broadband over the next three years. The Department's policy in this area is set out in the paper 'Next Generation Broadband – Gateway to a Knowledge Ireland', 2009. The following three programmes are in place to ensure the delivery of broadband:

- National Broadband Scheme
- Rural Broadband Scheme
- Schools 100 MBS Project

8.2.2 Broadband Infrastructure in County Meath

The successful delivery of the €223 million National Broadband Scheme was announced by the Communications Minister in December 2010. MANs have been provided in Navan, Trim, Kells, Dunshaughlin, Dunboyne and Clonee. The availability of broadband is critical in marketing and promoting these centres to potential employment generating investors.

The Rural Broadband Scheme has been established to enable a basic broadband service to be provided to individual rural premises which are not capable of obtaining a broadband service from existing internet service providers. The Scheme aims to identify the premises that cannot currently obtain a service, and once all of these premises have been identified, to ascertain whether existing telecommunications

operators can provide a service directly to these premises. The application phase of the Rural Broadband Scheme closed on 29th July 2011. 175 applications were received in County Meath. The verification phase of the scheme has now commenced.

The third programme is the broadband to schools initiative. It is aimed to equip second-level schools in Ireland with 100 Mbps of broadband connectivity and Local Area Networks (LAN) on a phased basis. The initial pilot phase of this project has been completed and delivered to 78 schools throughout the country. Under this programme all second-level schools will have 100Mbps broadband installed by the end of 2014. The roll out of broadband to schools in County Meath is currently underway.

8.2.3 Telecommunications Antennae

Meath County Council recognises the essential need for high quality communications and information technology networks in assuring the competitiveness of the county's economy and its role in supporting regional and national development generally. The document "Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" published by the Department of the Environment in July 1996 gives considerable guidance on this matter. It will be the policy of the Planning Authority to consider proposals for such infrastructure in the light of the guidance in this document. In 2007, a Code of Practice on Sharing of Radio Sites was issued by the Commission for Communications Regulation, ComReg, to facilitate the sharing of radio sites between 3G Operators. Sharing is already encouraged by existing planning guidelines and regulations in the aforementioned Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoE 1996) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended (Schedule 2, Class 31).

It shall be the preferred approach that all new support structures fully meet the co-location or clustering policy of the guidelines, and that shared use of existing structures will be

insisted upon where the numbers of masts located in any single area are considered to be excessive.

Due to the physical size of mast structures and the materials used to construct them, such structures can severely impact on both rural and urban landscapes. When dealing with applications, great care needs to be taken to minimise damage through discreet siting and good design. In the assessment of individual proposals, Meath County Council will also take the impact of rights of way and walking routes into account. The design of the mast structures should be simple and well finished. They should employ the latest technology in order to minimise their size and visual impact. Mast structures are most visible and exposed within upland/hilly or mountainous areas. In these locations, softening of the visual impact can be achieved through planting of shrubs, trees etc. as a screen or backdrop. Disguised masts e.g. as trees, will be encouraged in appropriate locations.

Planning permission for masts will generally be of a temporary nature, generally for a 5 year period only. This will allow review and reassessment in relation to numbers and concentrations, technology and the general dynamic nature of both the industry and the receiving environment within which these masts are sited. Where the antennae and their support structures are no longer being used by the original operator and no new user has been identified they shall be demolished, removed and the site reinstated at the operators expense. This will be a condition of any permission, and there will be a requirement for a bond arrangement to this effect to be put in place.

Where the owner of a site disposes of the site to another suitably licensed operator, the original operator/owner will be required to inform Meath County Council of such transfer, so that they will be in a position to enforce any continuing conditions on the new operator.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

EC POL 25	To facilitate the delivery of a high capacity Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure and broadband network and digital broadcasting throughout the county.
EC POL 26	To encourage the further co-ordinated and focused development and extension of telecommunications infrastructure including broadband connectivity in the County as a means of improving economic competitiveness and enabling more flexible work practices e.g. teleworking.
EC POL 27	To encourage coverage and capacity of mobile technology network infrastructure, while endeavouring to reduce the number of telecommunications structures, by ensuring that ComReg's Code of Practice on Site Sharing is implemented and reciprocal national roaming is entered into.
EC POL 28	To facilitate the development of telecommunications based services at appropriate locations within the County, subject to environmental considerations.

EC POL 29	To actively promote e-inclusion in County Meath by supporting strategies to encourage wider availability of modern broadband infrastructure.
EC POL 30	To seek to have appropriate modern ICT, including open access fibre connections in all new developments and carrier neutral ducting installed during significant public infrastructure works such as roads, water and sewerage, where feasible.
EC POL 31	To require the provision of communications cables underground, especially in the urban environment, and generally within areas of public open space, in the interest of visual amenity.
EC POL 32	To support a coordinated approach throughout the county in the role out of broadband infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE

It is the objective of Meath County Council:

EC OBJ 5	To support the establishment of a Broadband Telecommunications Task Force comprising service providers, user representatives and local development agencies to assist in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the roll out of broadband infrastructure in the county.
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POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

EC POL 33	To promote orderly development of telecommunications infrastructure throughout the county in accordance with the requirements of the "Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" July 1996, except where they conflict with Circular Letter PL 07/12 which shall take precedence, and any subsequent revisions or expanded guidelines in this area.
EC POL 34	To promote best practice in siting and design in relation to the erection of communication antennae.
EC POL 35	To secure a high quality of design of masts, towers and antennae and other such infrastructure in the interests of visual amenity and the protection of sensitive landscapes, subject to radio and engineering parameters.

EC POL 36


To encourage and facilitate pre-planning discussions with service providers and operators prior to the submission of planning applications.

EC POL 37

To encourage co-location of antennae on existing support structures and to require documentary evidence as to the non availability of this option in proposals for new structures. The shared use of existing structures will be required where the numbers of masts located in any single area is considered to have an excessive concentration.

EC POL 38

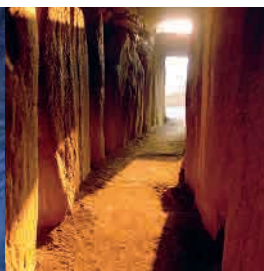
To assess proposals for the location of structures in sensitive landscapes in accordance with the policies set down in Chapter 9 of this Development Plan.

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- 9.1 Introduction
 - 9.2 Statutory Context
 - 9.3 Policy Context
 - 9.4 Achievements
 - 9.5 Challenges
 - 9.6 Cultural Heritage
 - 9.7 Natural Heritage
 - 9.8 Landscape
 - 9.9 Historic Landscape Characterisation
 - 9.10 Views and Prospects
 - 9.11 Landscape Conservation Area(s)

Cultural and Natural Assets

Cultural and Natural Assets

9



Cultural and Natural Assets

9.1

Introduction

The identity of Meath is intrinsically linked to its heritage, and is central to how we see ourselves as individuals, communities and as a county. The cultural and natural heritage and landscape are vital assets that help the county compete as a tourism destination and as a location of choice for investment.

Meath's wealth of built heritage makes it exceptional in Ireland. It includes the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne, the seat of the High Kings of Ireland at Tara, the passage tombs of Loughcrew, the largest Anglo-Norman castle in Europe at Trim, the historic

towns of Navan, Trim and Kells, great country houses, demesne landscapes, and a significant industrial heritage of canals and mills.

Meath's natural heritage includes scenic river valleys, rolling farmland, a network of mature hedgerows and diverse coastal habitats.

This chapter establishes Meath County Council's policies and proposals for the protection, conservation and enhancement of the heritage of Meath. Other chapters of this Plan also deal with such matters indirectly.

9.2

Statutory Context

Section 10(2) of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011 sets out a list of mandatory objectives to be included in a Development Plan. A number of these objectives relate to

heritage either directly or indirectly. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the full list of mandatory objectives.

9.3

Policy Context

The Government has signed and ratified a number of International and European Conventions and EU Directives and, in doing so, agreed to abide by the principles contained therein. These conventions and directives have guided the formulation of national legislation to protect the built and natural heritage, landscape and biodiversity.

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 (RPGs) recognizes heritage as an important environmental and economic resource requiring care and management. The policies contained in this chapter of the County Development Plan reflect the principles of these over-arching documents. Appendix 2 sets out detailed information on the relevant policy context.

9.4

Achievements

Since the adoption of the last County Development Plan in 2007, Meath County Council has developed and implemented its first ever County Heritage Plan. The Heritage Plan is a strategic 5 year plan that sets out a number of actions which aim to understand, protect, conserve and manage our heritage. Meath County Council has also adopted and is implementing its first County Biodiversity Plan. The production of biodiversity plans is an action arising from the National Biodiversity Plan, and provides a framework for the conservation of biodiversity and natural heritage at county level.

The Heritage and Biodiversity Plans were agreed in partnership with the County Meath Heritage Forum, and adopted by the elected members of Meath County Council, following extensive public consultation. A number of key actions have been delivered including county-wide surveys of Meath's geological heritage; wetlands and coastal habitats; industrial heritage; historic graveyards; trees, woodlands and hedgerows; character statements for eleven Architectural Conservation Areas; audit of biological datasets; indicative county habitat map; ecological survey of towns and villages; and thatched houses.

Through the implementation of these Plans, Meath County Council is promoting greater public awareness of the value of our natural and cultural heritage by actively engaging with local communities and facilitating public participation in its protection.

A number of heritage publications have been supported and published by Meath County Council Heritage Office; these include, among others, *The Making of Meath*, *Uncovering Medieval Trim*, *Wild Things at School: A Book for Primary School Teachers*, *Conservation*

and Management Plan for Trim Town Walls, *Megalithic Art in County Meath* and Meath County Library have published *Mapping Meath in the Early 19th Century with an atlas of William Larkin's map of County Meath, 1812* and *A Meath Anthology*. In addition, the Council has produced a number of guidance leaflets and booklets.

Following the adoption of the Conservation and Management Plan for Trim Town Walls, conservation works were carried out at Finnegan's Way and to the rear of Emmet Street. A number of Heritage Trails have been developed throughout the county. Since 2007, Meath County Council has administered in excess of €600,000 in grant funding for Protected Structures in the county. A national study has demonstrated that for every €1 grant aid given, €4 is spent in the economy.

In order to deliver on the strategic objectives and actions of the County Heritage and Biodiversity Plans, Meath County Council is actively working in partnership with the Heritage Council, Meath Tourism, Fáilte Ireland, Irish Walled Towns Network, Discovery Programme, Office of Public Works, National Parks and Wildlife Service, National Monuments Service, the Architectural Heritage Advisory Unit of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Brú na Bóinne Research Framework Committee, East Border Region, Irish Archaeological Field School, Meath Partnership, Third Level Institutes, and communities and schools across County Meath. It is the intention of Meath County Council to review its County Heritage and County Biodiversity Plans in partnership with the County Heritage Forum, relevant stakeholders and the community.

9.5

Challenges

Heritage is a valuable economic resource and plays a key role in Meath's economy. The key challenge for the period of this Development Plan is to:

- achieve the balance between protecting, conserving and presenting the county's rich cultural and natural heritage while

promoting sustainable economic development and the enrichment of the environment;

- make our heritage more accessible and maximise its potential as a learning resource.

STRATEGIC POLICIES

It is the strategic policy of Meath County Council:

CSA SP 1

To ensure that the unique cultural heritage of Meath is protected, conserved and sensitively integrated into the sustainable development of the county for the benefit of present and future generations.

CSA SP 2

To ensure that features of Meath's natural heritage and green infrastructure that provide ecosystem services are protected; that biodiversity is conserved and where possible enhanced, and; that the character of landscapes are maintained and enriched, and that tourist and recreational uses are facilitated in a sensitive manner.

CSA SP 3

To promote the understanding of County Meath's landscape in terms of its inherent and unique character and to recognise what elements should be preserved, conserved or enhanced.

CSA SP 4

To implement, in partnership with the County Meath Heritage Forum, relevant stakeholders and the community, the County Meath Heritage Plan and any revisions thereof.

9.6

Cultural Heritage

9.6.1 Introduction

Cultural Heritage refers to monuments, buildings, groups of buildings, and sites which are the combined works of nature and man, constituting the historic or built environment.¹ Within this great variety of building types

and uses are structures of significance and distinctive character that are deemed worthy of protection.

It is the aim of Meath County Council to protect, conserve and enhance buildings, areas, structures, sites and features of special

¹ World Heritage Convention 1972

architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. The survival of the cultural heritage of Meath is a priority for Meath County Council, reflected in the policies and objectives outlined in this section of the Development Plan.

9.6.2 UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne

The World Heritage Site of the *Archaeological Ensemble of the Bend of the Boyne* is commonly known as Brú na Bóinne, which means the 'palace' or the 'mansion' of the Boyne. It refers to the area within the bend of the river Boyne around Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth, and is one of the world's most important archaeological complexes. The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne contains many outstanding archaeological features, notably its megalithic art, the large and varied grouping of monuments, and evidence of continuous settlement and activity in the area for some 7,000 years. The international significance of Brú na Bóinne has gradually been revealed through an ongoing process of discovery and research which began 300 years ago, leading to its inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1993.

The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne lies in the lower plain of a river valley in which the watercourse defines a large 'U shape' and encompasses a series of low knolls to the north and to the south with steeper ground near Dowth. The large passage tombs are on high ground overlooking the valley, while there are numerous other archaeological sites on the low lying areas and floodplain closer to the river. The flood plain along the north side of the Boyne is rich in wildlife and has been designated a Natural Heritage Area.

Multiple ownership has created an attractive mosaic of mixed farmland ranging from intensive arable to permanent pasture. Many of the hedgerows and old field boundaries remain in place, with patches of deciduous woodland surviving. There are remains of a medieval settlement and an eighteenth century estate

at Dowth. The area of the World Heritage Site, its core and buffer zones, as identified in the UNESCO inscription and shown in Map 9.1 attached to this Plan, is primarily agricultural with a farming tradition that spans some 6,000 years. The survival of such a diverse range of monuments is testament to the tradition of respect shown by generations of farming communities.

The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne's famous archaeological remains, including National Monuments in the ownership of the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, are comprehensively identified in the Archaeological Inventory of County Meath and are given legal protection in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) of Co. Meath (1996) which lists all known archaeological monuments and sites. Some 93 Recorded Monuments identified to date, which are protected under the National Monuments Acts, lie within the bounds of the World Heritage Site. These include passage tombs, henges, fulacht fiadhs and cist burials, ringforts and souterrains, granges, medieval and manorial villages.

In addition, the area of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne encompasses Battle of the Boyne landmarks, structures of significant architectural heritage, many of which are included on the Record of Protected Structures, demesne landscapes (Netterville, Campbell – Caldwell and Coddington Estates), the Boyne Navigation and important designated wildlife habitats such as Boyne River Islands and River Boyne SAC, Crewbane Marsh, Rosnaree Riverbank and Dowth Wetlands proposed NHAs.

Meath County Council is committed to the protection and conservation of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne. This protection will also underpin the tourism aspects of the wider Boyne Valley region as a generator of local employment.

The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne is one of the foremost and popular

heritage site visitor attractions in the country and as such, is a very important local and national tourism asset with approximately 230,000 visitors annually.

9.6.3 UNESCO World Heritage Status

In December 1993 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) inscribed Brú na Bóinne as a World Heritage Site. This inscription recognises the universal importance of this landscape to the whole of humanity, and obliges the State

to protect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the area to the highest international standards.

The Outstanding Universal Value of a site is derived from statements on universal value, how it fits UNESCO criteria, and statements on authenticity and integrity. The OUV forms the basis for the protection, management and conservation of a World Heritage Site, its core area and buffer zones as identified in the inscription.

The 'Archaeological ensemble of the Bend of the Boyne' was judged to be of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), meeting three of the six criteria for cultural heritage:

- [i] it represents a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- [iii] it bears a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- [iv] it is an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

Brú na Bóinne represents an area of Outstanding Universal Value on a number of different levels;

Criterion 1. The Bend of the Boyne monuments represent the largest and most important expression of prehistoric megalithic plastic art in Europe;

Criterion 3. The concentration of social, economic and funerary monuments at this important ritual centre and the long continuity from prehistory to the late medieval period make this one of the most significant archaeological sites in Europe, and;

Criterion 4. The passage grave, here brought to its finest expression, was a feature of outstanding importance in prehistoric Europe and beyond.

Currently, a retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the World Heritage property Archaeological Ensemble of the Bend of the Boyne (Brú na Bóinne) 2011 is being considered by the World Heritage Centre.

9.6.4 Sustaining the Outstanding Universal Value

The protection, conservation, and presentation of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne is provided by a range of international

guidelines, national legislation, statutory and non statutory guidance:

- i) EU Directives, UNESCO Operational Guidelines, and International Charters, in particular – Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (The World Heritage Convention 1972), and the European Landscape Convention 2000;
- ii) The National Monuments Acts 1930 – 2004 which protect the recorded monuments,

- and areas of archaeological potential;
- iii) EU Habitats and Birds Directive and The Wildlife Acts 1976 – 2000;
- iv) The Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011 and Regulations, National and Regional Planning guidelines, and the provisions of this Development Plan;
- v) Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2011;
- vi) ICOMOS charters and guidelines, in particular - Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties. 2011.

9.6.5 UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne Management Plan

To adhere to the requirements of the World Heritage Site designation, a Management Plan was published in December 2002 by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, following a detailed process of public consultation. The Management Plan, which had a 5 year lifespan, set out to address the many complex issues that arise in a site of the importance of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne. The aim of the plan is to provide a clear strategy for managing the area so that priorities may be set that are achievable within given resources.

Section 7 of the Management Plan proposes a total of 29 actions under the five broad headings of protection, conservation, presentation, research, and general management.

The 2007 – 2013 County Development Plan formally incorporated the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne Management Plan of 2002, and it is now contained in Appendix 10 of this Plan.

The Management Plan is currently under review. Meath County Council is involved in this review in conjunction with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Louth County Council, other State agencies and local community representatives.

It is the intention of the Planning Authority to propose a variation of the County Development Plan to incorporate the revised Brú na Bóinne Management Plan, when completed.

9.6.6 UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne Research Framework

The understanding of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne is continually evolving in response to new information provided by researchers, archaeologists, Meath County Council, state agencies, community groups and other organisations.

Internationally, the publication of a Research Framework for the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne is seen as best practice. In 2009 the Heritage Council published the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site Research Framework (Smyth 2009). The Research Framework consists of a Resource Assessment, a Research Agenda and a Research Strategy, each section compiled through a process of public engagement, consultation and international peer review.

9.6.7 Development in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne

The World Heritage Site is very sensitive to all categories of new development, particularly housing, large agricultural structures, extractive industries, coniferous afforestation, and masts or other tall or bulky structures which would impinge on the visual envelope along the valley. There are a large number of views and prospects that are sensitive to inappropriate forms of development, and the protection of views both within and from the World Heritage Site is a major factor contributing to the retention of its integrity. These protected views are listed in Appendix 12 and shown on Map no. 9.5.1.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

CH POL 1	To work in partnership with the relevant agencies/organisations and the public to promote, understand, conserve and sustainably manage the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne.
CH POL 2	To consider individual housing within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne, as shown on Map No. 9.1, only for those involved locally in full time agriculture, and who do not own land outside of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne and subject to compliance with all other relevant provisions contained in this Development Plan.
CH POL 3	To require that all development within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne shall be subject to the Development Assessment Criteria set out in Volume 1, Chapter 9, Section 9.6.7, and elsewhere in the Development Plan.
CH POL 4	To refer all planning applications within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for comment. These comments will be considered in the making of decisions on all such planning applications.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

CH OBJ 1	To protect and enhance the Outstanding Universal Value of the cultural landscape in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne in accordance with the relevant guidelines and national legislation, so that its integrity, authenticity and significance are not adversely affected by cumulative inappropriate change and development, and to enhance views within and adjacent to the site.
CH OBJ 2	To protect the ridgelines which frame views within and from the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne from inappropriate or visually intrusive development.
CH OBJ 3	To encourage and facilitate pre-planning consultation with applicants regarding the siting and design of developments affecting the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne, and the scope of any necessary impact assessments.

CH OBJ 4	To encourage the retention, conservation, and appropriate re-use of vernacular and traditional buildings within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne in preference to either their replacement, or the construction of new buildings on green field sites.
CH OBJ 5	To utilise available LiDAR ² imagery data and viewshed analysis derived from it as a tool to guide and inform development management of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne.
CH OBJ 6	To develop a World Heritage Site page on the meath.ie website to disseminate information and provide initial planning guidance for those living and working in and around the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne.

Development Assessment Criteria

Within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne, and in particular the Core Area, with the exception of one-off houses for those with a clear local need based on agriculture, other new development will be limited to carefully designed and sited agricultural buildings, sensitively designed extensions to existing developments for the provisions of public services, the restoration of the Boyne Towpath for recreational purposes inclusive of associated necessary infrastructure, replacement buildings comparable in scale to those being removed, and minor works such as small extensions to existing domestic dwellings.

Rebuilding on sites which were previously developed, where this can be demonstrated from historic mapping, will be considered, subject to local needs, and other criteria listed below.

All new development, including extensions to existing buildings, and uses of land within the World Heritage Site must respect local character and distinctiveness, and demonstrate high quality sustainable design and construction. The Planning Authority will require that any new development must meet appropriate standards of proper planning and sustainable development having regard to the Outstanding Universal Value of the World

Heritage Site. This includes but is not restricted to ensuring

- materials are appropriate to the site and its setting;
- residential extensions are subordinate to the main building and do not significantly increase its size, i.e. are no greater than 50% of existing floor area or do not result in the floor area of the dwelling exceeding 200m², whichever is the lesser;
- development is sympathetic to existing buildings in terms of scale, height, massing, siting, form, materials and colour, and;
- the protection of open space which contributes to the amenity, character, and setting of a building, building group or village;

Within the World Heritage Site, the assessment of development proposals must also adhere to other policies contained in the Development Plan including the protection of the views, prospects, monuments, protected structures and their setting in the World Heritage Site.

This will include *inter alia* an assessment of the following:

- There should be no inter-visibility between the development site and the National Monuments of Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth, up to and including apex of roof

² LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) Survey (2007)

level, and minimisation of inter-visibility between the development site and the other National Monuments within the site;

- Protected views shall be retained;
- Development must not adversely affect the amenity, views, and landscape setting of the National Monuments;
- Extensive screen planting, or earth moving which would alter the landscape setting of the National Monuments will not in itself be considered as adequate mitigation;
- Development that would give rise to or exacerbate inappropriate clustering or ribbon development will not be permitted;
- That appropriate services and infrastructure are capable of being provided without compromising the quality of the landscape, and;
- The cumulative impact of the development will be considered in the context of existing and permitted developments.

Exempted Development

Development is not exempt from the obligation of applying for planning permission if it would interfere with the character of a landscape, or a view or prospect of special amenity value or special interest, the preservation of which is an objective of the Development Plan, or consist of the excavation, alteration or demolition of places, caves, sites, features or other objects of archaeological, geological, or historical, scientific or ecological interest, the preservation of which is an objective of the plan.

Refer to the Development and Planning Regulations 2001 - 2012, Part 2 'Exempted Development' in particular Article 9(1)(a) parts (i), (vi), (vii), and (xii) in this regard. As CH OBJ 1 and 2 seek to protect and enhance the landscape, views and prospects in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne, many developments which would be considered

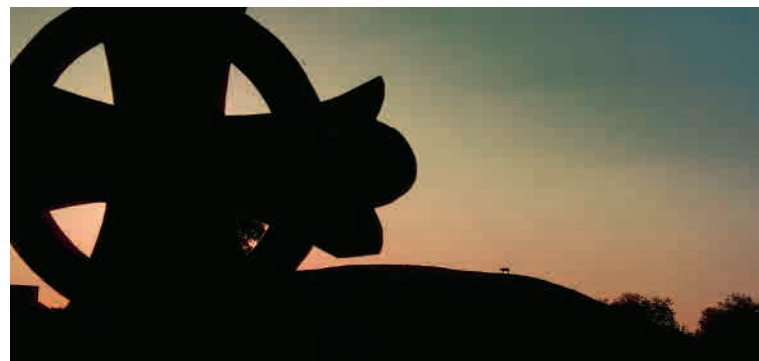
exempt in other areas may require planning permission. Those considering undertaking development works within the area of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne should first consult Meath County Council before commencement of any works.

9.6.8 World Heritage Tentative List

The protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage is of high importance for present and future generations and to this end the State is committed to the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of its World Heritage Sites to future generations in accordance with Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention.

A Tentative List is an inventory of those properties which a country intends to consider for nomination to the World Heritage List. The new Tentative List was approved by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and submitted to UNESCO in March 2010. The nomination of any property from the new Tentative List for inscription on the World Heritage List will only take place after consultation with relevant stakeholders, interested parties and local communities. Two sites in Meath have been included on the Tentative List as part of larger assemblies of sites:

- The Royal Sites of Ireland (Cashel, Dún Ailinne, Hill of Uisneach, Rathcroghan Complex and Tara Complex);
- Early Medieval Monastic Sites (Clonmacnoise, Durrow, Glendalough, Inis Cealtra, Kells and Monasterboice).



POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

CH POL 5

To recognise and respect potential World Heritage Sites in Meath on the UNESCO Tentative List – Ireland-2010 and support their nomination to World Heritage status.

9.6.9 Archaeological Heritage

Archaeology is the study of human societies through the investigation and analysis of the material evidence left behind. It is most useful for periods and civilisations that existed prior to written records. The archaeological heritage of an area includes monuments, sites, and objects whether situated on land or under water. In this respect, Meath has a significant archaeological heritage, which includes the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne, and provides a valuable cultural, educational and tourism resource.

Meath County Council recognises the value and significance of the county's archaeological heritage, and the importance of fostering a greater public appreciation of this heritage. Through policies contained in this Development Plan, they seek to ensure the effective protection, conservation and enhancement of archaeological sites, monuments and their settings.

Copies of the Record of Monuments and Places for County Meath are available for

public consultation in the Council's Planning Department, throughout the network of libraries in Co. Meath or online at www.archaeology.ie.

Details of statutory objectives, international and national legislation are contained in Appendices 1 and 2. A list of National Monuments and Registered Historic Monuments are contained in Appendix 11.

Archaeological structures may, in some situations, also be considered as architectural heritage and, therefore, may appear on both the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). This means that these structures are protected by both the National Monuments Acts and the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011.

Meath County Council will work with stakeholders to examine the feasibility of establishing a County Museum and County Archive or other such repository for the archaeological and historical heritage of the County.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

CH POL 6

To promote awareness of, and access to, the archaeological inheritance of County Meath.

CH POL 7

To ensure that development in the immediate vicinity of a recorded monument is sensitively sited and designed so that it does not significantly detract from the monument. Where upstanding remains exist, a visual impact assessment may be required.

CH POL 8

To retain surviving medieval plots and street patterns in the villages and towns of Meath, where practicable, and in the course of development to record evidence of ancient boundaries, layouts, etc.

CH POL 9

To inform and seek guidance from the National Museum of Ireland if an unrecorded archaeological object is discovered, or the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in the case of the discovery of an unrecorded archaeological site, in accordance with National Monuments legislation.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

CH OBJ 7

To protect archaeological sites and monuments, underwater archaeology, and archaeological objects, which are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, and to seek their preservation in situ (or at a minimum, preservation by record) through the planning process.

CH OBJ 8

To seek to protect important archaeological landscapes from inappropriate development.

CH OBJ 9

To make the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) available to the public in the Planning Office and maintain a link on the Meath website to the on-line edition at www.archaeology.ie.



CH OBJ 10	To establish in-house training programmes for Council staff carrying out repair and maintenance works to historic structures, subject to the availability of resources.
CH OBJ 11	To encourage and promote the appropriate management and maintenance of the County's archaeological heritage, including historical burial grounds, ³ in accordance with conservation principles and best practice guidelines.
CH OBJ 12	To consider the establishment of a National Monuments Advisory Committee for Meath, subject to available resources.

9.6.10 Architectural Heritage – Record of Protected Structures

The Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011 (Part II, Section 10) place an obligation on all Local Authorities to include in their Development Plan objectives for the protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. These buildings and structures are compiled on a register known as the Record of Protected Structures (RPS), and are described and mapped in Appendix 8.⁴

An interim review of the Record of Protected Structures was carried out in 2010 under Section 55 of the Planning and Development Act. 23 structures were added and 23 removed arising from this review.

Two structures were deleted from the RPS in the course of reviewing this plan. The updating of the Record of Protected Structures has had regard to –

- Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2011.
- Ministerial Recommendations made on foot of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage for County Meath.
- The towns of Navan, Trim and Kells have their own Record of Protected Structures

contained in their relevant development plans.

- A Protected Structure, unless otherwise stated in the RPS, includes:
- the interior of the structure;
- the land lying within its curtilage;
- any other structures within the curtilage, and their interiors, and;
- all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of any of these structures.

An up-to-date RPS is available on the Council's website or can be checked at the public counter of the Council's Planning Office. Developers and persons proposing to purchase historic buildings are advised to check the updated Record of Protected Structures.

The Planning and Development Acts place an onus on owners and occupiers of Protected Structures to ensure that the structure, or any element of the structure which contributes to its special interest, is not endangered either through neglect, or by inappropriate works. Owners and occupiers are encouraged to consult with Meath County Council when they are considering works to Protected Structures.

Permission for demolition of a Protected Structure may only be given in exceptional circumstances.

³ Heritage Council (2011). *Guidance for the Care, Conservation and Recording of Historic Graveyards*.

⁴ Each planning Authority has a statutory responsibility, under Section 5 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011, to include a Record of Protected Structures in its Development Plan.

Applicants proposing to demolish a Protected Structure or part thereof will be required to submit suitable documentation in support of their case to the satisfaction of the Meath County Council.

Under the planning system, many minor works to structures do not normally require planning permission. These works are known as exempted development. However, for a Protected Structure, such works can be carried out without planning permission only if the works would not affect the character of the structure or any element of the structure that contributes to its special interest. An owner or occupier may seek a declaration from Meath County Council as to the types of works which would or would not materially affect the character of the structure, and would or would not require planning permission. This does not preclude redevelopment or alterations from

taking place subject to appropriate planning control.

Meath County Council acknowledges that the continued well-being of a Protected Structure may involve its adaptation for a new use. However, Meath County Council will require the maintenance of its architectural character, and its setting. Developments in proximity to Protected Structures, which would seriously detract from their character, will not normally be permitted. Further guidance is provided in this regard in Section 2.9.5.

In the interest of sustainability, it is considered that the re-use and adaptation of existing buildings is preferable to their demolition. Action 22 of the Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015 asks all public authorities to specifically address the re-use of the existing building stock, regardless of protected status or otherwise.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

CH POL 10	To conserve and protect the architectural heritage of Meath.
CH POL 11	To require that all planning applications relating to Protected Structures contain the appropriate accompanying documentation in accordance with the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011) or any variation thereof, to enable the proper assessment of the proposed works.
CH POL 12	To encourage the retention, sympathetic reuse and rehabilitation of Protected Structures. In certain cases, land use zoning restrictions may be relaxed in order to secure the conservation of the protected structure.
CH POL 13	To encourage the retention of original windows, doors, renders, roof coverings and other significant features of historic buildings.
CH POL 14	To continue to develop the Council's advisory/educational role with regard to heritage matters and to promote awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the architectural heritage of Meath.
CH POL 15	To encourage, where appropriate, the adaptive re-use of existing buildings and sites in a manner compatible with their character and significance.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

CH OBJ 13	To protect all structures (or, where appropriate, parts of structures) within the county which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest and which are included in the Record of Protected Structures (See Appendix 8).
CH OBJ 14	To review and update the Record of Protected Structures when new information becomes available and to make additions and deletions as appropriate.
CH OBJ 15	To identify and retain good examples of historic street furniture e.g. cast-iron post boxes, water pumps, signage, street lighting and kerbing.
CH OBJ 16	To make available and distribute detailed guidance notes and provide advice on architectural heritage to the public, developers, public bodies, groups and associations.

9.6.11 Industrial Heritage

Industrial heritage consists primarily of sites and structures associated with transportation, communications, manufacturing, public utilities, and materials extraction, but can also refer to archaeological sites and objects which

demonstrate early evidence of industry such as metal working, or mining. Meath contains significant stretches of both operational and derelict waterways, railway structures, mills, lime kilns and milestones. Meath County Council commissioned an Industrial Heritage survey of the County in 2008 which may be seen on its website.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

CH POL 16	To protect the industrial heritage of Meath, including the Royal Canal and Boyne Navigation, historic bridges, roadside features and street furniture.
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OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

CH OBJ 17	To work with stakeholders to progress the phased restoration, maintenance and re-use for amenity purposes of the Boyne Navigation, towpath and associated structures within Meath.
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CH OBJ 18

To work with stakeholders to promote the maintenance and re-use for amenity purposes of the Royal Canal and associated structures within Meath.

CH OBJ 19

To carry out phase two of the Industrial Heritage Survey, which will comprise a more detailed site inventory and assessment of surviving structures and sites.

9.6.12 Architectural Conservation Areas

An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. They may also include areas which contribute to the appreciation of Protected Structures.

An ACA may consist for example, of a terrace of houses, a street, town centre or a cluster of structures associated with a specific building such as a mill or country house. Although the individual buildings may not be of special merit, their importance is in their context and interrelationship, and the contribution each makes to the character of the area. Unless a structure is also included on the Record of Protected Structures, the protected status afforded from inclusion in an ACA only applies to the exteriors and streetscape.

Any works which would have a material affect on the special character of an ACA need planning permission. Piecemeal alterations on individual non protected structures can have a significant cumulative effect on a streetscape. Nine towns/villages, one mill complex, a terrace of houses and seven demesnes have been designated as ACAs in Meath. These are distinctive areas, which in terms of composition of streetscapes, buildings of different periods, style, detail, and layout of buildings and streets, merit their individual designation as an ACA.

The Town Plans of Navan, Trim and Kells contain details of the ACAs in these towns. For the area of the County Plan the following ACAs are designated:

- i. Ardracavan Demesne
- ii. Athboy
- iii. Dunboyne
- iv. Dunsany Castle Demesne



- v. Headfort Demesne
- vi. Julianstown
- vii. Kilmessan
- viii. Laytown
- ix. Longwood
- x. Moynalty
- xi. Oldbridge Demesne
- xii. Oldcastle
- xiii. Slane
- xiv. Slane Castle Demesne
- xv. Slane Mill Complex
- xvi. Somerville Demesne
- xvii. Stackallen Demesne
- xviii. Summerhill

The boundaries of these areas are defined on Maps 9.2.1 – 9.2.18. A summary of the character and objectives for areas is contained in Appendix 9. The identification of new ACAs and the modification of existing ACAs may be proposed by a variation of the plan.

Detailed statements of character have been prepared as guidance documents for the majority of these ACAs and these are available to download from the Council's website. It is intended that the remaining character statements will be carried out over the life time of this Plan.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

CH POL 17

To identify places of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest and where appropriate to define them as Architectural Conservation Areas.

CH POL 18

To require that all development proposals within an ACA should be appropriate to the character of the area, inclusive of its general scale and materials, and are appropriately sited and sensitively designed having regard to the advice given in the Statements of Character⁵ for each area.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

CH OBJ 20

To prohibit the demolition of a structure that positively contributes to the character of an ACA, except in exceptional circumstances. Meath County Council will require such applications to be accompanied by a measured and photographic survey, condition report and architectural heritage assessment of the structure. Where permission for demolition is granted within an ACA, an assessment of the impact of the replacement building on the character of the ACA will be required.

CH OBJ 21

To ensure that any new development within or contiguous to an ACA is sympathetic to the character of the area and that the design is appropriate in terms of scale, height, plot density, layout, materials and finishes.

⁵ <http://www.meath.ie/LocalAuthorities/Heritage/ArchitecturalHeritage/ArchitecturalConservationAreas/>

9.6.13 Designed Landscapes, Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes

Historic designed landscapes consist of private gardens, public parks, and the gardens and landscapes associated with country houses and demesnes. The designed landscapes in Meath are for the most part found in demesnes or estate lands. Meath County Council recognises the importance of these landscapes, and that they often form the setting of Protected Structures.

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht have carried out a desktop survey of the Historic Gardens and Demesnes in Ireland and have identified approximately 300 such sites in Meath. This survey can be seen on their website www.buildingsofireland.ie. Phase 3 of the survey which consists of a detailed site inventory and assessment has commenced.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

CH POL19

To encourage the protection, promotion and enhancement of heritage gardens and parks in the county and support public awareness, enjoyment of and access to these sites.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

CH OBJ 22

To discourage development that would lead to a loss of, or cause damage to, the character, the principal components of, or the setting of historic parks, gardens and demesnes of heritage significance.

CH OBJ 23

To require that proposals for development in designed landscapes and demesnes include an appraisal of the landscape, designed views and vistas, and an assessment of significant trees or groups of trees, as appropriate.

9.6.14 Vernacular Heritage

Vernacular Architecture is the expression of the culture of a community - the homes and workplaces built by local people using local materials. The majority of vernacular buildings in both towns and rural areas are domestic dwellings. Examples of other structures include shops, farmsteads, outbuildings, forges, gates and gate piers.

Alterations to individual buildings can have a significant and cumulative effect on streetscapes, and landscapes. By the very

nature of vernacular architectural heritage, it is normally the case that they are the most sustainable forms of construction, built with local materials in a style responding to local conditions, with a low energy use compared to the construction of equivalent modern buildings.

The traditional farm complexes and agricultural buildings of Meath are also under increasing threat as they are seen to be no longer economically viable to the modern farm. In some cases, these agricultural outbuildings belong to large estates and are of fine cut

stone, with excellent detailing of features. The Council will encourage the appropriate re-use of

traditional farm buildings in preference to their replacement.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

CH POL 20

- (a) To encourage the retention, sympathetic maintenance, and appropriate re-use of the vernacular heritage of Meath, in both the towns and rural areas of the County, including the retention of the original fabric, such as windows, renders, shop fronts, gates, yards, boundary walls and other significant features where possible;
- (b) To discourage the replacement of good quality vernacular buildings with modern structures;
- (c) To ensure that new build adjoining, and extensions to, vernacular buildings are of an appropriate design and do not detract from the building's character.

OBJECTIVE

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

CH OBJ 24

To assist the retention and development of traditional building skills in Meath subject to the availability of resources.

9.6.15 Architecture - New Buildings

The built environment is not static, but is continually developing and evolving. The structures of today may become the heritage of the future. Contemporary buildings of a high design standard will be actively encouraged through the planning system.

Meath County Council has produced a Rural Housing Design Guide which gives guidance on good siting and design principles to new single house development in the countryside. It is the intention of the Council that single house developments constructed in the countryside will be of an excellent standard, will compliment the character of the landscape, and will contribute in a positive manner to the built heritage of the County.

Other policies and guidance on development standards and design which seek to ensure that new development is of a high quality, and

satisfactorily relates to the character, scale, layout and form of the area in which it is situated, are contained in Chapter 11 of this plan.

9.6.16 Village Design Statements

Our small towns and villages have for a long time created a significant sense of regional, and sometimes very local character based on the natural, built and cultural heritage. Each village is distinctive in its own unique way.

A Village Design Statement (VDS) is a non-statutory local development framework, compiled by the local community to establish a vision for the future of their village. The Julianstown VDS was the National Pilot for the Heritage Council's National Village Design Programme II, and was community led, in collaboration with the Heritage Council and Meath County Council. Through the process of the VDS, an Action Plan was formulated, and the community is currently progressing a number of those actions.

OBJECTIVE

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

CH OBJ 25

To support proposals from local communities and community organisations which seek to have a Village Design Statement for a particular village drawn up through a process involving community participation, the Heritage Council and the Council's Planning Department, subject to availability of resources.

9.7

Natural Heritage

9.7.1 Introduction

Natural heritage, often termed biodiversity, refers to the diversity of all living things - including people, plants, animals, fungi and micro-organisms - and it also includes geology and landscape. It underpins important economic sectors such as agriculture and tourism and provides many other benefits or ecosystem services free of charge which can be grouped into four main categories:

- Provisioning services (such as the production of food, water and timber);
- Regulating services (e.g. control of climate, disease and water quality);
- Supporting services (e.g. nutrient cycling, soil formation and crop pollination) and;
- Cultural services (such as spiritual and recreational benefits).

Ireland's first National Biodiversity Plan was published in 2002. The second National Biodiversity Plan – *Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016* was published in November 2011. The plan has been developed in line with EU and International Biodiversity strategies and policies. It recognises that locally led action is

crucial in protecting biodiversity and ecosystem services and sets out the measures Ireland will take over the next 5 years for the conservation of Ireland's biodiversity.

Local level – County Meath Biodiversity Action Plan

Meath County Council adopted its first Biodiversity Action Plan in April 2010 in accordance with the first National Biodiversity Plan. The plan provides a framework for the conservation of biodiversity and natural heritage at a local level.

A number of actions are set out under four strategic themes of:

- Awareness and Education;
- Baseline data and information;
- Best practice in Heritage Conservation and Management, and;
- Integrating biodiversity into the role of the Local Authority.

Implementation of the plan is ongoing and co-ordinated by the Heritage Officer in partnership with the County Meath Heritage Forum.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

NH POL 1

To protect, conserve, and seek to enhance the County's biodiversity.

NH POL 2	To promote measures to protect biodiversity in the development management process by creating and improving habitats, where possible.
NH POL 3	To raise public awareness and understanding of the county's natural heritage and biodiversity.
NH POL 4	To promote increased public participation in biodiversity conservation by supporting and encouraging community-led initiatives.

OBJECTIVE

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

NH OBJ 1	To implement, in partnership with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, relevant stakeholders and the community, the objectives and actions of Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016; Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan that relate to the remit and functions of Meath County Council and the County Meath Biodiversity Plan and any revisions thereof.
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9.7.2 Protecting biodiversity in Meath – Sites Designated for Nature Conservation

There are a number of internationally and nationally importance sites designated for nature conservation in the county.

9.7.2.1 European Sites (Natura 2000)

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are being, or have been, designated to conserve habitats and species of European importance pursuant to the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. Such sites form part of an EU network of ecologically important sites known as Natura 2000. Natura 2000 sites in County Meath are listed in Appendix 13. Other sites may be proposed for designation during the lifetime of this Development Plan. Further information is available on the National Parks and Wildlife Service website (www.npws.ie).

Planning Authorities are required to ensure that an Appropriate Assessment of the implications of proposals on designated nature conservation sites (Natura 2000) is undertaken. This assessment is required for all planning applications that have shown to pose likely significant effects on these sites through a screening process. Screening for Appropriate Assessment applies to all development proposals, either within or outside a Natura 2000 (*Please refer to Appendix 13 and Map 9.3*).

9.7.2.2 Natural Heritage Areas

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) are designated under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act (2000) and encompass nationally important semi-natural and natural habitats, landforms and geomorphological features. It is important that the conservation value of these areas be maintained as they contribute to the county's green infrastructure.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

NH POL 5	To permit development on or adjacent to designated Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, National Heritage Area or those proposed to be designated over the period of the plan, only where an assessment carried out to the satisfaction of the Meath County Council, in consultation with National Parks and Wildlife Service, indicates that it will have no significant adverse effect on the integrity of the site.
NH POL 6	To have regard to the views and guidance of the National Parks and Wildlife Service in respect of proposed development where there is a possibility that such development may have an impact on a designated European or National site or a site proposed for such designation.
NH POL 7	To undertake appropriate surveys and collect data to provide an evidence-base to assist Meath County Council in meeting its obligations under Article 6 of the Habitats Directives, subject to available resources.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

NH OBJ 2	To ensure an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, and in accordance with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009 and relevant EPA and European Commission guidance documents, is carried out in respect of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site(s), either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of the site's conservation objectives.
NH OBJ 3	To protect and conserve the conservation value of candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, National Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas as identified by the Minister for the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and any other sites that may be proposed for designation during the lifetime of this Plan.

9.7.3 Green Infrastructure

The term Green Infrastructure⁶ (GI) can be broadly defined as strategically planned and interconnected networks of green space and water capable of delivering ecosystem services and quality of life benefits to people. The natural environment provides a variety of services to us for free and these bring many benefits to society and the economy (See Section 9.7.1).

Green Infrastructure can include parks, open spaces, rivers, farmland, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens which surround and intersperse our towns and villages. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of economic, environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities including:

- Attracting businesses and inward investment by creating an attractive environment;
- More places for people to access nature, outdoor recreation and for social interaction;
- Local food production - in allotments, gardens and through agriculture;
- Encouraging physical activity and improved health and well-being by providing quality green spaces for walking and cycling and other physical activity;
- Creating a sense of place and local distinctiveness;
- Space for nature and wildlife to flourish;
- Climate change adaptation - for example flood alleviation and cooling urban heat islands, and;
- Environmental education.

Meath County Council acknowledge that Green Infrastructure planning involves a holistic approach and should be provided as an integral part of sustainable development, alongside other infrastructure such as utilities and transport networks, if we are to get the maximum benefit from our natural assets.

It is through the conservation of ecological infrastructure such as hedgerows and riparian corridors that we can develop a 'network of sites' as part of our green infrastructure. These allow for the migration and the exchange of species between conservation areas. To this end, and with a view to improving the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network, Meath County Council will encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. In addition, the Council will identify sites of local biodiversity value through the ongoing implementation of the County Heritage Plan and County Biodiversity Plan.

9.7.3.1 Green Infrastructure Strategy for County Meath

The Regional Planning Guidelines recommend the development of a green infrastructure approach at all levels in the planning system and the preparation of Green Infrastructure Strategies at county level. The principles of



⁶ Comhar (2010) *Creating Green Infrastructure for Ireland: Natural Capital for Human Wellbeing*. Comhar – Sustainable Development Council.

a Green Infrastructure approach to land use planning has been embedded as a cross cutting theme in the policies and objectives of this Development Plan.

Meath County Council has commenced the preparation of a Green Infrastructure Strategy, in accordance with international best practice and emerging national guidance. The network will operate at all spatial scales from urban areas to the wider countryside and to the regional landscape, providing connections

between these scales.

The strategy addresses the four main themes identified, namely:

- Biodiversity and natural heritage;
- Landscape, recreation and amenity;
- Water resources, and;
- Built heritage and culture.

The draft strategy will be presented to the elected members of Meath County Council for their consideration within one year.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

GI POL 1	To recognise the economic, social, environmental and physical value of Green Infrastructure.
GI POL 2	To protect existing green infrastructure within the County and to provide additional green infrastructure, where possible.
GI POL 3	To require that all Land Use Plans protect, manage and provide where possible green infrastructure in an integrated and coherent manner.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

GI OBJ 1	To develop and support the implementation of a Green Infrastructure Strategy for County Meath.
GI OBJ 2	To identify sites of local biodiversity value in County Meath over the lifetime of the Plan.
GI OBJ 3	To encourage, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

9.7.4 Protected Species

Certain plant, animal and bird species are protected by law. This includes plant species listed in the Flora Protection Order, 1999 (or other such Orders) and animals and birds listed in the Wildlife Act, 1976 and subsequent statutory instruments, those listed in Annex

IV of the Habitats Directive, and those listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive. Proposals for developments, where appropriate, will require an assessment of the presence of bats or other protected species and ensure that suitable avoidance and/or mitigation measures are put in place accordingly.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

NH POL 8

To seek to ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory avoidance or mitigation, on plant, animal or bird species protected by law.

NH POL 9

To consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and take account of any licensing requirements, when undertaking, approving or authorising development which is likely to affect plant, animal or bird species protected by law.

9.7.5 Invasive Species

Invasive non-native plant and animal species are a major threat to biodiversity (www.invasivespeciesireland.com). They can negatively impact on native species, can

transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems causing serious problems to the environment and the economy. There is potential for the spread of invasive species during excavation and construction works.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

NH POL 10

To promote best practice in the control of invasive species in the carrying out of development.

9.7.6 Peatlands

County Meath represents the eastern limit of raised bogs in Ireland and Meath County Council recognises the potential for utilisation of protected areas for tourist, amenity,

educational and research purposes. The Council will liaise with the various government and non-government organisations involved in an effort to secure the conservation of the peatland areas.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

NH POL 11

To seek to ensure that peatland areas which are designated (or proposed for designation) as NHAs, SACs or SPAs are conserved for their ecological, archaeological, cultural and educational significance.

OBJECTIVE

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

NH OBJ 4

To work in partnership with relevant stakeholders on a suitable peatland site(s) to demonstrate best practice in sustainable peatland conservation, management and restoration techniques and to promote their heritage and educational value subject to Ecological Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening as appropriate.

9.7.7 Geological Heritage

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) are currently drawing up a list of sites of nationally important geological sites. As part of this process, in 2007 the GSI assessed the geological heritage of County Meath and produced a report entitled *The Geological*

*Heritage of Meath*⁷ in which they identified sites of geological importance (see Appendix 13). Some of these sites may be designated in due course, as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) because of their geological interest from a national perspective. In the interim the Council will seek to maintain the geological heritage value of these sites.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

NH POL 12

To have regard to the geological and geomorphological heritage values of County Geological Sites listed in Appendix 13 and avoid inappropriate development, through consultation with the Geological Survey of Ireland.

9.7.8 Woodlands, Hedgerows and Trees

Woodlands and individual trees contribute positively to the landscape and aesthetic beauty of Meath. (Please refer to Chapter 10.10,

Forestry and Chapter 10.11, Tree Preservation, in this regard).

In 2010 Meath County Council commissioned a tree, woodland and hedgerow survey of County Meath⁸ to provide baseline ecological data on

⁷ A copy of the report is available on <http://www.meath.ie/LocalAuthorities/Publications/HeritagePublications/>

⁸ Smith, G.F. Delaney, E., O'Hara, K., and O'Donoghue, P. (2011) *County Meath Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Survey*. Report prepared for Meath County Council. Atkins, Dublin.

type, extent and condition, of selected trees, woodlands and hedgerows.

Woodland cover in Meath is approximately 4% of land cover⁹ making it one of the least wooded counties. Woodlands tend to be small and highly fragmented for the most part and are more frequent near rivers, particularly along the lower stretches of the River Boyne. These woodlands together with the river have the potential to act as a significant ecological corridor or piece of Green Infrastructure. Improving the connectivity of these woodlands, as well as that of woodlands along other river corridors, through new woodland planting would be likely to yield significant biodiversity benefits at the local and county scales.

The most abundant native woodland habitat type in Meath is Oak-Ash-Hazel woodland (WN2), reflecting the limestone derived soils that dominate the county. A large proportion of Meath's woodlands are parklands associated with demesnes.

Hedgerows are perhaps the most characteristic feature of the Meath landscape and provide valuable refuges for biodiversity in a landscape dominated by large tracts of intensive agriculture. The total length of hedgerow in the county is estimated at 22,000 km based on the county-wide survey. This translates to an average length of 9.5 kilometres of hedgerow per square kilometre of land, which is more than most counties in Ireland. In addition, most Meath hedgerows are old – over 80% are shown as field boundaries on maps from the 1840s, and many are likely to be much older than that. At least 36 species of trees and shrubs can be found in County Meath hedgerows. The most common shrubs appearing in hedgerows are hawthorn, elder and blackthorn. Other common hedgerow shrubs are gorse, wild privet, holly, willow, wych elm and hazel. Ash is by far the most common tall tree, with sycamore, beech and oak much less common. Under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 the cutting of hedges (and uncultivated vegetation) during the bird-nesting season (March 1st to September 1st) is prohibited, except in certain legally defined circumstances.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

NH POL 13	To encourage the retention of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatments in rural areas and prevent loss and fragmentation, where possible. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, mitigation by provision of the same type of boundary will be required.
NH POL 14	To promote and encourage planting of native hedgerow species of local provenance.
NH POL 15	To recognise the archaeological importance of townland boundaries including hedgerows and promote their protection and retention.
NH POL 16	To seek to maintain the natural heritage and amenity of the county by promoting the preservation and enhancement of native and semi-natural woodlands, groups of trees and individual trees.

⁹ National Forest Inventory, Forest Service (2007)

NH POL 17	To encourage the use of native species wherever possible in Meath County Council's own landscaping work, and on Council property.
NH POL 18	To encourage the retention of mature trees and the use of tree surgery rather than felling where possible when undertaking, approving or authorising development.
NH POL 19	To protect Champion and Heritage Trees identified on the Tree Register of Ireland and Heritage Tree Database when undertaking, approving, or authorising development.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

NH OBJ 5	To promote awareness, understanding and best practice in the management of Meath's woodland, tree and hedgerow resource.
NH OBJ 6	To continue to work in partnership with stakeholders to develop and enhance Balrath Wood and other appropriate woodlands, where feasible, as an Outdoor Classroom and its facilities under the auspices of the NeighbourWood Scheme.
NH OBJ 7	To co-operate with stakeholders in promoting greater public access and recreational use of state and privately owned forests.

9.7.9. Public Rights of Way

The Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011 (Section 10(2)(o)) state that a Development Plan shall include an objective for *'the preservation of public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility, which public rights of way shall be identified both by marking them on at least one of the maps forming part of the development plan and by indicating their location on a list appended to the development plan'*.

This is, by its nature, a lengthy process which will be conducted throughout the lifetime of this Development Plan. Appendix 14 provides a list and mapping of such public rights of ways, identified to date, in accordance with this

provision. It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list and that the omission of a right of way from this list shall not be taken as an indication that such a right of way is not a public right of way.



POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

NH POL 20

To preserve and protect for the common good, existing public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility as identified in Appendix 14 & Map Series 9.4 (Volume III).

OBJECTIVE

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

NH OBJ 8

To seek to identify and protect over the lifetime of the plan further existing rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility (accompanied by mapping showing public rights of way).

9.7.10 Inland Waterways and Wetlands

County Meath contains significant stretches of both operational and derelict waterways including stretches of the Royal Canal and Boyne Navigation Canal. Both the navigable

and non-navigable waterways are of great importance, both as an amenity resource and a wildlife habitat. Chapter 7 of this Development Plan sets out a number of policies and objectives for the protection, maintenance and improvement of water quality in the county.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

NH POL 21

To protect the recreational, educational and amenity potential of navigational and non-navigational waterways within the County, towpaths and adjacent wetlands.

9.7.11 The Coast

The coastal zone of County Meath is of great significance to the county, containing important resources that provide economic, recreational, aesthetic and conservation benefits. The coastline of County Meath is classified as a soft coast and stretches for approximately 10 km

between the Boyne Estuary in the north and the River Delvin in the south. The coastline is home to a variety of natural habitats and there are several species of flora and fauna, reflected in the cSAC, pNHA and SPA designations that cover much of the Coastline (please see Appendix 13).

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

NH POL 22	To have regard to the character, visual, recreational, environmental and amenity value of the coast and provisions for public access in assessing proposals for development.
NH POL 23	To work to protect beaches and coastal areas from the driving of motor vehicles in the interest of environmental integrity, quality of amenity and in the interest of public safety.
NH POL 24	To ensure that the County's natural coastal defences, such as beaches, sand dunes, coastal wetlands and estuaries are not compromised by inappropriate works or development.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

NH OBJ 9	To maintain the beaches along the coast to a high standard and develop their recreational potential as a seaside amenity in co-operation with the relevant agencies, in order to bring them to a Blue Flag standard.
NH OBJ 10	To undertake conservation works in accordance with best practice on the coastal dune systems subject to ecological impact assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening as appropriate.

9.7.12 Coastal Zone Management

The Coastal Zone extends seaward and landward of the coastline and its limits are determined by the geographical extent of natural coastal processes and human activities associated with the coast. Sustainable development in coastal areas is

best achieved through a process of Coastal Zone Management (CZM). CZM involves the management of human activities and natural processes at work in coastal areas and aims to promote a partnership approach to planning and management in the coastal zone involving all stakeholders.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

NH POL 25	To support the development of Integrated Coastal Zone Management initiatives in Meath in partnership with the local community, environmental groups, user organisations and statutory authorities.
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9.8

Landscape

9.8.1. The European Landscape Convention

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) defines landscape as ‘...an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’, and applies to both rural and urban landscapes. The Convention requires landscape to be integrated into planning policies and promotes interaction between local and central authorities, and transfrontier co-operation to protect landscapes. The Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011 states that landscape in the Act has the same meaning as in Article 1 of the ELC. The convention recognises that landscape has an important public interest role in the cultural, ecological, environmental and social fields, and constitutes a resource favourable to economic activity and whose protection, management and planning can contribute to job creation and is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere. Please refer to Appendix 2 for further detail.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

LC POL 1

To support and implement the provisions of the National Landscape Strategy.

9.8.3 Landscape Character Assessment

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a process which describes, maps and classifies landscapes objectively. Landscape character is defined as ‘a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse’. Defining landscape character enables an understanding to be formed of the inherent value and importance of individual landscape

9.8.2. Proposed National Landscape Strategy

In line with Ireland’s signing and ratification of the European Landscape Convention, Ireland has a commitment to deliver a National Landscape Strategy (NLS). In September 2011 the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht published A National Landscape Strategy for Ireland Strategy Issues Paper for Consultation. As set out in the issues paper, there is a need to seek the right balance between management, planning and protection of a landscape. The National Landscape Strategy will provide a framework to achieve this balance. When published, it will:

- Implement the ELC in Ireland;
- Recognise the importance of all landscapes in Ireland;
- Promote sustainable development;
- Protect and enhance the environment.

elements and the processes that may alter landscape character in the future. The cultural and ecological aspects of the landscape cannot be divorced from its physical and visual characteristics so all of these elements are considered.

Draft guidelines for Landscape Character Assessment were published by the DoEHLG in 2000 and a Landscape Character Assessment for Meath was carried out in 2007.

The key objectives of the Landscape Character Assessment are:

1. To improve the understanding of Co Meath's landscape in terms of its inherent and unique character and to recognise what elements should be preserved, conserved or enhanced;
2. To predict the broad pattern of future changes and devise policies and objectives as guidance to planners and other parties which will ensure that change is complimentary to landscape character. Sensitivity and capacity of the landscape should be given due consideration in all aspects of decision-making, and;
3. To assist in the achievement of sustainable development, the underlying principle of all current planning practice and legislation will be adhered to by promoting a unified approach to landscape planning and management which links policies and recommendations for landscape character to existing planning policies.

The Landscape Character Assessment forms Appendix 7 to the Meath County Development Plan. It provides guidance for a detailed understanding of the landscapes in County Meath, and sets out guidance and recommendations to assist the development of related planning policies, development of strategies, and development management within the County. In the assessment of an individual application, all of the relevant policies and objectives contained in the Development Plan must be considered in a holistic manner in order to take an informed and balanced decision.

9.8.4 Landscape Character Types and Areas

Landscape Character Types are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character and are generic in nature in that they may occur in different localities throughout the country. Nonetheless, where they do occur, they commonly share similar combinations of geology, topography, land cover and historical land use, e.g. Hills and Upland Areas.

Landscape Character Areas are units of the landscape that are geographically specific and have their own character and sense of place. Each has its own distinctive character, based upon patterns of geology, landform, landuse, cultural, historical and ecological features e.g. the Boyne Valley.

The Landscape Character Assessment divides the county into 4 landscape character types (LCTs). These are:

- Hills and Uplands Areas;
- Lowland Areas;
- River Corridors and Estuaries, and;
- Coastal Areas.

These LCTs are sub-divided into 20 geographically specific landscape character areas. The LCA includes recommendations that would, if implemented, to seek to protect and enhance the landscape character, and facilitate and guide sensitively designed development.

9.8.5 Landscape Character Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the Landscape Character Areas is defined as its overall resilience to sustain its character in the face of change and its ability to recover from loss or damage to its components. Sensitivity is evaluated using criteria ranging from 'High' to 'Low' and is based on the interaction of individual components such as landform, amount of evident historical features (time depth) and distribution of viewers. A highly sensitive landscape is likely to be vulnerable, fragile and susceptible to change whereas a landscape with low sensitivity is likely to be more robust and/ or tolerant of change.

A Matrix of Landscape Character which indicates the Value, Importance and Sensitivity of Landscape Character Areas is included in the Meath Landscape Character Assessment 2007, which forms Appendix 7 of this plan.

9.8.6 Landscape Capacity

The potential capacity of each LCA is based on

indicative types of development that are likely to occur within the study area. Capacity is the ability that the landscape has to absorb specific types of development. It is only possible to define actual capacity on a case-by-case basis

because it will vary according to the type and form of development, its location in relation to the landscape character area in question, and its visibility from it.

STRATEGIC POLICY

It is the strategic policy of Meath County Council:

LC SP 1

To protect the landscape character, quality, and local distinctiveness of County Meath in accordance with relevant government policy and guidelines and the recommendations included in Meath Landscape Character Assessment (2007) in Appendix 7.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

LC POL 2

To require that any necessary assessments, including landscape and visual impact assessments, are provided when undertaking, authorising, or approving development.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

LC OBJ 1

To seek to ensure the preservation of the uniqueness of all landscape character types, and to maintain the visual integrity of areas of exceptional value and high sensitivity.

LC OBJ 2

To assess development proposals having regard to the recommendations contained in the Meath Landscape Character Assessment 2007.

LC OBJ 3

To work in partnership with key stakeholders to promote County Meath as a centre for cultural heritage education and learning.

Development Assessment Criteria are contained in Chapter 10, Rural Development, and are applicable not only to rural housing, but also to other buildings within the landscape.

Chapter 7, Water Services and Waste Management also contains relevant policies and objectives which should be referred to in this regard.

9.9

Historic Landscape Characterisation

Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) is concerned with identifying and detailing the contribution of the past to the present day landscape and broadens the understanding of landscape character. HLC is an important contribution to landscape management because it considers the historical development of the landscape and the relationship of buildings and monuments to landscape patterns. Meath County Council has initiated a pilot project on

Historic Landscape Characterisation of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne with the School of Archaeology in UCD in accordance with the Heritage Council guidance on *Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) in Ireland: Policy and Best Practice Guidance (2010)*. It is the intention of Meath County Council to utilise Historic Landscape Characterisation as a tool to inform Landscape Character Assessment in the County.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

LC OBJ 4

To complete the pilot study on Historic Landscape Characterisation and utilise the results to complement and contribute to Landscape Character Assessment (LCA).

9.10

Views and Prospects

9.10 Views and Prospects

County Meath contains many vantage points from which views and prospects of great natural beauty may be enjoyed. The scenery and landscape of the County are of amenity and economic value to residents and tourists, and contribute greatly to the quality of life. There is a need, therefore, to protect and conserve views and prospects adjoining public roads and from publicly accessible places throughout the

County for the benefit of future generations to enjoy. In assessing the potential impacts on views and prospects of development proposals, it is not proposed that this should give rise to the prohibition of development in these locations. Rather such development, where permitted, should not hinder or obstruct these views and prospects and should be designed and located so as not to be intrusive in the landscape as seen from these vantage points.

OBJECTIVE

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

LC OBJ 5

To preserve the views and prospects and the amenity of places and features of natural beauty or interest listed in Appendix 12 and shown on Map 9.5.1 from development that would interfere with the character and visual amenity of the landscape.

9.11

Landscape Conservation Area(s)

Section 204 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011 enables the elected members of Meath County Council to designate a Landscape Conservation Area, within its functional area, in order to preserve it. The Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 had an objective to explore the designation of a Landscape Conservation Area(s), in respect of their core areas for (a) Tara Skryne area (s) and (b) Loughcrew and Slieve na Calliagh Hills.

In March 2009, Meath County Council in partnership with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Heritage Council commenced the process of the designation of a Landscape Conservation Area for the Tara/Skryne landscape.

The objectives of the project are to:

1. Examine, learn from and adapt suitable international best practice models for the sustainable management of historic landscapes and establish long-term partnerships with organisations/agencies responsible;
2. Raise awareness and understanding of the significance of the Tara Skryne Landscape to maximise the socio-economic benefits and cultural tourism opportunities for the area;
3. Develop a participative process to collaborate in an inclusive and open manner with stakeholders, the public and residents within the Tara Skryne Landscape;
4. Implement the relevant policies and objectives of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013;
5. Agree, after consultation, the criteria to define the character and values of the Tara Skryne Landscape and to designate a Landscape Conservation Area under Section 204 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000;
6. Prepare a participatory Landscape Action Plan for the Tara Skryne Landscape

Conservation Area;

7. Review and monitor the effectiveness of the Landscape Conservation Area and to inform the development of a National Landscape Strategy using the European Landscape Convention as a guide, and;
8. Develop protocols and training tools utilising Information Communication Technology for local authority staff and other key stakeholders to inform the management of the Tara Skryne Landscape.

The basis for the designation of the Landscape Conservation Area was strongly influenced and guided by:

- European Landscape Convention;
- National legislation and guidelines;
- Ministerial Direction;
- Landscape Character Assessment (see Appendix 7);
- the Draft Management Plan for the Hill of Tara, and;
- Stakeholder participation.

Following extensive stakeholder meetings, and pre-draft consultation events, a draft Tara Skryne Landscape Conservation Area was placed on public display in May 2010 for a six week statutory consultation period. The Manager's Report on submissions received was presented to the elected members of the Council in July 2010. In September 2010 further detailed presentations on the project were made to the elected members. The elected members, having considered the proposed order and the submissions and observations, may by resolution make the order with or without modifications or refuse to make the order. There is no statutory timeframe for adoption of the Landscape Conservation Area and the matter is currently subject to ongoing discussions. Information is available on a dedicated project website www.taralandscape.ie. It is the policy of Meath County Council to progress this project in a timely fashion.

Meath County Council will facilitate the establishment of a partnership structure which brings together the local community, state agencies, research institutions and all other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement an agreed and innovative Landscape Action Plan for the Tara Skryne Landscape that will focus on developing initiatives to: (i)

maximise the socio-economic benefits and cultural tourism opportunities for the area; (ii) investigate, interpret, manage, promote and communicate the significance and values of the landscape, and; (iii) maintain the high quality landscape based on local distinctiveness and a strong cultural brand identity.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

LC POL 3

To protect the archaeological heritage, rural character, setting and amenity of the Tara landscape and Loughcrew and Slieve na Calliagh Hills.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

LC OBJ 6

To progress the designation, in a timely fashion, of a Landscape Conservation Area, pursuant to Section 204 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011, for the Tara Skryne Landscape.

LC OBJ 7

To explore, over the life of the plan, the designation of a Landscape Conservation Area, pursuant to Section 204 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011, in respect of Loughcrew and Slieve na Calliagh Hills.

LC OBJ 8

To develop and support the implementation of an agreed and innovative Landscape Action Plan for the Tara Skryne Landscape.

LC OBJ 9

To work in partnership with the Consultative Group on the day-to-day management of the Hill of Tara and to prepare a Conservation Plan for the State Owned Lands at the Hill of Tara.

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- 10.1 Rural Development Context
 - 10.2 Rural Settlement Strategy
 - 10.3 Rural Area Types
 - 10.4 Persons who are an Intrinsic Part of the Rural Community
 - 10.5 All Areas
 - 10.6 Graigs
 - 10.7 Rural Residential Development: Design and Siting Considerations
 - 10.8 Agriculture
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 - 10.11 Tree Preservation
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 - 10.14 Integrated Rural Tourism Complexes
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 - 10.19 Technical Requirements

Rural Development

Rural Development

10

Rural Development

10.1 Rural Development Context

County Meath is a predominantly rural county in terms of land use, with a large rural population. The rural landscape which includes scenic river valleys and rolling farmland provides a tranquil setting. Rural areas within Meath are home to a diverse range of uses ranging from agriculture and equine industries, centres of local food production, recreational and tourist activities, established villages and one-off rural housing. Ensuring 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. This chapter sets out the rural settlement strategy which is informed by the Core Strategy set out in Chapter 2 of this Development Plan and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022.

GOAL

To encourage the continued sustainable development of rural communities without compromising the physical, environmental, natural and heritage resources of the County.

To realise this goal, Meath County Council has identified a series of key strategic objectives relating to the county and rural development

generally, and has devised more detailed objectives specific to development types and rural area types.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

It is a strategic objective of Meath County Council:

RUR DEV SO 1	To support the continued vitality and viability of rural areas, environmentally, socially and commercially by promoting sustainable social and economic development.
RUR DEV SO 2	To identify and protect rural resources such as locally and regionally important aquifers and water sources from development which would prejudice their sustainable future usage.
RUR DEV SO 3	To identify and protect known or potential aggregate resources, where feasible, from development which would prejudice their sustainable future usage.

RUR DEV SO 4	To recognise the strategic roles the county will play in the regional and national context in terms of recreation, heritage conservation, natural resources and food production, and to ensure compatibility between this plan and regional and national strategies.
RUR DEV SO 5	To support the vitality and future of Graigs for rural development and ensure a functional relationship between housing in Graigs and the rural area in which they are located.
RUR DEV SO 6	To protect and enhance the visual qualities of rural areas through sensitive design.
RUR DEV SO 7	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, in the context of sustainable development and the management of environmental resources.
RUR DEV SO 8	To support and protect the existing economic base and seek to diversify the economy through both inward investment and the promotion of agriculture, forestry and tourism- related industries in rural areas.
RUR DEV SO 9	To ensure that plans and projects associated with rural development will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment Screening and those plans or projects which could, either individually or in-combination with other plans and projects, have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site (or sites) undergo a full Appropriate Assessment.

10.2

Rural Settlement Strategy

Meath County Council recognises the long tradition of people living in rural areas and promotes sustainable rural settlement as a key component of delivering more balanced regional development. Rural development should be consolidated within existing villages and settlements that can build sustainable rural communities as set out in the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 and Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022. The Development Plan seeks to

accommodate rural generated housing needs¹ where they arise, subject to local housing need criteria and development management standards. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government published Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities in April 2005 and issued a circular SP5/08 which provides advice and guidance in relation to local need and occupancy conditions.

¹ Urban generated housing is housing in rural locations sought by people living and working in urban areas, including second homes / holiday homes whereas rural generated housing is defined as housing needed in rural areas within the established rural community by people working in rural areas or in nearby urban areas. ('Sustainable Rural Housing Development Guidelines', Department of Environment, Community and Local Government)

GOAL

To ensure that rural generated housing needs are 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 rural housing needs should be accommodated within built-up areas or land identified, through the development plan process.

STRATEGIC POLICIES

It is a strategic policy of Meath County Council:

RUR DEV SP 1

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 the characteristics of the individual rural area types.

RUR DEV SP 2

To ensure that individual house developments in rural areas satisfy the housing requirements of persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community in which they are proposed, subject to compliance with normal planning criteria. An assessment of individual rural development proposals including one-off houses shall have regard to other policies and objectives in this Development Plan, and in particular Chapter 9 Section 9.6.7 UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne.

10.3**Rural Area Types**

The Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 identified three area types in the county following detailed research and assessment. It is considered appropriate to retain the three area types in this County Development Plan as there has been no significant change in the characteristics of these areas or their socio-economic profile in the intervening period. Given the current economic climate and decreased number of planning applications it is considered that there remains a need to stimulate development in certain rural areas of County Meath.

The three rural area types are identified on Map 10.1 and are described as follows:

Area 1 - Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence

Key Challenge: To facilitate the housing requirements of the rural community while directing urban generated housing development to areas zoned for new housing in towns and villages in the area of the development plan.

This area exhibits the characteristics of proximity to the immediate environs or close commuting catchment of Dublin, with a rapidly rising population and evidence of considerable pressure for development of housing due to proximity to such urban areas. This area includes the commuter-belt and peri-urban² areas of the county, and are the areas that are

² Peri Urban areas are parts of the open countryside that have been subjected to very high levels of urban generated adjustment.

experiencing the most development pressure for one-off rural housing. These areas act as

attractive residential locations for the inflow of migrants into the county.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 1	To ensure that individual house developments in rural areas satisfy the housing requirements of persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community in which they are proposed, subject to compliance with normal planning criteria.
RD POL 2	To facilitate the housing requirements of the rural community as identified while directing urban generated housing to areas zoned for new housing development in towns and villages in the area of the development plan.
RD POL 3	To protect areas falling within the environs of urban centres in this Area Type from urban generated and unsightly ribbon development and to maintain the identity of these urban centres.

Area 2 - Strong Rural Areas

Key Challenge: To maintain a reasonable balance between development activity in the extensive network of smaller towns and villages and housing proposals in the wider rural area.

This area is underpinned primarily by relative levels of residential stability compared to Area Type 1 within a well developed town and village structure and in the wider rural area around them. This stability is supported by a traditionally strong agricultural economic base

and the level of individual housing development activity in these areas tends to be lower than that within Area Type 1 and confined to certain areas.

This area type is to be found in rural areas along a spine from the north of the county east of and including Kells as far as Oldcastle. The environs of Athboy and Slane are also included in this category. This area has less of a tradition of urban settlement. It is under more moderate pressure for one off housing development than the areas under strong urban influence.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 4	To consolidate and sustain the stability of the rural population and to strive to achieve a balance between development activity in urban areas and villages and the wider rural area.
RD POL 5	To facilitate the housing requirements of the rural community as identified while directing urban generated housing to areas zoned for new housing development in towns and villages in the area of the development plan.

Area 3 - Low Development

Pressure Areas

Key Challenge: To arrest population and economic decline.

This area type covers much of the north-western, western and south-western parts of the county. This area is associated with

relatively high levels of residential stability above average percentages of family households and high rates of agricultural employment. In addition, it is characterised by the lowest average population densities. This area has the weakest urban structure within the county and the rural housing policy applicable should reflect same.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 6

To accommodate demand for permanent residential development as it arises subject to good practice in matters such as design, location and the protection of important landscapes and any environmentally sensitive areas.

This Development Plan identifies Policies for one off rural housing – referring to housing outside of the development boundaries of any settlements identified in the Settlement Strategy in chapter 3 (i.e. on unzoned lands).

Meath County Council will assess applications for rural dwellings on the basis of the policies set down for each Area Type above and the criteria set out below.

10.4

Persons who are an Intrinsic Part of the Rural Community

The Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines outline that Planning Authorities, in formulating policies, recognise the importance to rural people of family ties and ties to a local area such as parish, townland or the catchment of local schools and sporting clubs. It also delivers positive benefits for rural areas and sustains rural communities by allowing people to build in their local areas on suitable sites.

Meath County Council will support proposals for individual dwellings on suitable sites in rural areas relating to natural resources type employment where the applicant can:

- Clearly demonstrate a genuine need for a dwelling on the basis that the applicant is significantly involved in agriculture. In these cases, it will be required that the applicant satisfy Meath County Council with supporting documentation that the nature of the agricultural activity, by reference

to the area of land and/or the intensity of its usage, is sufficient to support full time or significant part time occupation. It is also considered that persons taking over the ownership and running of family farms and/or the sons and daughters of farmers would be considered within this category of local need. The applicant shall satisfy Meath County Council as to the significance of their employment. Where persons are employed in a part time capacity, the predominant occupation shall be farming / natural resource related. It should be noted that, where an applicant is also a local of the area, the onus of proof with regard to demonstrating the predominance of the agricultural or rural resource employment shall not normally be required;

- Clearly demonstrate their significant employment is in the bloodstock and

equine industry, forestry, agri-tourism or horticulture sectors and who can demonstrate a need to live in a rural area in the immediate vicinity of their employment to carry out their work. In these cases, it will be required that the applicant satisfy Meath County Council with supporting documentation that the nature of the activity, by reference to the area of land and/or the intensity of its usage, is sufficient to support full time or significant part time occupation. The applicant shall satisfy Meath County Council as to the significance of their employment. Where persons are employed in a part time capacity, the predominant occupation shall be bloodstock and equine industry, forestry, agri-tourism or horticulture related. It should be noted that, where an applicant is also a local of the area, the onus of proof with regard to demonstrating the predominance of the agricultural or rural resource employment shall not normally be required.

Meath County Council recognises the interest of persons local to or linked to a rural area, who are not engaged in significant agricultural or rural resource related occupation, to live in rural areas. For the purposes of this policy section, persons local to an area are considered to include:

- Persons who have spent substantial periods of their lives, living in rural areas as members of the established rural community for a period in excess of five years and who do not possess a dwelling or who have not possessed a dwelling in the past in which they have resided or who possess a dwelling in which they do not currently reside;
- Persons who were originally from rural areas and who are in substandard or unacceptable housing scenarios and who have continuing close family ties with rural communities such as being a mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, son-in-law, or daughter-in-law

of a long established member of the rural community resident rurally for at least ten years;

- Returning emigrants who have lived for substantial parts of their lives in rural areas, then moved abroad and who now wish to return to reside near other family members, to work locally, to care for older members of their family or to retire, and;
- Persons, whose employment is rurally based, such as teachers in rural primary schools or whose work predominantly takes place within the rural area in which they are seeking to build their first home, or are suited to rural locations such as farm



hands or trades-people and who have a housing need.

Meath County Council also recognises that exceptional health circumstances may require a person to live in a particular environment or close to family support. In such cases, the exceptional health circumstances would require supporting documentation from a registered medical practitioner and a disability organisation supporting a planning application. In the absence of any significant environmental, access or traffic reasons for refusal and the proposal adheres to sensitive design and siting criteria, Meath County Council will consider granting planning permission, subject where appropriate to conditions regarding occupancy.

Where an applicant for a one off house in the countryside can demonstrate, by the

submission of documentary evidence, that their original dwelling was sold due to unavoidable financial circumstances, such applications will be considered on their individual merits, where the applicant satisfies local housing need criteria. This consideration does not override the other normal assessment criteria as set out in this Development Plan for a one off house. Where an applicant has resided in a rural area for a considerable period of time, being a period of time in excess of the previous 10 consecutive years, in a dwelling attached to their business, such as farming, and the business inclusive of dwelling house is being sold for retirement or other circumstances, such applications will be considered on their individual merits, where the applicant satisfies local housing need criteria. Meath County Council will facilitate preplanning consultation in such circumstances.

10.5

All Areas

10.5.1 Development Assessment Criteria

Meath County Council will also take into account the following matters in assessing individual proposals for one off rural housing:

- The housing need background of the applicant(s) in terms of employment, strong social links to rural areas and immediate family as defined in Section 10.4 Persons who are an Intrinsic Part of the Rural Community;
- Local circumstances such as the degree to which the surrounding area has been developed and is trending towards becoming overdeveloped;
- The degree of existing development on the original landholding from which the site is taken including the extent to which previously permitted rural housing has been retained in family occupancy. Where there is a history of individual residential development on the landholding through the speculative sale of sites, permission may be refused;

- The suitability of the site in terms of access, wastewater disposal and house location relative to other policies and objectives of this plan;
- The degree to which the proposal might be considered infill development.

10.5.2 Ribbon Development

Ribbon development is considered to be a high density of almost continuous road frontage type development, for example where 5 or more houses exist on any one side of a given 250 metres of road frontage. (Please note that in all instances where ribbon development is referred to in this Development Plan, the example contained in Appendix 4 of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities as published by the DoEHLG in April 2005 shall apply). Whether a given proposal will exacerbate such ribbon development or could be considered will depend on:

- The type of rural area and circumstances of the applicant;
- The degree to which the proposal might be considered infill development, and;

- The degree to which existing ribbon development would be extended or whether distinct areas of ribbon development would coalesce as a result of the development.

Meath County Council will endeavour to arrive at a balanced and reasonable view in the interpretation of the above criteria taking account of local circumstances, including the planning history of the area and development pressures.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 7

To attach an occupancy condition to all individual one off rural dwellings, including those located in Graigs, on unzoned land, pursuant to Section 47 of the Planning & Development Act 2000-2011, restricting the use of the dwelling to the applicant, as a place of permanent residence. The period of occupancy will be limited to a period of 7 years from the date of first occupation. No such occupancy condition shall be imposed with respect to housing located in Rural Area Type 'Low Development Pressure Area'.

10.6

Graigs (Appendix 16)

The experience in terms of the operation of the 'Graig' policy since the 2007 County Development Plan was adopted has been mixed and given the household allocation for Meath in the Regional Planning Guidelines (and as allocated within Chapter 3 Settlement and Housing Strategy) it is recognised that

there may be some scope to facilitate the development of housing within Graigs where the applicant can demonstrate a local housing need in accordance with the policies and Development Assessment criteria set down for the relevant rural area type above and the policies set down below.



POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 8	<p>To ensure that the provision of housing in all Graigs shall be reserved for persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community and comply with the local housing need criteria and policies set down within the relevant rural area type in this Chapter.</p> <p>The following exceptions may apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Where a person cannot secure an appropriate site in their native rural area consideration will be given to permission for a rural dwelling within a Graig (maximum distance of 10km from the family home); b. (b) Where a person previously owned a dwelling and is no longer in possession of that dwelling due to unavoidable financial circumstances.
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OBJECTIVES

It is the objective of Meath County Council:

RD OBJ 1	To support Graigs located across the County in offering attractive housing options to meet the needs of the established rural communities and to support existing local community facilities such as schools, post offices etc.
RD OBJ 2	To seek to ensure that new residential development in Graigs is in accordance with 'the Meath Rural Design Guide' and is of a design and layout compatible with the character of its setting. Suburban type developments will not be permitted.

10.7

Rural Residential Development: Design and Siting Considerations

Traditional buildings in the countryside evolved in response to their setting and function on the land. They blend sympathetically with their surroundings and do not appear incongruous in the landscape. It is essential that similar care is exercised in the siting and design of new buildings to ensure that they too can integrate harmoniously with their surroundings and thereby protect the amenity and character

of the countryside of County Meath. Meath County Council has prepared design guidelines for rural houses and it is the policy of the Council to implement these guidelines through the development management process. The guidelines are included in Appendix 15 of the Development Plan.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 9

To require all applications for rural houses to comply with the 'Meath Rural House Design Guide'.

The determination of whether a new building integrates into the landscape is not a test of invisibility; rather it requires an assessment of the extent to which the development of the proposed site, including necessary site works, will blend in unobtrusively with its surroundings.

The main criteria against which the degree of visual impact will be considered include:

- The location of the site within the landscape, the position of the building within the site and its relationship with surrounding buildings. This will help determine whether the development will be a prominent feature in the landscape;
- The attributes of the site and its landscape surroundings and whether these provide sufficient enclosure for the new building. This includes the existence or otherwise of natural boundaries and/or a visual backdrop, and whether there is any intervening vegetation or natural features between the site and critical views; and
- The suitability of the design of the building for the site and its locality, including its form, scale and massing.

The assessment of integration will be judged from critical views along stretches of the public road network, shared private lane-ways serving existing or approved dwellings, public rights of way and other areas of general public access and assembly.

New buildings that would read as skyline development or occupy a top of slope/ridge location or otherwise be a prominent feature in the landscape will be unacceptable.

New buildings should be sited to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by

existing mature planting, hills, slopes or other natural features to provide suitable enclosure. These features can provide a visual backdrop to development and equally where located in the foreground between the site and critical views can assist integration by filtering views of the new building. A group of existing buildings, such as a farm complex may also provide an opportunity to sensitively integrate a new building provided this does not adversely impact on rural character.

Where trees provide enclosure or a backdrop to a site they should be retained and where necessary augmented by new planting with native or other species characteristic of the area. This will assist the integration of the new building and help promote biodiversity. Care should be taken to ensure that an appropriate distance is maintained between tree root systems and building foundations, so neither is compromised.

While new tree planting for integration purposes will be considered together with existing landscape features, new planting alone will not be sufficient. A building on an unacceptable site cannot be successfully integrated into the countryside by the use of landscaping. New planting will inevitably take a considerable length of time to mature and in the interim will not mitigate the impact of new development. Similarly a new building that relies on significant earth works, such as mounding or cut and fill for integration will be generally unacceptable.

Due to the widespread views generally available in flat landscapes or exposed hill areas, it is all the more important to ensure that new buildings integrate well with their surroundings. In such areas, poor siting and design carries

with it a greater potential for adverse impact on visual amenity and rural character. Particular care is therefore required in site selection so that new buildings will integrate into these landscapes.

10.7.1 Access and Other Ancillary Works

New accesses are often a visible feature of development in the countryside and on occasion can be more obtrusive than the building itself, particularly if they include ornate walls, gates and fencing.

All new access drives and services, such as electricity and telephone lines, should be run unobtrusively alongside existing hedgerows or wall lines and should be accompanied by appropriate landscaping measures. Access driveways should respect site contours and cross them gently, thus integrating the building with its entrance and site. Sweeping driveways which create a suburban emphasis and access arrangements, will not be acceptable.

While adequate visibility at the road access is necessary in the interests of road safety,

access driveways surfaced in tarmac and with concrete kerbing can look out of place in the countryside and less formal solutions should be sought.

The traditional field pattern should be preserved and roadside and field boundary hedges and stone walls retained or reinstated following any access works. Retention or reinstatement of boundaries, hedges and walls and the provision of gates and piers in keeping with the character of the area is an important element in mitigating the impact of new development and where necessary will be controlled by condition.

The provision of external lighting to serve dwellings requires careful consideration in order to meet the functional requirements of residents while remaining in character with the rural area. Floodlighting can result in light pollution and may have adverse impacts on the fauna of an area while ornate, suburban style garden lighting may also be inappropriate in a rural context. Where considered necessary, Meath County Council may attach conditions to grants of permission stipulating what type of lighting should be provided.

10.8

Agriculture

County Meath's rich pasturelands support a wide variety of farming types. Agriculture has traditionally been the most important contributor to the rural economy of County Meath. While it may now provide less employment, it still remains important as a significant source of income and employment in rural areas. Furthermore, it is recognised that the agriculture sector plays an important role in environmental management and landscape protection and can play a central role in maintaining and enhancing the quality of the rural countryside.

The EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is being reviewed and will inform the future output and production activities of the sector.

To meet this challenge farms will need to become more viable entities, adaptable to change and subject to more environmentally sustainable practices.

10.8.1 Employment in Agriculture

According to the Meath County Development Board 'Meath Working Together 2009-2012- A Review of 'Le Cheile – An Integrated Strategy For Meath to 2012' and 'Meath in Transition 2005-2008', the number of people working in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (AFF) in County Meath has reduced significantly since 1991. In 1991 there were 5,823 working in the industry, this figure has reduced to 3,674 in 2006. 73% of the AFF workforce is employed

within the county and 7% are commuting to surrounding counties.

To sustain rural communities, farm diversification and new employment opportunities will be required. In recent years there has been significant growth in the demand for fresh local produce and the development of allotments. Further development in horticulture and in value added food, and agricultural enterprises are sectors with opportunities for growth. Specialist beef production and intensive dairying are the most common types of farming. Meath is the country's second most important centre for the bloodstock industry, after County Kildare. The equine industry is important both economically and culturally. According to the 'Directory of the Turf' there are 54 stud farms in Meath. Fairyhouse Racecourse, Navan Racecourse

and Tattersalls Bloodstock Auctioneers are highly prominent enterprises in the area. Race meetings are also held in Bellewstown and Laytown. Bloodstock and sport-horse enterprises generate employment directly and also through other associated enterprises and sectors such as tourism.

Agriculture will continue to be an important component of the economy. The agricultural sector must adapt to the challenges posed by modernisation, restructuring, market development and the increasing importance of environmental issues. An economically efficient agricultural and food sector, together with forestry, sensitive exploitation of natural resources and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, are essential components of the development of the rural economy.

GOAL

To maintain a vibrant and healthy agricultural sector based on the principles of sustainable development whilst at the same time finding alternative employment in or close to rural areas to sustain rural communities.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 10	To encourage and facilitate agricultural diversification into agri-businesses such as organic foods, rural tourism and small to medium sized enterprises subject to the retention of the holding for primarily agricultural use and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
RD POL 11	To protect the economic and social benefits of local country markets devoted to the sale of local agricultural and craft produce and to support their role as visitor attractions.
RD POL 12	To facilitate the development of agriculture while ensuring that natural waters, wildlife habitats and conservation areas are protected from pollution.
RD POL 13	To protect agricultural or agri-business uses from unplanned and/or incompatible urban development.

10.9

Agricultural Development

10.9.1 Agricultural Buildings

The provision of well located structures and facilities necessary for good and environmentally sound agricultural practice shall be supported by Meath County Council. The suitability of a given proposal will be determined by the following factors:

- The provision of buildings to a design, materials specification and appearance and at locations which are compatible with the protection of rural amenities. Particular attention should be paid to developments therefore in sensitive landscapes as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment (Refer to Appendix 7);
- The availability of an effective means of farm waste management to ensure nutrient balancing between application of farm wastes to land and its balanced uptake by agricultural use of land;
- Whilst Meath County Council recognises the primacy in land use terms of agriculture in rural areas, and that the presence of individual housing should not impinge unduly on legitimate and necessary rural activity, regard should also be had to the unnecessary location of major new farm complexes proximate to existing residential development.

10.9.2 Intensive Agriculture

The requirements of the preceding section will be applied to intensive agri-business proposals in the pig and poultry sectors. Whilst Meath County Council recognises the role of this sector to contribute towards national economic targets and the economic well-being of the county in general, it is vital that the environmental qualities of the county are recognised in such proposals and protected accordingly. The scale and intensity of such activities within a limited area and the appropriateness of the activity in relation to the quantum of waste generated and its effect

on the area are important considerations in assessing development proposals for intensive agriculture. This applies in particular where the management of nutrients located in areas identified as major aquifers and which are vulnerable to contamination of ground water.

10.9.3 Alternative Agri-Enterprise

Meath County Council shall support proposals for agri-tourism developments such as farmhouse guest accommodation, equestrian centres, outdoor pursuit centres and other similar activities including small-scale craft activities where normal development criteria in relation to satisfactory access, appropriate location and design and waste management are observed.

Whilst Meath County Council encourages and endeavours to facilitate the expansion and diversification of agriculture, some agri-business activities may be more appropriately located within serviced settlement centres on lands identified for such uses in the Local Area Plans, where piped wastewater disposal facilities are available. Detailed policies on economic development within rural areas are included in Chapter 4 Economic Development.

10.9.4 The Informal Horticulture Sector

Allotments are becoming increasingly popular and play an important function in serving communities. Private landowners have a role in providing this resource and service which promote sustainable living. Allotments shall be located such that they do not have an adverse impact on the safety and capacity of the surrounding road network, and shall be designed and sited to have a minimal impact on the surrounding landscape.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 14

To support the development of appropriately located allotment development, in areas which have good access to and are proximate to built up and residential areas.

10.10

Forestry

Forests and woodlands play an important role within the Greater Dublin Area in terms of supporting rural employment and rural diversity, climate change management and carbon sequestration, biodiversity and as a source of renewable/alternative energy sources. Forests and woodlands have a significant recreational and amenity value. County Meath has one of the lowest ratios of planted area in the state. In 2007, c. 9,710 ha of the county was in forest cover which accounts for only 4.1% of the county³. The Forest Service published an Indicative Forest Strategy in 2008 which provides information on how much land is



potentially available for afforestation, where it is, how productive it is, how it is currently being used and what type of forestry might be suitable there. It contains a map which gives an overview of all the opportunities and constraints which exist for forestry in Ireland, at a national level. Further growth in forestry plantation will need to take into account potential impacts on water quality and biodiversity.

The introduction of large scale forestry areas can have negative impacts on an area if they are not in harmony with the surrounding environment. Forestry activities must be appropriate in terms of nature and scale to the surrounding area, so they are not visually obtrusive on the landscape or cause damage to important habitats or the ecology of the area. The use of native species or broadleaf/ conifer mixture and age class diversity can enhance the visual impact and biodiversity of forests. To facilitate guidance on areas which contain opportunities for the creation of new woodland and areas which might be sensitive to new forestry proposals, the Landscape Characterisation Assessment of the county should be consulted (Appendix 7). There are several areas of commercial forestry in County Meath but it is not currently a widespread land use. There are already some young plantations in parts of the County which are a likely result of farm diversification. Coniferous plantations are significant and long-term landscape features which should be located sensitively. If located in prominent or highly visible locations they will change the traditional farmed appearance

³ National Forest Inventory, Forest Service (2007)

of the landscape and may attract attention from long distances. They have the potential to adversely affect scenic value, biodiversity and archaeological features.

At all times, the recommendations of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht guidelines on forestry and fisheries, archaeology and landscape, will be

adhered to. In addition, Meath County Council will encourage the provision of public access to new forests through walking and bridle paths, recreational areas and other similar facilities. The appropriateness of a given site will also be determined by reference to any effects upon established housing which might be enveloped and the proposed manner of transporting harvested timber and the adequacy of transport routes for haulage.

GOAL

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.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 15	To encourage sustainable forestry development, which is planted, managed and harvested in accordance with the Forest Service Guidelines for Landscape, Forest Harvesting and Environmental, Archaeology, Biodiversity and Water Quality.
RD POL 16	To promote forestry development of appropriate scale and character whilst ensuring that the development does not have a negative visual impact on the countryside or cause pollution or degradation to wildlife habitats, natural waters or areas of ecological importance.
RD POL 17	To encourage the provision of public access to new forests through walking and bridle paths, recreational areas and other similar facilities.
RD POL 18	To promote the avoidance of deforestation or commercial afforestation within Natura 2000 sites unless directly relating to the management of the site for its qualifying interests.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

RD OBJ 3	To co-operate with the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to encourage and promote the preparation and implementation of an Indicative Forest Strategy for the County.
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RD OBJ 4

To continue to involve the Local Authority in the NeighbourWood Scheme and to identify areas at local level that are suitable for such schemes.

10.11**Tree Preservation**

Throughout the county, series of trees or groupings of trees have been identified as being of particular importance or value to the area. As a means of protecting these areas of planting, Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) have been made for a number of sites (Map 10.2). In 2011 Meath County Council, in conjunction with the Heritage Council, commissioned the County Meath Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Survey. During the course of field surveys of woodlands and parklands, a number of trees were surveyed including the trees and groups of trees protected under TPOs. The survey details the location of notable trees in County Meath classified according to the nature of their

heritage value and recommends that these trees be afforded protection by Meath County Council under TPOs.

Notwithstanding the existence of TPOs, it is recognised that in some instances tree felling will be unavoidable over the life of the Plan. Where felling of trees is unavoidable, new planting will be required and the planting of native species will be encouraged. Meath County Council will consult with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine advisors regarding its recommendations on Tree Felling Licence applications.

OBJECTIVE

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

RD OBJ 5

To review and update the current list of TPOs and explore the option of making additions having regard to the recommendations set down in the *County Meath Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Survey (2011)* and having due regard to the Council's policies and objectives elsewhere in this County Development Plan.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 19

To consider the preservation of any tree, trees or groups of trees or woodland of special amenity or environmental value by use of Tree Preservation Orders.

RD POL 20

To require the submission of landscape plans where appropriate to accompany planning applications for rural development prepared by competent professionals and to promote the use of native trees for boundary treatment and shelter belts.

10.12

Extractive Industry and Building Materials Production

Meath County Council acknowledges the need for extractive industries in terms of supply of aggregate materials for the construction sector, delivering transport infrastructure projects, and for the export market. However, the potential for conflict in the operation of these industries with wider environmental issues needs careful consideration. By their nature, aggregates can only be worked where they occur. The cost of haulage affects economic competitiveness in this sector. This inevitably leads to conflicts and environmental concerns. Extractive industries by their nature can give rise to detrimental environmental and residential amenity effects including traffic generation, vibration, dust, noise, water pollution, visual intrusion and loss of ground water supplies. The impact on the road network of the County is significant.

Meath contains a variety of natural resources such as building raw materials in the form of sand, gravel, stone reserves including high purity limestones and shale used in cement and magnesia manufacture, and base metal deposits. The potential of these resources to underpin construction output and provide employment and economic growth in the local and regional economy is recognised as is the need to exploit such resources in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner.

The RPGs require development plans to map key natural aggregate resources. The wide distribution of resources is recognised and particular known deposits and sites have

been mapped by Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) in 2004. The GSI Aggregate Potential Mapping illustrates potential crushed rock and sand and gravel deposits and assesses the interactions between the development of these resources and future land uses. These maps are acknowledged as not being exhaustive and additional reserves may adjoin those shown on Map 10.3 and 10.4. Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Quarries and Ancillary Activities were published by the DoEHLG in 2004. A number of other guidelines relating to quarrying have been produced by various bodies for example 'Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry' (GSI), 'Institute of Geologists of Ireland Environmental Impact Statements Guide' and 'Wildlife, Habitats and the Extractive Industry' (NoticeNature).

Meath County Council has undertaken an examination of quarries within its administrative area in accordance with section 261A of the Planning & Development Act 2000-2011 to determine whether development was carried out which would have required Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Appropriate Assessment (AA) having regard to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive and the Habitats Directive. The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government published Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Section 261A of the Planning & Development Act 2000-2011 and related provisions in January 2012.

GOAL

To facilitate adequate supplies of aggregate resources to meet the future growth needs of the County and the wider region while addressing key environmental, traffic and social impacts and details of rehabilitation.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 21	To ensure that projects associated with the extractive industry carry out screening for Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the E.C. Habitats Directive, where required.
RD POL 22	To facilitate the exploitation of the county's natural resources and to exercise appropriate control over the types of development taking place in areas containing proven deposits, whilst also ensuring that such developments are carried out in a manner which would not unduly impinge on the visual amenity or environmental quality in the area.
RD POL 23	To support the extractive industry where it would not unduly compromise the environmental quality of the county and where detailed rehabilitation proposals are provided.
RD POL 24	To seek to ensure that the extraction of minerals and aggregates minimise the detracting from the visual quality of the landscape and do not adversely affect the environment or adjoining existing land uses.
RD POL 25	To ensure that the extractive industry and associated development minimises adverse impacts on the road network in the area and that the full cost of road improvements, including during operations and at time of closure, which are necessary to facilitate those industries, are borne by the industry itself.
RD POL 26	To ensure that all existing workings shall be rehabilitated to suitable land uses and that all future extraction activities will allow for the rehabilitation of pits and proper land use management. The biodiversity value of the site should be considered in the first instance when preparing restoration plans. Where land filling is proposed, inert material is the preferred method. Each planning application shall be considered on a case by case basis and, where relevant, will be dealt with under the relevant regional Waste Management Plan.
RD POL 27	<p>To ensure that development for aggregates / mineral extraction, processing and associated processes does not significantly impact in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Existing & Proposed Special Areas of Conservation (SACs); ii. Special Protection Areas (SPAs); iii. Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas; iv. Other areas of importance for the conservation of flora and fauna; v. Areas of significant archaeological potential; vi. In the vicinity of a recorded monument; vii. Sensitive landscapes, and; viii. World Heritage Sites.

10.13 The Meath Gaeltachts/Gaeltachtaí na Midhe

County Meath contains two separate Gaeltachts that have been officially designated by the Department of Community, Rural, and Gaeltacht Affairs namely (a) Rathcairn, three miles south east of Athboy and (b) Baile Ghib, six miles east of Kells (Map 10.5). The Gaeltacht area had a combined population of 1,670 persons in 2006, representing an increase of 4.9% since the 2002 Census.

There is a requirement on Planning Authorities to include objectives in the development plan for:

“the protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht including the promotion of Irish as the community language, where there is a Gaeltacht area in the area of the development plan.”

The two key elements therefore are protection and promotion.

It has been a long standing objective of successive Governments to maintain Irish as the language of the community and of the home in the Gaeltachts and Meath County Council fully supports this objective. The normal requirements to demonstrate that an applicant(s) is an intrinsic member of the rural Gaeltacht community will apply to all

applications for individual applications within the defined areas of the Gaeltachts. This accords with both national and regional planning guidance. Nonetheless, special consideration will be given to Irish applicants or those who can ensure the stabilisation and the promotion of Irish as a community language.

In addition to the Development Plan, Meath County Council in performance of its duties pursuant to the Official Languages Act 2003 has drafted its own plan towards providing:

- A clear policy towards bi-lingual signage;
- Attending the needs of the public and providing services in Irish;
- Attend the needs of the Gaeltacht completely in Irish, and;
- Assign persons with Irish to provide services through Irish, as required.

The Language Scheme/Plan is monitored to ensure that its provisions are clearly met in an efficient and effective manner and in accordance with the Official Languages Act 2003.

The Local Area Plans provide detailed objectives for the promotion of development in the two Meath Gaeltachts in a manner that protects and enhances their cultural distinctiveness.

GOAL

To ensure the continued survival and development of the Gaeltachts as an area distinct in the linguistic and cultural life of the county, whilst seeking to realise their economic and development potential in a balanced and sustainable manner over the lifetime of the Plan.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 28

To ensure that all new development in the Gaeltachts have a positive impact upon the use of Irish in the area and the cultural heritage of the area, whilst seeking to realise their economic and development potential in a balanced and sustainable manner over the lifetime of the Plan.

RD POL 29

To require all applications for rural houses within the Gaeltachts to comply with the 'Meath Rural Design Guide'.

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

RD OBJ 6

To require that a "*Linguistic Impact Study*" be carried out before any application for housing (for single and multiple housing developments) is considered within the Gaeltacht Area. Such a study, by reference to the linguistic background of intended users or occupants, or identification of its relationship with linguistic or cultural development objectives of groups associated or charged with the development of Gaeltacht areas, will need to prove that a given proposal will have a positive impact upon the promotion and use of Irish as the language of the community.

RD OBJ 7

To promote the provision of signage in Irish in the Gaeltachts regarding:

- a) entry and exit points with explanatory details of the cultural significance of the areas to visitors;
- b) the provision of all commercial signage in Irish, and;
- c) in association with the relevant professional and vocational groups, that auctioneers and other temporary signs are in Irish.

10.13.1 Development Assessment Criteria

Special consideration shall be given to Irish speaking applicants or those who qualify under the rural housing policy i.e. to persons that are an intrinsic part of the rural community, and that demonstrate compliance with the local housing need criteria as set out in Section 10.4.

To assist in assessing the impact of new residential development upon the use of Irish in the Gaeltachts, all planning applications for residential development, both single and multiple house developments, will be referred to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Údarás na Gaeltachta Management for comment.

10.14**Integrated Rural Tourism Complexes**

Rural tourism can play a strong role in stimulating rural economies. The location of the county largely in the hinterland of the largest metropolitan area in the state has generated considerable demand for golf course and leisure estate type developments over the past decade. The Development Plan acknowledges this regional amenity and tourism role for the

county while recognising the importance of ensuring tourist development does not have a negative impact on the overall character of the area. Policies and guidance in relation to tourist accommodation, hotels, holiday homes, caravan and camping sites, tourist signage, festivals and walking and cycle routes are set down in chapter 4 of this Development Plan.

10.15

Vernacular Rural Buildings and Replacement Dwellings

A key component of the rural landscape of Co. Meath is the built legacy of traditional dwellings and buildings, many of which have been neglected in preference for new dwellings, or because traditional buildings have become unsuitable as farming practices changed. In the majority of cases in recent times, most vernacular 'Parnellite' cottages are being replaced with larger contemporary and, in particular, suburban style dwellings that, in many instances, are out of keeping

with the rural character of the area. Thatched cottages, which were once commonplace, have been and continue to be in decline, and every effort will be made by the Council to encourage and facilitate the survival of the remaining examples. Detailed policy in relation to refurbishment and reuse of existing vacant structures within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne are contained within the Heritage Chapter, section 9.6.7.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 30

To promote the viable re-use of vernacular dwellings without losing their character and to support applications for the sensitive restoration of disused vernacular or traditional dwellings.

RD POL 31

To encourage and facilitate the appropriate refurbishment of existing housing stock in rural areas and in certain limited cases the replacement of existing dwellings subject to development assessment criteria outlined below.

RD POL 32

To oppose the demolition and replacement of traditional or vernacular rural houses in order to protect the varied types of housing stock in rural areas of the County and to preserve the rural built heritage.

RD POL 33

To consider the limited conversion of outhouses and other structures attached to large country houses or other heritage structures where acceptable conservation practice is observed in line with the other policies and objectives of this plan and where acceptable site suitability has been established in terms of access, car parking, open space, wastewater disposal and maintaining the setting and amenities of the main structure.

RD POL 34

To respect the sensitive restoration and conversion to residential use of disused vernacular or traditional dwellings or traditional farm buildings, including those which are Protected Structures, such proposals shall not be subject to the Rural Housing Policy (i.e. local need) that applies to new dwellings.

RD POL 35

To actively promote the retention and restoration of thatched dwellings as a key component of the built heritage of County Meath.

OBJECTIVE

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

RD OBJ 8

To update the survey of surviving thatched structures in Meath and to promote available grant schemes to assist owners with their retention and repair.

10.15.1 Development Assessment Criteria

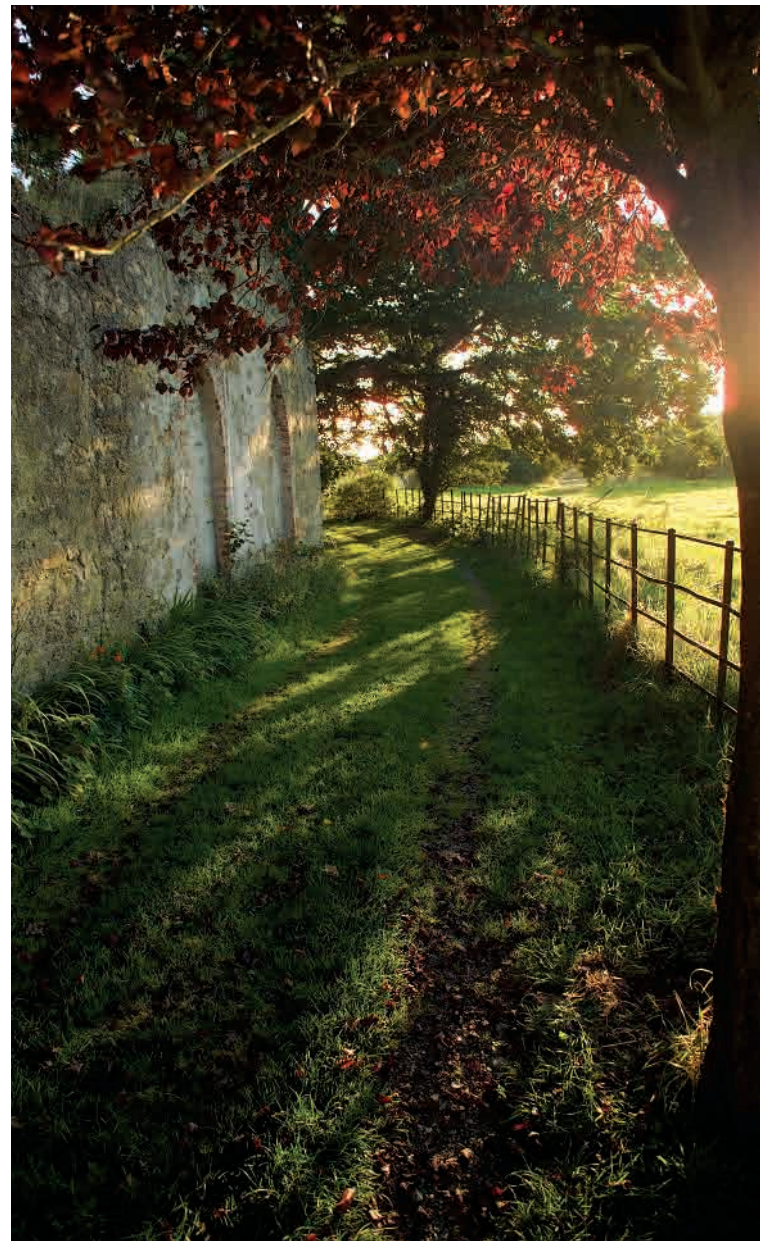
Meath County Council shall assess applications for refurbishment and/or replacement of existing housing stock in rural areas, having regard to the criteria outlined hereunder:

- That in the case of refurbishment and extension proposals, that the scale and architectural treatment of proposed works are sympathetic to the character of the original structure and the surrounding area including adjoining or nearby development;
- That in the case of replacement dwellings, to require that the original structure was last used as a dwelling and that its roof, internal and external walls are generally intact;
- That replacement dwellings are provided at locations where safe access and acceptable wastewater disposal arrangements can be put in place and where specific development objectives or other policies of Meath County Council are not compromised, and;
- That the replacement dwelling shall be designed to be of a size and scale appropriate to the site;
- The design of replacement dwellings in rural areas shall comply with the 'Meath Rural Design Guide', and;
- In the assessment of whether a house which it is proposed to replace is habitable or not, Meath County Council will rely on the definition contained in Section 2 (Interpretation) of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011.

A "Habitable House" means a house which

- (a) is used as a dwelling;

- (b) is not in use but when last used was used, disregarding any unauthorised use, as a dwelling and is not derelict, or;
- (c) was provided for use as a dwelling but has not been occupied.



10.16

Restricting Access to Certain Categories of Roads

10.16.1 National Primary and National Secondary Routes

National policy in relation to development involving access to national roads and development along such roads is set out in the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines published by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government in January 2012. The Guidelines state, 'The policy of the planning authority will be to avoid the creation of any additional access point from new development or the generation of increased traffic from existing accesses to national roads to which speed limits greater than 60kmh apply. This provision applies to all categories of development, including individual houses

in rural areas, regardless of the housing circumstances of the applicant'.

Under Part 4, Article 28 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 - 2012, notification of planning applications which involve a new access or material widening of an access to an existing or planned national road, or where the development might give rise to a significant increase in the volume of traffic using a national road, must be sent to the National Roads Authority. The Authority may make submissions or observations on such planning applications in accordance with Article 29 of the Regulations. National policy in relation to access to national routes has been outlined previously in Chapter 6.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 36

To develop and maximise the opportunities of the county's national primary and secondary roads as key strategic infrastructure vital to the county's continued economic development and to protect this strategically important infrastructure from unplanned ribbon development or random one-off housing development.

RD POL 37

To ensure that future development affecting national primary or secondary roads, shall be assessed in accordance with the guidance given in the document 'Spatial Planning and National Roads - Guidelines for Planning Authorities'.

10.16.2 Regional and County Roads (Refer Map 10.6)

It is vitally important that new housing in rural areas, that is located along non national routes, is located in such a manner as to avoid endangering public safety by way of a traffic

hazard. There are a number of regionally and locally important functions of certain regional and county road routes that are particularly important transport links, and that traverse County Meath.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 38	To ensure that all development accessing off the county's road network is at a location and carried out in a manner which would not endanger public safety by way of a traffic hazard.
RD POL 39	To identify and protect those non-national roads of regional or local importance from unnecessary and excessive individual access/egress points, which would prejudice the carrying capacity and, ultimately, the function of the road.
RD POL 40	To restrict new accesses for one-off dwellings where the 80km per hour speed limit currently applies in order to safeguard the specific functions and to avoid the premature obsolescence of identified regional and important county link roads (see Map No. 10.6) through the creation of excessive levels of individual entrances, and to secure the investment in non-national roads.

10.16.3 Development Assessment Criteria

Exceptions to the above policies relating to regional and county roads will be considered on their merits in the following circumstances:

- For those who have a location specific, rural housing need on family owned lands and cannot provide access onto any other non identified regional or county road, and therefore need to access one of the regional or county roads identified on Map No. 10.6. In this circumstance, the applicant will be encouraged to maximise the potential of an existing entrance. The onus shall be on the applicant to demonstrate that they have no other access or suitable sites within their landholding, and;
- Where an existing dwelling with a vehicular entrance that is not considered a traffic hazard is to be demolished and replaced with a new dwelling.

New development proposals onto certain regionally and locally important county road routes that act as particularly important transport links and that traverse County Meath shall be assessed having regard to:

- Avoiding unnecessary new accesses, for example, where access could be provided off a nearby county road;
- Ensuring that necessary new entrances are located in such a manner as to provide effective visibility for both users of the entrance and users of the public roads so that opportunities for conflicting movements are avoided;
- Avoiding the premature obsolescence of regional roads in particular, through creating excessive levels of individual entrances.

10.17 Roadside Boundaries

Roadside boundaries, whether hedgerows, sod and stone bank, stone wall or other boundaries, provide important features that are elements of both the landscape and ecology of rural areas. The retention of such boundaries assists in absorbing new rural housing into its surroundings and should generally be encouraged.

Occasionally, the removal of substantial lengths of roadside boundaries is proposed to improve visibility at the junction of a new entrance onto a road. Where an alternative site is available and otherwise suitable, applicants and Planning Authorities should consider a location that avoids the necessity for widespread boundary removal.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 41

To avoid the removal of existing roadside boundaries where they are more than 3 meters from the road edge (edge of carriageway), except to the extent that this is needed for a new entrance, and where required for traffic safety reasons. (Please refer to policies contained in Section 9.7.8 Woodlands, Hedgerows and Trees in this regard).

10.18

Roads Served by Unmanned Railway Crossings

Under the National Development Plan, a rail investment and safety programme has resulted in substantial route renewal and service upgrades. This will deliver, over time, more frequent and faster rail passenger services over the rail network. In some areas, laneways accessed via unmanned level crossings that were originally designed to provide access to agricultural lands are now the subject of significant residential development. In certain

circumstances, the provision of substantial additional development that is completely dependent for access off unmanned and unprotected level crossings may increase the risk of an accident and make alternative crossing arrangements necessary. The provision of such arrangements needs to be carefully considered given the likely costs involved and the availability of resources.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 42

To refer proposals for new housing development requiring access via unmanned and unprotected level crossings to Iarnród Éireann and to carefully consider the subsequent views of Iarnród Éireann such that due and proper consideration has been made for the safety of road users and rail safety.

10.19

Technical Requirements

10.19.1 One Off Houses: Sight Distances and Stopping Sight Distances

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 43

To ensure that the required standards for sight distances and stopping sight distances are in compliance with current road geometry standards as outlined in the NRA document Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) specifically Section TD 41-42/09 when assessing individual planning applications for individual houses in the countryside.

10.19.2 Groundwater Protection and the Planning System

Ensuring that the country's water resources are of the highest quality is a prerequisite for a healthy environment, a healthy economy and is a key part of Government policy. The planning system at national, regional and local level has a key role in ensuring that development proceeds in a manner that ensures Ireland's water resources continue to be of the highest quality.

Circular Letter SP 5/03 issued on July 31st 2003 issued by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government covers three main issues in relation to the role of the planning system in ensuring that development proceeds in a manner that offers the best possible environmental protection, including protection of groundwater quality. S.I. 9 of 2010 European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 also places duties on the Local Authorities to protect groundwaters.

(1) Groundwater Protection and the Development Plan

Identifying groundwater resources and protecting them in a way that integrates

environmental protection and the operation of the planning system requires that effective linkage be created between any groundwater protection scheme which has been put in place. This includes:

- identifying key aquifers and groundwater resources, assessing their vulnerability to contamination, incorporating protection schemes for specific sources of public water supplies;
- adhering to the Development Plan made under the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011, and;
- the operation of the development management system as it relates, in particular, to the assessment of proposals involving on-site disposal of wastewater, agri-wastes and any other development activity that may affect groundwater quality.

Meath County Council has prepared groundwater protection schemes and it is imperative that these are linked to the County Development Plan. As progress is made in putting groundwater protection schemes in place, they will be accompanied by appropriate supporting policies.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 44	To ensure that new development meets the highest standards in terms of environmental protection.
RD POL 45	To utilise a "Groundwater Protection Response Matrix" to assist in deciding the appropriateness of various categories of development to areas that have different levels of vulnerability in terms of groundwater contamination. This approach will support the proper input of information into planning decision-making processes.

By consulting this matrix prospective applicants, as well as Meath County Council, will be able to get an indication of the likelihood of a proposed development being acceptable on a given site, or whether further investigations or

adjustments to the proposals are necessary. For Meath County Council, this matrix will also be of assistance in determining the nature of any planning and the monitoring conditions to be attached to planning permissions.

(2) Groundwater Quality and Decisions on Planning Applications

Under Section 34(2)(a) of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011, when making a decision in relation to an application, Planning Authorities are restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, having regard to the provisions of the Development Plan as well as other provisions. These other provisions include, where relevant, the policy of the Government, the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, or any other Minister of the Government.

Good siting and design of necessary development in rural areas is vitally important. In this regard, the current standard for domestic effluent treatment and disposal from single dwelling houses is set out in the EPA *'Code of Practice - Waste Water Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (p.e. <10)'*, (2009). It includes an assessment methodology to determine site suitability, a methodology to select suitable waste water treatment systems, information on the design and installation of septic tanks and treatment systems, and maintenance requirements. As an alternative to recommending a minimum site size, the EPA Code of Practice makes recommendations about matters such as separation distances from water courses and wells, site boundaries, etc.

The assessment of site conditions is critical to ensuring that new development does not adversely affect water quality generally and groundwater quality specifically. Meath County Council propose to use a standard site characterisation form modelled on that included at Annex C in the EPA *'Code of Practice Waste Water Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (p.e. <10)'*, (2009) and to insist on the use of qualified personnel in carrying out site assessments.

It is also very important that on site systems - both conventional septic tank systems and innovative effluent treatment systems - are installed in accordance with the manufacturer's or supplier's specifications and instructions

and the terms and conditions of planning permissions. Innovative effluent treatment systems should be certified by the NSAI Irish Agrément Board (IAB) or by the Agrément Board (or equivalent) of an EEA Member State; where the latter certificate ensures an equivalent level of safety and suitability. It is important that any installation instructions incorporated in the relevant Agrément Certificate (or equivalent) should also be strictly followed. The process of installation should proceed under the supervision of a competent person and be certified by that person. Evaluation of site suitability will be undermined if the system is not installed as designed. Meath County Council will ensure that conditions attaching to a grant of permission provide for the above, as well as a suitable means of confirming that the installation process has been adequately supervised by a competent person.

(3) Monitoring and Enforcement of Planning Requirements

The primary responsibility for ensuring compliance with the terms of a planning permission rests with the person carrying out the development pursuant to a planning permission. In the normal course of carrying out developments, there will also be parallel requirements to comply with other codes such as the national Building Regulations made under the Building Control Act 1990 or water pollution legislation, to mention two examples.

The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government has published the Water Services (Amendment) Act 2012 to regulate waste water discharges from all homes that are not connected to the public sewer network. It provides for registration and inspection arrangements for on-site septic tank systems or domestic waste water treatment systems.

10.19.3 Wastewater Disposal

Wastewater from housing developments in unserviced areas is normally dispersed underground. Individual wastewater treatment facilities in rural areas should therefore, be

located, constructed and maintained to the highest standards to ensure minimal impacts

on water quality and, particularly, groundwater quality.

POLICY

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 46

To ensure that new development is guided towards sites where acceptable wastewater treatment and disposal facilities can be provided, avoiding sites where it is inherently difficult to provide and maintain such facilities. Sites prone to extremely high water tables and flooding or where groundwater is particularly vulnerable to contamination shall be avoided.

To ensure both public health and environmental protection, it is essential that any new dwelling

is served by drainage arrangements that meet the Council's requirements and standards.

POLICIES

It is the policy of Meath County Council:

RD POL 47

To ensure that the site area is large enough to adequately accommodate an on-site treatment plant and percolation area.

RD POL 48

To ensure that all septic tank/proprietary treatment plants and polishing filter/percolation areas satisfy the criteria set out in the EPA '*Code of Practice Waste Water Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (p.e. <10)*', (2009) (or any other updated code of practice guidelines) in order to safeguard individual and group water schemes.

RD POL 49

To require a site characterisation report to be furnished by a suitably qualified competent person. Notwithstanding this, Meath County Council may require additional tests to be carried out under its supervision.

RD POL 50

To ensure that a maintenance agreement or other satisfactory management arrangements are entered into by the applicant to inspect and service the system as required. A copy of this must be submitted to Meath County Council.

RD POL 51

To ensure that direct discharge of effluent from on site waste water disposal systems to surface water is not permitted.

RD POL 52

To ensure wastewater treatment plants discharging into the Boyne catchment or to coastal Natura 2000 sites are suitably maintained and upgraded in advance of any additional loadings beyond their capacity in order to protect water quality, as required.

RD POL 53

To promote good practice with regard to the siting and design of septic tanks and the maintenance of existing tanks. A high level of scrutiny will be placed on applications within 2km of watercourses in the Boyne catchment. Proposals in this area shall not have an adverse impact on local water quality that could affect the qualifying interests of the cSAC and SPA.

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- 11.1 General Site Development Standards
- 11.2 Residential Development
- 11.3 Childcare Facilities
- 11.4 Educational Facilities
- 11.5 Sports Facilities
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Development Management Guidelines & Standards

Development Management Guidelines & Standards

11



Development Management Guidelines & Standards

11.0

Introduction

Development management is one of the main implementation tools of this County Development Plan and its core strategy. The carrying out of development in accordance with the standards set out in this chapter is therefore critical to the achievement of the Development Plan objectives, and the delivery of key infrastructure through development management will support the aims of the core strategy.

The purpose of development management guidelines and standards is to supplement the policies and objectives cited in the other chapters of the Development Plan regarding the appropriate form of new development and to ensure that new development is of a high quality and satisfactorily relates to the character, scale, layout and form of the area in question.

Proposed developments must also comply with relevant legislative requirements, for example, in respect of Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment. Applicants must also separately comply with the Building Regulations and requirements for fire safety certificates.

In addition, reference should be made to the Landscape Character Assessment, which accompanies this Development Plan (Appendix 7), when investigating development proposals. The Landscape Character Assessment contains a landscape classification for the county and outlines the capacity of the various landscape areas to accommodate development, including wind turbines, infrastructure, housing and agricultural buildings. Development proposals must demonstrate consistency with the guidance for the Landscape Character Area that they are situated in.

A Development Contributions Scheme is in place for County Meath. In circumstances where additional specific infrastructure for an area is required, Meath County Council may bring forward a special contribution scheme.

All standards and guidelines may be subject to review from time to time in light of alterations in national or other standards.

11.1

General Site Development Standards

The design of schemes should promote best practice in architectural design, consistent with the aims of the 'Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015' (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2009) to support good architectural quality.

11.1.1 Building Height

A high building is one that is significantly higher than neighbouring or surrounding development. High buildings can make a positive contribution to their environment and can add to the character of the urban area and identity of towns. They can assist in the

consolidation of towns referred to in the core strategy. High buildings must be well designed and appropriate to their context. The following considerations will be taken into account in deciding on an application for a high building:

- The characteristics of the site and surrounding area;
- The design of high buildings which should exhibit exceptional architectural character and quality;
- The degree of overshadowing and consequent loss of light caused to surrounding property;
- The degree of overlooking, (particularly of residential property) and consequent loss of privacy to surrounding premises;
- Impact on the streetscape;
- Impact on structures or spaces of architectural or historic importance or special visual quality;
- The extent to which the building impacts on important landmarks;
- Impact on identified protected views;
- The degree of impact of the building on the skyline;
- The contribution the proposal makes to the public realm;
- Microclimatic impacts including shadow impacts and down draft effect;
- Standards of environmental sustainable design and building solutions;
- Whether the purpose or civic importance of the building would justify its prominence.

Where, in the opinion of Meath County Council, a location for a high building is acceptable under the above criteria, a high standard of design and finish will be required, commensurate with the location and civic importance of the site. Where a high building is likely to lead to a concentration of pedestrians seeking access to the public street, the design of the building must ensure the safety and convenience of pedestrians and other road users.

11.1.2 Building Lines

Meath County Council will normally seek to ensure that development is not carried out in

front of established lines, or in a position that would be in conflict with a building line. This may be determined where proper planning and sustainable development would show such to be desirable. In deciding where a building line should be located, the form of development to which it is related will be considered.

Where located along roads of traffic importance, increased building lines may be required to provide for greater amenity and safety of road users and residents. On existing roads, building lines may be required for future road widening. In such cases, building lines will be required to allow for future road requirements.

11.1.3 Access for All

Meath County Council recognises the need for universal equality of access to all aspects of the built and external environment as an essential prerequisite of equal opportunity and the development of an inclusive society.

Part M of the Building Regulations (S.I. No. 179 of 2000) sets out standards to ensure that buildings are accessible to and usable by everyone, including the older people, people with disabilities and people with children. The Technical Guidance Document in relation to Part M provides guidance on the access requirements for public buildings and for residential dwellings.

Meath County Council will have regard to the National Disability Authority's Building For Everyone Planning Guidance (Booklet 9, 2009), the UK Lifetime Homes Standards, and will seek to encourage the implementation of best practice standards with regard to access in both indoor and outdoor environments.

In assessing planning applications, which relate to protected structures, regard shall be had to the protected status of the structure and the need to protect the special character of it. An important element in achieving sustainability in the design of residential units is the ability of the design to accommodate decreased mobility

as residents may acquire some level of mobility impairment through accident, or through old age.

Housing with long term adaptability and potential for flexibility allows for change as circumstances alter or families grow. Adaptability that allows for the alteration of the fabric of a building and flexibility which allows for spaces to accommodate a range of uses, are key considerations in the design of a home. Meath County Council supports the Lifetime Homes guidance contained in Section 5.2 of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities' (2007) and will require house designs to incorporate lifetime adaptability where feasible.

11.1.4 Green Infrastructure

Existing green infrastructure should be identified at the initial stages of the planning process for development and should guide the design of an appropriate site layout. The landscaping plan submitted with an application should clearly illustrate how existing green infrastructure, and opportunities to create more linkages, have informed and been incorporated into the development, layout and, if appropriate, management proposals.

11.1.5 Waste Management

Waste storage facilities should be provided for all forms of development in accordance with national policy and the relative Waste Management Plan. In residential schemes, bin storage areas should be provided to the front of terraced dwellings. These areas should be screened and the design integrated with the dwelling. Apartment developments should make provision for waste segregation and recycling. Shared bin storage areas shall be located conveniently for the residents of the development and collection service providers.

In assessing planning applications, regard will be had to the waste produced by proposed

developments including the nature and amount produced and the proposed method of management. Developments should ensure that production/management methods do not give rise to environmental pollution, result in undue loss of amenity or be detrimental to public health.

In assessing all significant construction/ demolition projects, the developer shall include construction and demolition waste management plans. These plans should seek to focus on waste minimisation in general and optimise waste prevention, re-use and recycling opportunities. These plans are required for developments of five or more housing units or commercial or industrial developments on sites in excess of 0.5 hectares.

11.1.6 Energy Efficiency

Layout and building design must conform to the highest possible standards of energy efficiency and as many dwellings as possible must have access to sunlight and make use of passive solar design. New developments will be encouraged to optimise usage of orientation and natural sun lighting with single aspect housing being discouraged, particularly where it has a northerly aspect, and multiple aspects will be encouraged in apartment type development.

Where possible and practicable energy-saving and energy generating technologies, such as roof top solar panels and geothermal energy, should be incorporated at the design stage. Information on renewable energy sources and possible grants available can be found on www.seai.ie.

11.1.7 Urban Design

Urban design is concerned with the relationships of buildings to one another and to the spaces around them. The principles of good urban design include:

- **Character:** Design should respect existing form, layout, urban grain and the natural landscape while encouraging individual

character in a development and a sense of the development belonging to a distinct place with its own identity;

- **Enclosure:** Design should establish a clear distinction between public and private spaces and public areas that are suitably supervised by adjoining buildings;
- **Legibility and Permeability:** Design should promote places with a clear image which are easy to navigate. The latter will be aided by an interconnected street network to allow for ease of access and a greater spread of traffic movement;
- **Scale:** Towns and buildings which, whatever their size, relate to human proportions and design should take cognisance of this;
- **Public Space:** The design of public areas including street furniture, paving, signage and lighting, and the relationship between buildings and public spaces is as important as the design of individual buildings;
- **Diversity:** Design should contribute to creating places with variety and choice by facilitating a mix of uses and developments;
- **Longevity:** Design should create streets and buildings that can be adapted to a variety of uses during their lifetime.
- **Hierarchy:** Design should foster a clear and legible ordering system which recognises a hierarchy between different types of buildings or roads and their individual parts;
- **Decoration:** Design should encourage visual identity and interest and discourage functional anonymity.

New developments should incorporate these principles. The elements of 'Smarter Travel' require an emphasis in new development on promoting sustainable transport, including making developments easily accessible for

pedestrian and cyclists, reducing the need to travel and the distance of journeys.

11.1.8 Transport and Traffic Assessments

Developers will be required to provide a detailed Transport and Traffic Assessment, as carried out by competent professionals in this field, where new developments will have a significant effect (see below) on travel demand and on the capacity of surrounding transport links. Where a Transport and Traffic Assessment identifies necessary on and off site improvements for the development to be able to proceed, the developer will be expected to fund the improvements by entering into a formal agreement with the Council. Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audits (RSA) shall be used in preparing planning applications for major developments affecting roads, particularly national roads. In doing so, reference shall be made to the NRA's 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges' and the 'Traffic Management Guidelines' prepared by the Department of Transport and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

The thresholds for Transport Assessment are as follows:

- Traffic to and from the development exceeds 10% of the traffic flow on the adjoining road;
- Traffic to and from the development exceeds 5% of the traffic flow on the adjoining road where congestion exists;
- Residential development in excess of 200 dwellings;
- Retail and leisure development in excess of 1,000 m²;
- Industrial development in excess of 5,000 m², and;
- Distribution and warehousing in excess of 10,000 m².

Reference shall also be made to the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (TTA) in the preparation of the Transport Assessments.

11.2 Residential Development

The successful design of residential development will depend on a coherent and unambiguous design brief. In dealing with applications for residential development over 0.2 hectares (0.5 acre), or for more than 15 residential units, Meath County Council will require the submission of a design statement as part of the application documents.

The principal functions of a design statement will be:

- To ensure that the key characteristics of the local context are taken into account from the outset;
- To establish the overall form of the development based on the density and layout of buildings and spaces;
- To indicate how the layout of roads, streets and open spaces contribute to the spatial hierarchy, as well as linking the development to the rest of the vicinity;
- To indicate how the quantitative and qualitative criteria, which inform the design have been adhered to.

Quantitative criteria refer to density, private and public open space, roads, footpaths, car parking standards and internal space standards.

Qualitative criteria refer to consideration of safety, privacy, sense of place, variety functions, convenience and aesthetics.

The design of residential development should not be based solely on compliance with quantitative standards. The creation of residential areas with a sense of place should be the priority. In the making of places, road layout and the movement of vehicles should not dictate the internal layout of a housing scheme. The design of new residential development should provide for a network of functional and aesthetically pleasing public, semi-private and private spaces rather than merely a hierarchy of roads.

Applications for residential development shall illustrate the phasing for the scheme. Phasing proposals shall ensure that open space and infrastructure to serve dwellings in a given phase e.g. public lighting, footpaths, is completed to the satisfaction of Meath County Council prior to the initiation of the succeeding phase.

Applications will be required to adhere to the guidance contained in the 'Urban Design Manual A Best Practice Guide' (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2009). The design of schemes should promote best practice in architectural design, consistent with the aims of the 'Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015' (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2009) to support good architectural quality.

Where an application is made for changes to the design or layout of elements of a residential scheme, the duration of the application shall be linked by condition with that of the parent application. This is to ensure the implementation of residential schemes in an orderly and integrated fashion and to avoid a proliferation of expiration dates for different elements of schemes such that permission for, for example, the open space serving a development may expire prior to permission for units due to a newer application being made for revisions to unit types. Such procedure reflects best planning practice in this regard.

11.2.1 Residential Density

Meath County Council recognises the benefits of increasing the density of residential development at appropriate locations in harmony with improved public transport systems and in accordance with various strategies and reports such as the 'National Spatial Strategy', the 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines'

and the 'Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area'. Such an approach would encourage a more sustainable form of urban development through the avoidance of excessive suburbanisation and consumption of greenfield, virgin lands and ensure a more economic use of existing infrastructure and serviced lands. A further benefit would be the reduction in dependence on the private motor car, facilitating and encouraging walking and cycling by reducing the distance to be travelled and improving accessibility to, and the attractiveness of, public transport. The use of zoned and serviced land to its maximum, as positioned in the core strategy through the emphasis on consolidation, will assist in achieving the objective of satisfying housing demand.

In respect of Large Growth Towns, Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns and Small Towns which are located on well established, existing or proposed public transport routes or nodes with additional capacity, residential densities in excess of 35 net residential units per hectare should be utilised particularly in town centre locations. This is subject to good design and the absence of onerous site constraints. In all other instances, in the county's smaller towns and villages, maximum densities of 35 net residential units per hectare shall be applicable and, in general, densities and house types shall be compatible with established densities and housing character in the area. The justification for the density of a given scheme should be detailed in the design statement or in a report accompanying the application where a multi unit proposal is below the threshold for a design statement. Where Meath County Council considers that there is an over proliferation of particular types of housing in an area, the Council may seek to re-balance the form of housing in new schemes.

However, before these benefits may be exploited, there are several challenges that should be considered, such as:

- Raising the standard of design to ensure that in the pursuit of quantitative based

housing yield, qualitative aspects of design are not weakened;

- Considering the pursuit of radical new forms of development rather than a compression of traditional housing form;
- The identification of key public transport corridors and other suitable locations where higher densities may be considered;
- Ensuring that development takes place in an integrated manner, and;
- Considering the pursuit of higher residential densities only in conjunction with the protection of existing urban quality and where adequate infrastructure is available.

The appropriate residential density in any particular location will be determined by the following:

- i) The extent to which the design and layout follows a coherent design brief resulting in a high quality residential environment;
- ii) Compliance with qualitative and quantitative criteria set out in the subsequent sections;
- iii) The extent to which the site may, due to its size, scale and location, propose its own



density and character, having regard to the need to protect the established character and amenities of existing adjoining residential areas;

- iv) Proximity to points of access to the public transport network;
- v) Existing topographical, landscape or other features on the site, and;
- vi) The capacity of the infrastructure, including social and community facilities, to absorb the demands created by the development.

The choice as to the level of residential density appropriate to a given area cannot therefore be considered in simple arithmetic terms for all development sites as a single numerical value. Rather, the identification of a given density, and the question of its appropriateness should be determined by spatial planning and architectural design criteria, determined by the context of a given site and the relationship to the overall proper planning and sustainable development of that centre.

11.2.2 Residential Design Criteria

11.2.2.1 General

1. Pedestrian and vehicular movement within housing areas should be convenient, safe and pleasant. Within larger housing areas, a clear hierarchy of spaces and roads should be apparent. Movement through estates should be guided by the principles of security, with opportunities for crime and anti social behaviour minimised.
2. Estate design should be guided by the principle of lifetime use and recognise the role of housing areas in children's play activities and the needs of older people and of persons with a disability. In particular, the layout of roads, footpaths and open space, should facilitate children to move freely and safely around their neighbourhood, and to be able to play in front or within sight of their homes.
3. Every effort should be made to eliminate through traffic (rat-runs); however provision

should be made for public transport, pedestrian and cycle network through-routes. Long straight roads should be avoided where feasible to keep vehicular speeds to the minimum. Provision should be made for traffic management proposals in all developments. Where shared surfaces are proposed, vehicle design speeds should be at or near walking pace. This shall be achieved by design features such as curves, ramps, pinch points and other features where appropriate.

4. In housing developments containing 15 or more units, a mix of house types and sizes should generally be provided. Variety in design, within a unified concept, will generally be required. This may be achieved through scale and massing, roof profiles, materials and decorative details. In smaller scheme, i.e. less than 15 units, uniformity in design and finishes may be acceptable, depending on the site context.
5. Public open spaces within residential developments should be designed so as to complement the residential layout and be informally supervised by residents. The spaces should be visually and functionally accessible to the maximum number of dwellings. The landscape design of open spaces, including the retention of existing features such as an important stand of trees, stream or rock outcrop, must be incorporated into the initial design process. Where such features are being retained, they should be situated in open space to ensure their visual setting and protection. The design and layout of the network of public open spaces should take into account, and make provision for, the need for level areas of sufficient size to accommodate informal sports activities for children. Narrow tracts of open space, which are difficult to manage, should not be acceptable.
6. Privacy, defined as freedom from undue observation, is an essential factor in residential layout. Privacy can be ensured

by attention to the alignment of new residential buildings and their relationship to each other. Good design in housing layouts, the configuration of houses and their relationship to each other, to open spaces and roads, should aim to provide layouts with adequate private open space and screening so as to achieve freedom from observation.

7. Curtilage car parking will not necessarily be mandatory with grouped parking an option subject to ensuring a high degree of passive surveillance. Underground parking will also be an option subject to acceptable access, circulation and parking space dimension standards, provision of good ventilation and standards of personal safety. Proper provision must always be made in all layouts for access by fire appliances and refuse freighters.
8. Applications for multi unit residential development shall be accompanied by a landscape plan prepared by an appropriately qualified professional.
9. Housing which is to cater for a specific sector of society, for example people with a disability or older people, shall comply with the best practice guidance for such housing that is in place at the time that the planning application is being assessed.
10. Excessive transmission of sound between structurally adjoining residential units causes nuisance to occupiers. New residential units must be constructed to a high standard to ensure transmission of sound is within acceptable standards. The relevant standards for sound insulation and the enforcement of these are controlled through the building control regulations and legislation.

11.2.2.2 Houses

1. All houses should have an area of private open space, exclusive of car parking, to the rear of the building line. The minimum

area of private open space to be provided shall be in accordance with the table below. It should be noted that housing developments which provide private open space at the minimum standard throughout the scheme will be discouraged.

Table 11.1: Minimum Private Open Space Standards for Houses

House Type	Minimum Area of Private Open Space to be Provided
One/two bedroom	55 sq.m.
Three bedroom	60 sq.m.
Four bedrooms or more	75 sq.m.

2. A minimum of 22 metres, between directly opposing windows shall be observed. Where sufficient private open space is provided and privacy is maintained, this depth may be reduced for single storey dwellings. Appropriate design solutions may be acceptable in other circumstances where the windows of non habitable rooms are within 22 metres of each other.
3. A minimum distance of 3.2 metres shall be provided between dwellings for the full length of the flanks in all developments of detached, semi-detached and end terrace houses. This area shall be equally divided between the dwellings so separated. Where garages are provided as single storey annexes to houses, the above separation distance may be reduced, providing a direct through access from front to rear of the dwelling is maintained.
4. Public open space shall be provided for in residential development at a minimum rate of 15% of total site area. Where residential developments are close to existing facilities or natural amenities or where, in the opinion of Meath County Council, it would be in the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of

the area, then Meath County Council may require a financial contribution towards the provision of public open space or recreational facilities in the wider area in lieu of public open space within the development. If development proposals are proposed to follow this approach then the applicant must ensure that there are no adverse direct or indirect effects on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites. Applicants will be obliged to comply with Article 6(3) of the EC Habitats Directive in this regard.

5. A variety of types and sizes of open spaces should be provided and located to cater for the active and passive recreational needs of children and adults of all ages. The minimum requirements per 1,000 population (in excess of 350 conventional housing units) for the different types of open space are set out below. It is the intention of Meath County Council that, where practical, additional open space shall be provided at a minimum rate of 3.2 hectares (8.0 acres) per 1000 population.
6. Discretion is required to take account of the composition of different housing units and the different demographic characteristics which may result from same. The preferred make up of this open space is outlined below:

Table 11.2: Open Space Specification

Proposed Use	Minimum Standard per 1000 population
Children's play area	0.4ha
Urban Parks/General Amenity Space	1.2ha
Playing Fields	1.6ha
Overall requirements	3.2ha

7. The general amenity space / urban parks is in addition to the provision of playing fields and is for more informal play than the playing fields which may also be used by

local sports organisations, as considered appropriate. A minimum of 4,000 sq.m. of children's play area is required per 1,000 population. No account will be taken of incidental open space such as grass margins, left over areas, nor any area due to its nature (e.g. marshy) or topography (slope) which is deemed unsuitable. A recreational area (providing safe, durable and accessible active recreational facilities) appropriate in scale and nature should be provided for 1) all developments of 75 dwellings or more, 2) where a development for less than 75 houses represents Phase 1 of a scheme likely to equal or exceed 75 houses or 3) where it is considered appropriate and deemed necessary by Meath County Council.

8. The location, siting and design of the open space will have regard to the following:
 - Be well designed and of a high visual standard so that it is functional and accessible to all;
 - Provide for the retention of existing natural features;
 - Include proposals for drainage and landscaping of the public open space;
 - Houses shall not be permitted to back onto open spaces;
 - Provide high levels of natural surveillance and overlooking by as many houses as possible;
 - Be provided with a boundary fence / wall or appropriate soft landscaping where such open space is adjacent to a main access road or Local Distributor Road.
9. The use of hard landscaping elements such as paving, cobbled areas, etc. should play an increasingly important role in the design and presentation of open space concepts. Hard play areas such as all weather surfaces should also be taken into account when assessing new proposals.
10. Meath County Council shall require that areas dedicated for public open space in a planning application are transferred to the ownership of the Council where the

development is taken in charge by the Council.

11.2.2.3 Apartments

Meath County Council consider that appropriate levels of well designed apartment development can make a strong contribution to providing housing in central urban areas particularly in Large Growth Towns I and II and Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns.

Planning applications for the development of apartments are subject to the guidelines and standards set out below. All apartment development should comply with the 'Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments' (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2007).

Applicants/developers of apartment schemes should take cognisance of the Multi Unit Developments Act 2011 (or as otherwise amended).

1. Apartment development should have a high quality of building design and site layout and have due regard to the character of the adjoining streetscape or landscape. They will not normally be permitted on sites surrounded by or gaining access through family occupied suburban housing estate development. They may be acceptable within housing developments when planned or constructed as part of such development but will only be permitted where a satisfactory degree of separation from standard suburban housing, in terms of design, height and layout is achieved to the satisfaction of Meath County Council.
2. The height of apartment developments should have regard to the design statement submitted with the application and the character of the area. A significant consideration will be the manner in which the adequacy of the site area allows the building to be sited, such that they will not adversely interfere with the scale, amenities or visual quality of existing development. To this end, the form and design should demonstrate a satisfactory transition from the scale of any neighbouring buildings of lower height.
3. In the case of apartment blocks, particular attention must be paid to the location of communal open space for the residents. This open space should not be unduly overshadowed by the blocks and be laid out in such a fashion to provide for ease of maintenance. Secluded sunny areas and shade should be provided by a careful choice of planting. Public open space shall be provided at a minimum provision of 15% of the total gross area of the site.
4. Car parking should be broken up by planting and/or other design features and located where it does not obtrude onto the layout and yet provide for reasonable convenience of users. Only minor areas of car parking, primarily for visitors, will be permitted between the block and the road boundary. Where development is likely to involve significant letting, an innovative car-parking layout should be proposed to accommodate increased car parking within the curtilage of the site.
5. Meath County Council will generally seek apartment units larger than minimum standards set out in the 'Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments' (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2007). A development consisting solely of units which accord to the minimum standards will be discouraged.
6. The design statement should include details of compliance with the standards set out in the 'Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments' (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2007). This shall include details of the space standards required by the Guidelines for each unit and the quantity of space

provided in each unit. Applications below the threshold for a design statement should include this information as part of the application details.

7. A mix of units shall be provided in schemes in terms of design, size and type of units.

11.2.2.4 Services

In general, applications for multiple unit housing development on unserviced and unzoned lands will be regarded as premature.

Where water and/or sewerage infrastructure is privately provided, the type and design shall be in compliance with the standards set by Meath County Council. Provision should be made in the design of units for individual monitoring of the consumption of water and wastewater services. All sewerage systems should conform with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and public health standards. Individual and/or group schemes will be required to connect to the public sewerage scheme when it is provided. Private one off residences will generally be encouraged to connect to public services where available.

For guidance on services associated with residential developments, reference should be made to 'Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas' (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 1998) (or any such other relevant standards and legislation that may be enacted).

11.2.2.5 Art Work

Proposals for residential developments above 75 units shall incorporate works of public art into the overall scheme or make a financial contribution to the Local Authority to provide the piece of public art in order to enhance the amenities of the local environment (see Policy SOC POL53, in Chapter 5, Social Strategy).

11.2.2.6 Screen Walls and Boundaries

Screen walls constructed of brick/stone/rendered blockwork, 2.0 metres in height and constructed in accordance with current

standards and regulations shall be provided to enclose private open space and where the boundaries of the house sites abut roads, pedestrian ways or open spaces. The walls shall be capped and the design and finish should be consistent with the design/finish of the house design. Post and wire or timber panel fencing shall not be permitted.

A uniform treatment for the boundaries of individual sites shall be implemented throughout a residential development. In general, front boundaries shall be defined by walls or fences at least 0.5 metres high in keeping with the house design. Open plan front gardens will generally be discouraged and will only be acceptable in innovative layouts and where a high level of safety is achieved. Open plan gardens will not be allowed on main access roads.

11.2.2.7 Parking Provision

Car parking should be provided in accordance with the standards set out in section 11.9. Spaces may be provided on site or on street. Appropriately designed on-street car parking will be encouraged to facilitate increases in residential densities at appropriate locations. This parking may be provided as a shared parking area or bay which may be integrated into the overall development, or provided on-street where road widths are developed to adequate standards. In general, no more than 10-15 spaces will be provided in a shared parking cluster, in the interest of visual amenity. Within group parking areas, consideration will be given to the visibility of residents' cars (from their homes if possible), convenience and the need to soften the impact of group parking by landscaping.

In some older residential areas, small front gardens and original features such as railings are characteristic of the overall development scheme, and in such areas on site car parking in front gardens/patios may not be permitted. Proposals for off street parking need to be balanced against loss of amenity (visual and physical) and will be considered in light of traffic flows and car parking in the vicinity.

The cumulative effect of removal of front garden walls and railings can damage the appearance of suburban streets and roads.

Where permitted, drive-ins should:

- Not have outward opening gates;
- Have a vehicular entrance not wider than 3 metres;
- Have an area of hard standing (parking space of 2.5 m x 5 m);
- Retain the balance as garden;
- Have gates, walls and railings made good, and;
- Permeable paving should be used in the interests of sustainable drainage.

Where adjoining householders intend to construct drive-ins, a more efficient use of garden space can be achieved by the use of a shared vehicular entrance to serve both houses. Where proposals involve works to public footpaths, they must be carried out at the applicant's expense to the specification of the Council.

11.2.2.8 Names of Residential Developments

The names of residential developments and roads shall reflect local place names, particularly townlands or local names which reflect the landscape, its features, culture and/or history within which developments are located, including names of historical persons who have some association with the area. Meath County Council shall approve the names chosen prior to the launching of any advertising campaign for a development. Name plates should be fixed to walls and buildings where they can be clearly seen. In order to assist the public and postal authorities, all houses within housing estates or in comprehensive street developments shall be provided with numbers and/or names, which, where feasible, shall be visible from the adjoining roadway. Street nameplates should be erected on all estate roads at a location that is clearly visible to the motorist. Ideally, they should be placed at junctions to be of maximum assistance to the navigating motorist, cyclist or pedestrian.

11.2.3 Family Flat Extensions

The creation of a family flat, generically referred to as granny flats, to be occupied by a member of the occupant family, is generally acceptable, provided it is not a separate detached unit, and it is possible to provide direct access to the remainder of the house. There shall be no permanent sub division of the garden/private amenity space. The flat shall not be let, sold or otherwise transferred, other than as part of the overall property and shall revert to being part of the original house when no longer occupied by the family member. The design should ensure that the flat forms an integral part of the main dwelling unit capable of reintegration for single family use and, from public view, retains the appearance of a single dwelling unit.

11.2.4 Extensions

In assessing an application for a house extension, Meath County Council will have regard to the following:

1. High quality designs for extensions will be required that respect and integrate with the existing dwelling in terms of height, scale, materials used, finishes, window proportions etc.;
2. The quantity and quality of private open space that remains to serve the house;
3. Pitched roofs will be required except on some single storey rear extensions. Flat roof extensions visible from public areas will not normally be permitted;
4. Impact on amenities of adjacent residents, in terms of light and privacy. Care should be taken to ensure that the extension does not overshadow windows, yards or gardens or have windows in the flank walls which would reduce a neighbour's privacy;
5. Effect on front building line - extensions will not generally be allowed to break the existing front building line. A porch extension which does not significantly break the front building line will normally be permitted. In terrace and semi-detached situations, extensions which significantly protrude beyond the front building line and/

or along the full front of the house will not be permitted;

6. In the case of single storey extension to the side of a house, the extension should be set back at least 150mm from the front wall of the existing house to give a more satisfactory external appearance;
7. In some circumstances a gap of 1m should be retained between the extension and the neighbouring dwellings to prevent dwellings which were intended to be detached from becoming a terrace;
8. Dormer extensions should not obscure the main features of the existing roof, i.e. should not break the ridge or eaves lines of the roof. Box dormers should be avoided;
9. Front dormers should normally be set back at least three-tile courses from the eaves line and should be clad in a material matching the existing roof;
10. Proposed side extensions must retain side access to the rear of the property where possible;
11. Ability to provide adequate car parking within the curtilage of the dwelling house should be demonstrated, and;
12. On unsewered sites, where an extension increases the potential occupancy of a house, the adequacy of the sewage treatment and disposal facilities should be demonstrated by the applicant.

11.2.5 Home Based Economic Activity

Home based economic activity is defined as small scale commercial activity carried out by residents of a house, being subordinate to the use of the house as a single dwelling unit and including working from home. Meath County Council recognises that such working arrangements can benefit individuals, families and the local community in addition to contributing to more sustainable land-use patterns by reducing the need for commuting. There is no objection to minor changes of use to allow for this provided the use remains ancillary to the main residential use, the applicant continues to reside in the house and the use has no adverse impact on the amenities

of neighbouring dwellings.

In determining applications for developments involving working from home, Meath County Council will have regard to the following considerations:

- The nature and extent of the work;
- The effects on the amenities of adjoining occupiers, particularly in relation to hours of work, noise and general disturbance;
- Anticipated levels of traffic generated by the proposed development and the potential increased demand for parking;
- Arrangements for the storage of refuse and collection of waste.

There will be a presumption in favour of this type of use in residential areas. However, such use will not normally be permitted in apartments except in the case of own-door units accessed from street level.

11.2.6 Nursing Homes

In general, these facilities should be located close to a range of easily accessible facilities in towns and villages where the residents can more easily access local services.

In determining planning applications for change of use of a residential dwelling or other building to nursing/older persons care home, the following factors should be considered:

- Compliance with the standards as laid down in Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations 2009 and the Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (or any such other relevant standards and legislation that may be enacted);
- The affect on the amenities of adjoining properties;
- Adequacy of off street car parking;
- Suitable private open space;
- Proximity to local services and facilities, and;
- The size and scale of the facility proposed – the scale must be appropriate to the area.

Comprehensive landscaping plans must be prepared by a fully qualified landscape architect and shall be submitted at application stage.

11.3 Childcare Facilities

Meath County Council will require the provision of childcare facilities of an appropriate type and scale in suitable locations throughout the County. In particular, the development of childcare facilities at the following locations will normally be required:

- In areas of concentrated employment and business parks;
- In neighbourhood centres;
- In large retail developments and retail warehouse parks;
- In schools or major educational facilities;
- Adjacent to public transport nodes;
- In rural areas where it can be demonstrated that a need exists in the locality for such a facility subject to normal planning criteria including access, traffic generation and environmental considerations, and;
- Within new and existing residential developments. In this regard, Meath County Council will encourage the

provision of childcare facilities in tandem with proposals for new residential developments. Generally, one childcare facility with places for 20 children shall be provided for each 75 family dwellings. Meath County Council will encourage developers of new residential developments to consult with Meath County Childcare Committee on how best to meet the childcare needs of that area.

In general, the factors to be considered in determining a planning application for a childcare facility are as follows:

1. Compliance with the Child Care (Pre-School Services)(No. 2) Regulations 2006 and the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No2) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 (or any such other relevant standards and legislation that may be enacted);
2. The suitability of the site and building;



3. The size and nature of the facility proposed (i.e. sessional or full day care);
4. The effects on the amenities of neighbouring residents;
5. The availability of easy access to public transport and the availability of safe and convenient arrangements for dropping off and collecting of children and for staff car parking;
6. The adequacy of the local traffic circulation system and the prevailing local traffic conditions;
7. The adequacy of outdoor play areas, separated from car parking and service areas, and;
8. Ease of access for all.

Meath County Council will consider proposals for purpose built or converted childcare facilities within residential estates, where they are suitably located and are of a scale appropriate to the area. Applications for childcare facilities in a residential area will be assessed on the basis of their impact in terms of noise, loss of residential amenity, traffic generation and general disturbance. Large detached properties, at/near the entrance to housing estates, with off street parking, provide the most suitable properties for conversion. Alternative sites may be considered subject to proposals adhering to proper planning criteria.

11.4

Educational Facilities

Sites required for schools shall comply with the requirements of 'The Provision of Schools and the Planning System A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, the Department of Education and Science, and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government' (Department of Education and Science, and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local

Government', 2008). Technical guidance document TGD-027 (or any such updated document) on the identification and suitability assessment of sites for post primary schools shall be complied with in respect of post primary schools while technical guidance document TGD-025 (or any such updated document) shall be complied with in respect of primary schools.

11.5

Sports Facilities

Development proposals for sports involving the use of motor vehicles, aircraft or firearms will be facilitated where the following criteria are met:

- There will be no unacceptable disturbance to local residents;
- There will be no unacceptable disturbance to farm livestock and wildlife;
- There will be no conflict with the enjoyment of areas used for informal recreation, and;

- The ambient noise level in the area of the proposed development is already high and the noise likely to be produced by the new activity will not be dominant.

Save where the impact of noise or disturbance may involve a qualifying interest/conservation interest in a Natura 2000 site, the Council may in certain cases consider it appropriate to grant a temporary permission to allow the impact of noise levels and any potential disturbance or nuisance to be more fully assessed.

11.6 Integrated Rural Tourism Complexes

In assessing resort type development Meath County Council shall have regard to:

- The integrity and essential characteristics of the visual qualities of rural landscapes are acknowledged and protected. (Refer to Appendix 7 Landscape Character Assessment);
- The impact on Natura 2000 sites, NHAs and other ecological sites;
- The heritage qualities of demesnes and the integrity of heritage buildings and their settings are protected;
- The need for public access is acknowledged and incorporated into the proposal;
- The need to ensure that such proposals will not impinge on any right of way or walking route;
- Proper traffic management measures are put in place where major events are anticipated, and;
- Other environmental concerns in relation to waste management are properly provided for.

11.7 Retail Development

The provision of new retail development in Meath in accordance with the County Retail Strategy will contribute to achieving the aims of the core strategy and the economic strategy.

11.7.1 General

It is a requirement of Meath County Council that proposals for major retail centres such as shopping centres and retail outlets are accompanied by specific measures to address the following issues:

- The ability of the proposal to be adequately serviced in relation to car parking, public transport and pedestrian and cyclist access and facilities;
- The creation, and enclosure of, good pedestrian space at an appropriate scale;
- A good mix of uses to increase activity and passive security, particularly in the evening time;
- The provision, within the overall design of the centre, of public facilities such as childcare facilities, toilets, advice centres, public telephones, etc;
- The provision and design of street furniture including public art, telephones, seats, litter bins, etc., and;

- The provision of residential uses as an integral part of the centre, to increase the evening activity and security of the centre.

The design and layout of buildings, including materials, should discourage graffiti and other forms of vandalism. Service areas should be out of sight of surrounding residential and pedestrian areas. Tree planting and landscaping must form part of the overall design of the centre, plans for which must be prepared by a fully qualified landscape architect.

In addition, the use of roll-down or external type security screens will not normally be considered in retail development generally, in central areas. Where the provision of screens is considered imperative, the use of perforated external and back lit screens or translucent internal screens will be considered.

Applicants should ensure that:

- Infill development should reflect the architectural character of its surroundings in terms of height, massing, materials and design;
- In cases where car parking is permitted, an attractive layout will be required.

Shopping centres must conform to the highest urban design standards. The design must ensure that the proposed centre will be integrated with, and be complementary to, the streetscape where it will be located, or in accordance with detailed urban design framework.

It should be noted that Guidelines from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government detailing best practice in the area of retail development and urban design have been published.

11.8

Other Commercial Development

11.8.1 Industrial, Office, Warehousing and Business Park Development

Industrial, office, warehousing and business park development should generally be located in or adjacent to settlements where infrastructure has been provided, where the development can facilitate the integration of land use and transport, and in line with the principles of sustainable development. Proposed developments on greenfield sites will be required to satisfy minimum requirements for design regarding location, layout, finishes, access, tree planting and landscaping, boundary treatment, water supply, drainage, and effluent disposal. In addition, sufficient space shall be reserved within the curtilage of the site for parking of all employees' and visitors' cars and for the loading and unloading of vehicles. Adequate rear access to business premises shall be made. Adequately screened on-site storage shall be provided for raw materials, waste products and finished goods.

A high standard of design, finish, layout and landscaping will be required for industrial, office, warehousing and business park developments. Comprehensive landscaping plans must be prepared by a fully qualified landscape architect and shall be submitted at application stage. Green infrastructure should be identified at the initial stages of the planning process and guide the design of an appropriate site layout which is reflected in the landscape plan.

Where proposals for these types of developments would generate a large volume of HGV traffic, they shall not be located where

they would encourage movement of such traffic through residential areas. It is essential that each industrial/warehousing unit be provided with adequate space for loading and unloading goods, including fuels, in an area clear of the public road and preferably behind the building line.

In the case of development for two or more industrial/warehousing buildings, a uniform design for boundary fences, roof profiles and building lines is essential. Areas between the building and the road boundary may include car parking spaces, provided an acceptable landscaping scheme is incorporated.



Industrial, office, warehousing and business park developments should present a pleasant aspect helped by tree planting, the careful design of signage, screening of storage space and unobtrusive loading and parking space. A variety of unit size shall be provided to cater for the differing needs of potential occupants.

There are developing opportunities for enterprise in the areas of waste recycling and conservation. Meath County Council will require details of the nature of the proposed activities and of the means of controlling effluents, noise, light, solid waste and gaseous emissions from these activities together with ameliorative measures as part of a planning application.

Meath County Council will encourage over counter office development to be located in the town/village centres. The use of vacant or under utilised upper floors for office development will be encouraged by Meath County Council. Outside of the town/village centres, applications for office development will normally only be considered within the industrial and business park, on appropriately zoned lands. All new office developments outside of the town/village centres will be required to provide a minimum of 10% open space. Where offices are proposed on lands zoned for industry, such development will be required to provide a minimum of 10% open space.

In assessing an application for development, Meath County Council will weigh the development against its impact on the environment. Applications for industrial, office, warehousing and business park developments will be considered having regard to the following:

- **Zoning of area:** more favourable consideration will be given to development in their appropriate zones having regard to the zoning objectives;
- **Density:** In town centre locations, to encourage and facilitate the development of a compact business district, and to

achieve desirable massing and heights of buildings, a plot ratio and site coverage of 1.5 and 70% respectively will generally be the norm. Moreover, for a development to be acceptable, it must not be prejudicial to the amenities of adjoining properties and must show appropriate provision for access, parking, storage and space for off loading and air circulation. The indicative site coverage for industrial/commercial development on greenfield sites is 50% coverage unless the design characteristics of the scheme, proposed uses and mobility management/travel plan indicate support for a higher site coverage;

- **Design of buildings/structures on site:** Meath County Council will require a high standard of design for new industrial, office, warehousing and business park development. In existing industrial estates, new developments may be required to adhere to an overall architectural theme to ensure uniformity and co-ordination;
- **Height:** The height of buildings should be no more than necessary for the operation of the business and should take account of the land-uses, character and amenities of the area;
- **Use:** Nature and scale of operations. Full details of proposed use, including industrial processes involved, any toxic materials, chemicals or solvents used should be submitted to Meath County Council;
- **Hours of operation:** Particularly where the proposed development is located in proximity to residential areas;
- **Services:** Availability of adequate services to serve the development - water, sewerage, etc.;
- **Access:** Traffic generation, access and road safety. Generally one vehicular access point will be permitted to serve the development with a minimum carriageway width of 7.5 metres with a 2 metre wide

footpath to either side. Adequate turning areas must be provided within the curtilage of the site unless satisfactory alternative arrangements are agreed with Meath County Council;

- **Parking:** Functional parking provision (car parking for staff/visitors, loading/ unloading areas etc.) in accordance with Meath County Council's vehicle parking standards;
- **Storage:** All external storage including bin storage, oil tanks, etc. shall be visually screened from the public areas with adequate screening by fencing or walls of not less than 2 metres in height;
- **Fuel and waste storage:** Proposals for and location of safe storage on site and disposal of waste are required. Proposals should be in accordance with the waste management plan applicable to the Council's functional area. All overground oil, chemical storage tanks should be adequately bunded to protect against spillage;
- **Boundary treatment and landscaping:** Proposals should be accompanied by a survey of existing vegetation on the site and a suitable landscaping scheme using native species to screen the development from public areas. Existing trees and hedgerows of amenity should be retained where possible. Any security measures shall be in accordance with the overall design of a development;
- Lighting and noise impacts resulting from lighting and noise from sites should be minimised. A detailed study may be required prior to the commencement of development in sensitive locations (e.g. adjacent dwelling houses, nursing home etc.) to outline probable impacts and mitigation measures;
- The Council will require major new commercial developments above 10,000 sq.m. to incorporate works of public art into the overall scheme or to make a financial contribution to the Local Authority to provide the piece of public art in order to enhance the amenities of the local environment (see Policy SOC POL 53 in Chapter 5, Social Strategy);
- Infill development should reflect the architectural character of its surroundings in terms of height, massing, materials and design;
- In cases where surface car parking is permitted, an attractive layout incorporating landscaping and/or screening will be required;
- Bicycle parking provision will be required, where appropriate, to facilitate visitors and employees. Where bicycle parking is provided for employees, adequate ancillary facilities, to include showers and locker storage space, shall be provided;
- It is not intended to place undue restriction on individual innovative design possibilities and Meath County Council will endeavour to accommodate same, where appropriate;
- In the case of proposed developments (or groups of developments located in close proximity to one another) which would attract significant volumes of traffic, the preparation and submission of a mobility management plan may be required as part of the application. Appendix 17 gives guidance on the type and scale of developments that will require the submission of a mobility management plan and the required form and content of these documents, and;
- Applications for multi-unit industrial/office/ warehousing/business park schemes shall illustrate the phasing for the development. Phasing proposals shall ensure that open space and infrastructure to serve units in a given phase e.g. public lighting, footpaths, is completed to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, prior to the initiation of the succeeding phase.

11.9 Car Parking Standards

Land Use - Residential	Car Spaces
Dwellings	2 per conventional dwelling
Flats/ Apartments	1.25 per 1 & 2 bedroom unit 2 per 3 - 4 bedroom unit In all cases, 1 visitor space per 4 apartments
Hotel Accommodation (excluding bars, functions rooms, etc.)	1 per bedroom
B&B / Guesthouse	1 per bedroom
Motel Accommodation	1 per bedroom
Hostel Accommodation	1 per bedroom or 1 per 10 bed
Self-Catering Accommodation	1 per unit
Institutions	1 per employee
Land Use - Employment	
Manufacturing Industry	1 per 50 sq.m. gross floor area
Warehousing	1 per 100 sq. gross floor area
Offices	1 per 25 sq. gross floor area. Where the floor area exceeds 1,500 sq.m. gross floor area, 1 space per 50sq.m. gross floor area.
Land Use - Commercial	
Food Retail	1 per 20 sq.m. gross floor area. Where the floor area exceeds 1,000 sq.m. gross floor area, 1 space per 14 sq.m. gross floor area.
Non Food Retail	1 per 20 sq.m. gross floor area.
Retail Warehousing	1 per 20 sq.m. gross floor area
Cash and Carry	1 per 50 sq.m. gross floor area
Banks	1 per 20 sq.m. gross floor area
Restaurants	1 per 5 sq.m dining area
Bars, Lounges, Function Rooms incl. such spaces in hotels	1 per 4 sq.m. of public area
Night Club / Dance Hall	1 per 4 sq.m. of public area
Service Garages	To be determined by Meath County Council
Retail Outlets within Service Garages	1 per 10 sq. m of net floor area

Land Use - Health and Education Facilities	
Hospitals	1 per bed
Surgeries	2 per consulting room
Nursing Homes	1 per 3 beds and one space per employee
Schools	3 per classroom
Colleges/Third Level Institutions	To be determined by Meath County Council. Where gross floor area exceeds 2,500 sq.m., 1 space per 2 staff and 1 space per 15 students.
Land Use - Community Facilities	
Places of public worship	1 per 4 seats
Libraries	1 per 20 sq.m. gross floor area
Cultural Buildings	To be determined by Meath County Council
Crèches	1 per employee & dedicated set down area 1 per 5 children
Cinemas/Theatre	1 per 3 seats. Where gross floor area exceeds 1000 sq.m., 1 space per 5 seats.
Funeral Homes	1 per 5 sq. m. gross floor area
Community Centres / Halls	1 per 5 sq. m. gross floor area
Land Use - Sports Facilities	
Sport Clubs-including swimming pools tennis courts etc.	2 per court, 5 per 100 sq.m.
Golf / Pitch & Putt courses	3 per hole
Golf driving ranges	1 per 2m of base line/per trap whichever is less
Bowling Alleys	5 per lane
Stadia	1 per 3 seats. Above 1,500 seats, 1 space per 15 seats.

Notes

1. In the case of any specific uses not listed in the above table, Meath County Council will specify its requirements in relation to parking.
2. The above car parking standards shall be applied at the discretion of Meath County Council in the County's rural towns and villages having regard to the availability and adequacy of on street parking, existing or proposed off street parking to serve the development and the status of the town/ village within the settlement structure of Meath.
3. Non-residential car parking standards are set down as "maxima" standards.
4. Parking facilities for mobility impaired drivers and their vehicles shall be provided at the general rate of 2 per 100 spaces, such spaces shall be proximate to the entry points of the proposed buildings.

5. Adequate car parking bays should be provided within the confines of the public areas of residential areas to address public needs.

11.9.1 Loading and Unloading

In addition to the general car parking requirements, service parking spaces may be required for cars or other vehicles necessary in the operation of the business or a particular building, e.g. delivery and collection of goods. In all major developments of an industrial/commercial nature, developers will be required to provide loading and unloading facilities sufficient to meet the likely demand of such development. Off-street loading facilities shall be designed to conform to the following requirements:

- Each required space shall be not less than 3.7m in width, 6m in length and 4.3 m in height exclusive of driving and manoeuvring space and located entirely on the site being served;
- Loading spaces may be enclosed within a structure and must be enclosed if located within 15m of the curtilage of the residence where the use involves regular night operation;
- There shall be appropriate means of access to a street or road as well as adequate manoeuvring space;
- The maximum width of driveway openings at the street boundary shall be 6 metres and the minimum width shall be 3.6 metres.

Loading facilities shall be provided and maintained so long as the use exists which the facilities were designed to serve. They shall not be reduced in total extent after their provision and all reasonable precautions shall be taken by the owner or sponsor of particular uses to assure availability of required facilities for the delivery and pick-up vehicles that they are designed to serve.

However, Meath County Council may modify the requirements of loading and unloading



facilities in any specific case where it appears that it would be in the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to do so.

11.9.2 Cycle Parking

Secure cycle parking facilities shall be provided in new office, residential, retail and employment generating developments. Bicycle racks shall be provided in all cases where Meath County Council deems bicycle parking necessary. Such facilities should be within 25 metres of a destination for short-term parking, (shops) and 50 metres for long term parking (school, college, and office). The number of stands required will be a third of the number of car spaces required for the development, subject to a minimum of one stand.

All cycle facilities in multi-storey car parks shall be at ground floor level and segregated from vehicle traffic. Cyclists should also have designated entry and exit routes at the car park. Cycle parking facilities shall be conveniently located, secure, easy to use, adequately lit and well posted. Weather protected facilities should

be considered where appropriate. In addition, parking should be placed within a populated, well-supervised area, and monitored by CCTV where possible. All long-term (more than three hours) cycle racks shall be protected from the weather.

11.9.3 Taxi Services

Planning applications for commercial and other developments which use taxi services should demonstrate the necessary provision of suitable drop off and set down areas.

11.10 Petrol Service Stations

New petrol filling stations and refurbished existing stations will be required to have a high quality of overall design and architectural layout to ensure an attractive environment, which integrates with and complements or enhances its surroundings.

Proposals for petrol filling stations shall comply with the requirements of Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (National Roads Authority) as well as the Dangerous Substances (Retail and Private Petroleum Stores) Regulations 1979 to 2010 (or any such other relevant standards and legislation that may be enacted) and Smarter Travel. Proposals for petrol stations should consider the risk of any hydrocarbon contamination of Natura 2000 sites and groundwater. Particular attention should be paid to the relevant River Basin Management Plan.

Ancillary retail uses may be permitted but having regard to the impact of excessively scaled retail uses on established urban retailing areas and the considerations of public and traffic safety, it will be a requirement that any retailing component shall not exceed 100 sq.m. of retailing area.

In assessing individual planning applications for new or refurbishment to existing petrol service stations, the following standards shall apply, where appropriate.

11.10.1 Design & Layout

- A minimum frontage of 30 metres shall be provided inside a 60 km/h (40 mph) speed limit zone and this frontage must be kept clear of any structure (apart from boundary

fence) for a depth of not less than 4.5 metres from the roadside boundary of the site;

- Every new petrol filling station must be laid out in such a manner that vehicles are re-fuelled, and can wait to be re-fuelled, clear of the adjoining roadway. The means of access should be designed to give best visibility;
- The layout of new or redeveloped petrol filling stations shall permit safe access for delivery tankers (cab plus trailer) up to 15.25 metres in length, and an adequate off road area shall be provided for parking these vehicles safely without obstructing access to pumps while fuel is being delivered to petrol filling stations;
- The scale of buildings contained in a petrol filling station shall be related to the scale, character and form of adjoining structures to ensure an attractive development that integrates with and complements its surroundings;
- Car washing and vacuuming facilities are to be sited so as not to interfere with residential amenities or other adjoining sensitive land uses;
- Landscaping, including trees or shrub planting and suitable screening, shall be required to protect the amenities of the surrounding area and enhance the appearance of the development. A comprehensive landscaping scheme shall be prepared by a fully qualified landscape architect and submitted as part of the planning application. The use of native non-invasive species will be preferred in landscaping, and;
- The surface of the forecourt shall be

graded, surfaced with bitumen macadam or other suitable material and drained to the satisfaction of Meath County Council. A petrol interceptor trap shall be fitted to the surface water drainage system. Provision shall be made for the storage and removal of refuse and waste material.

11.10.2 Location

- Such facilities will generally be required to locate within the 60 km/h and 50 km/h speed limit areas and they shall not be permitted where the amenities of nearby properties will be affected and or obstruction of traffic flows would arise;
- Petrol service stations will not generally be permitted adjoining residential areas, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that no significant damage to residential amenities will occur by reason of factors such as noise, visual obtrusion, safety considerations or fumes and smells. Hours of operation will be limited in residential areas.

11.10.3 Advertisements

- Standard corporate designing will have to be modified as required by local circumstances;

- Signs should be limited in number and design and located so as to generally form part of the buildings or other structures on the site;
- The placing of signs of any description on footpaths, grass verges or any part of a public roadway will not be permitted. No advertisements or other structures whether temporary or permanent shall be placed on the forecourt which would interfere with the sight lines of motorists entering / egressing the site, and;
- A proliferation of illuminated and non-illuminated signs, flags and bunting will not be permitted as this leads to clutter and detracts from the visual amenities of the area.

11.10.4 Lighting

Forecourt lighting including canopy lighting should be limited to that which is necessary for the safe operation of a petrol filling station. The use of high level and powerful lighting should be avoided where possible and should not interfere with the amenities of adjoining premises or cause glare, hazard or confusion to public road users. All external lighting shall be cowed and diverted away from the public roadway to prevent a traffic hazard.

11.11

Advertising

Meath County Council recognises the role of well located and sympathetically designed advertising, whether attached to a building or free standing, to contribute to the character and vitality of commercial areas, particularly at night. However, whether by design, scale, location, proliferation or ancillary issues such as manner of lighting, advertising has the capacity to seriously injure the visual qualities of an area and on occasion, pose a hazard to motorists through distraction. Meath County Council will seek the removal of such advertisements and permit only advertisements which are used sensitively and sympathetically and which enhance the appearance and vitality of an area.

It will be an objective of Meath County Council to limit advertising to commercial areas where it is already a feature and within such areas, the following considerations will arise:

- The size and scale of signs should not conflict with existing structures in the vicinity;
- Large scale commercial advertisement structures are not acceptable on or near buildings of architectural or historical importance, in parks, Architectural Conservation Areas and in areas of high amenity;

- Signs will not be permitted if they compete with road signs or otherwise endanger traffic safety.
- Free standing signs will generally be resisted, and;
- Signs should not interfere with windows or other façade features or project above the skyline.

Advertising structures are an accepted part of commercial shopping activity, and as such they can normally be allowed in commercial centres. Control shall be exercised to prevent an impression of clutter in any location. The number of signs attached to a building in such areas should be limited and no sign should be excessively obtrusive or out of scale with the building façade. The design should be simple and related to features of the building such as fenestration, cornices, string courses, etc. Ideally, the sign should be an integral part of the elevational design of the building. As with shop-front design, Meath County Council will require commercial interests, especially chain outlets, to restrain the use of their corporate image advertising where these are considered to be too dominant.

In general, the following criteria shall be used in assessing applications for signage:

1. Signs will only be considered where an advertising “need” can be demonstrated. In this context the term “need” relates to the requirements of the travelling public and not the desire of the applicant to advertise as widely as possible. Each such need will be assessed on its merits. In relation to public institutions, Meath County Council will determine the necessity for directional signs;
2. Fingerpost signage is the preferred type of advertisement structure. Other types of advertisement structures will be discouraged unless a “need” can be demonstrated;
3. Applications for advertisement structures will be refused where they give rise

to a potential traffic hazard. In general, advertisement structures will not be permitted at roundabouts, at traffic signalised junctions, at locations where they obstruct sight lines, compete with other traffic signs, give rise to confusion for road users or endanger traffic safety;

4. Applications for advertisement structures along national routes and along approach roads to towns and villages will generally not be permitted except for tourist attractions of national or regional importance. All such signage will require the written consent of the National Roads Authority, where appropriate;
5. The number of advertisement structures for any one premises shall be kept to a minimum and will generally be restricted to a maximum of two in the local area. In exceptional cases this maximum may be exceeded at the discretion of Meath County Council;
6. The number of advertisement structures that will be permitted on any one pole will be strictly limited by Meath County Council. In the event of multiple applications for advertisement structures at any particular location, priority will be given to approved applicants on a first come first served basis;
7. Applications for advertisement structures shall comply with the requirements of the “Traffic Signs Manual” published by Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the “Policy on the Provision of Tourist and Leisure Signage on National Roads” published by the National Roads Authority (or any such other relevant standards and legislation that may be enacted). All lettering, logos and symbols are subject to the approval of Meath County Council. In general, the use of the standard brown background and white lettering will be preferred, and;

8. The use of electronic variable messaging signs commonly known as “VMS signs”, shall be reserved strictly for use in roadwork activities, hazard information and or as part of an approved event traffic management plan. Advanced written consent of Meath County Council will be required prior to installation and usage of such signage.

11.11.1 Advertising Hoardings

Advertising hoardings, including tri-vision and three-dimensional signs, inappropriately located can constitute one of the most obtrusive elements of all forms of outdoor advertisement. They rely for their impact on size, scale and location and are thus usually detrimental to the character of the area in which they are situated and in some cases contribute to a traffic hazard. However, they can help to screen derelict or obsolete sites awaiting re-development, in certain circumstances.

The practice of parking trailers or other mobile objects bearing advertisements in fields adjoining roads has become a feature of Irish roads over the past number of years. Such advertisements can be harmful to the visual amenities of the area, represent a traffic hazard by virtue of distracting motorists and could have impacts on biodiversity. Where such advertisements do not have the benefit of planning permission, Meath County Council shall take appropriate enforcement action. The potential negative impacts of such development shall also be taken into account in assessing applications for such development.

- Outdoor advertising hoardings shall not be permitted where it would detract from the visual quality of the setting of protected structures;
- In all other cases, regard to the visual impact of a proposed advertising hoarding and potential of traffic hazard arising from same will be imperative;
- The scale of display panels must be related to the scale of the buildings and streets in which they are located;

- Where illuminated hoardings are proposed, their effect on the streetscape during the hours of darkness and on the amenities of the area will be considered;
- Display panels may form part of the visual screening around building sites or sites awaiting re-development. In such cases, temporary permissions will be considered where appropriately sized panels form an integral part of an overall boundary treatment and do not comprise more than half of the total surface area of such treatment;
- As a general rule, planning permissions for outdoor advertising will be limited to a maximum of three years in the first instance, to enable the position to be reviewed by Meath County Council in light of changing circumstances at the end of that period, and;
- The number and scale of hoardings in the vicinity of the site will be a material consideration.

11.11.2 Fingerpost Signage

The erection of fingerpost signs may require a licence or planning permission from Meath County Council and should comply with the following:

- Directional signs for major tourist attractions and community purposes will be considered but product advertising will not be permitted;
- Signs must have a standard size and colour, and;
- Signs which interfere with the Local Authority's directional signs or which contribute to visual clutter will not be permitted.

11.11.3 Bus Shelters as Advertising Shelters

In considering applications for bus shelters, Meath County Council will have regard to the particular circumstances of each case, such as location, scale and type of advertising proposed and the effect on the amenities of the area and

the streetscape. Care must be taken with the location of shelters and attached advertising panels so that the public footpath, road traffic signs, pedestrian and wheelchair access and vehicular entrances are not obstructed.

As priority is intended to be given to public transport, the desirability of adequate provision of bus shelters is not in question. However, poorly designed shelters, with excessive amount of advertising can have a very unfavourable visual impact. Care must be taken with the location of shelters so that the public footpath, pedestrian and vehicular entrances are not obstructed.

11.11.4 Illuminated Signage

Illuminated signs in appropriate locations can provide both information and colour in the townscape after dark. The following guidelines will apply:

- The type of illuminated signs, internally or externally illuminated individual letter/neon tubes, should be determined by consideration of the design of the building and its location;
- The design of an illuminated sign should

be sympathetic to the building on which it is to be displayed. It should not obscure architectural features such as cornices and window openings in the area. On new buildings, they should be part of the integral design;

- The daytime appearance when unlit will be considered;
- Sky lines i.e. signs, which project in any part above the level of a building parapet or obtrude on the skylines, are regarded as objectionable in principle and will not be permitted;
- Neon tubular strip lighting is generally not acceptable, and
- The number of illuminated signs in the area.

If external illumination is proposed, documentation shall be provided that clearly shows that the blight or glare from such illumination will not adversely affect pedestrian and vehicular traffic or adjacent properties. The design of external lighting shall minimise the incidence of light spillage or pollution into the surrounding environment. Where illuminated signs are considered acceptable, the preference will be for those that are powered by solar energy.

11.12

Telecommunications

An efficient telecommunications system is important in the development of the economy. However, in considering location requirements, Meath County Council will take the following factors outlined in the 'Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 1996) into account.

Proposals for standalone telecommunication installations should demonstrate that the developer has made reasonable efforts to share with other existing users or proposed sites in the vicinity of the proposed mast. Standalone telecommunication installations will not

generally be favoured in residential areas, on land where development may be restricted or prevented for amenity reasons or in parts of the town centre which are architecturally important.

Telecommunications antennae should be located so as to minimise any negative visual intrusion on the surrounding area, especially on landscapes or streetscapes of a sensitive nature. The preferred location for telecommunication antennae is in industrial estates or areas zoned for industrial use or in areas already developed for utilities.

If the proposal is contrary to the above, Meath County Council will need to be satisfied that

the installation is of strategic importance if permission is to be granted.

In rural areas, where possible, masts should be placed in forestry plantations provided that the antennae are clear of obstruction. The developer will be required to retain a cordon of trees around the site, which will not be felled during the lifetime of the mast without the written agreement of the owner. In un-forested areas, softening of the visual impact should be achieved through judicious design, and through the planting of native shrubs, trees, etc., as a screen and backdrop. Where masts are located in areas of high amenity or landscapes of exceptional or high value, international or national importance and high sensitivity as indicated in the Landscape Character Assessment (Chapter 9 and Appendix 7), there shall be a presumption for a need to provide a 'Landscape Impact Report' to allow proper assessment of the visual impact of the structure on the area. Consideration of surrogate trees (coniferous) shall be considered in such circumstances.

The use of tall buildings or other existing structures is always preferable to the construction of an independent antennae support structure. Support structures should be kept to the minimum height consistent with effective operation and should be monopole (or poles) rather than latticed or square structure, unless such structures have a clear and / or simple design or alternatively where it is judged by Meath County Council to incorporate high sculptural design quality. Sharing of installations (antennae support structures) will be encouraged where it is deemed to lead to a reduction in the visual impact on the landscape or townscape.

To facilitate the evaluation of development proposals for the erection of antennae and support structures, applicants/developers/operators will be required:

- a) To demonstrate compliance with *Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning*

Authorities issued by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in July 1996 and/or to any subsequent amendments, Code of Practice on Sharing of Radio Sites issued by the Commission for Communications Regulations and to such other publications as may be relevant in the circumstances;

- b) To submit a reasoned justification as to the need for the particular development at the proposed location in the context of the operators overall plans to develop a network in County Meath;
- c) To indicate what other sites or locations in the County were considered and include a map showing the location of all existing telecommunications structures (whether operated by the applicant or a competing company) within a 1km radius of the proposed site;
- d) To submit evidence of consultations, if any, with other operators with regard to the sharing of sites and/or support structures;
- e) To submit proposals to mitigate the visual impact of the proposed development including the construction of access



- roads, additional poles and structures, and adequate screening and/or landscaping, and;
- f) To furnish a statement of compliance with the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA) Guidelines (Health Physics, Vol. 54, No. 1(Jan) 1988) or

the equivalent European Prestandard 50166-2 which has been conditioned by the licensing arrangements with the Department of Transport, Energy and Communications and to furnish evidence that an installation of the type applied for complies with the above Guidelines.

11.13

Agriculture

11.13.1 Agricultural Buildings & Structures

The design, scale, siting and layout of agricultural buildings should respect, and where possible, enhance the rural environment.

In visually sensitive areas, the Council will seek to group together and site buildings in an appropriate manner, and require the use of harmonious external materials to minimise obtrusion on the landscape. The use of dark coloured cladding, notably dark browns, greys, greens and reds are most suitable for farm buildings, and roof areas should be darker than walls.

Developments shall comply with the Good Agricultural Practices Regulations.

11.13.2 Piggery Developments

New piggery developments exceeding 3,000 pig units (1 sow litter = 10.p.u, 1 pig = 1 p.u.) shall preferably be sited a minimum distance of 5 km from existing population centres exceeding 200 persons. The following shall be taken into consideration:

1. Where considered necessary by Meath County Council, a treatment plant shall be provided for piggery developments;
2. The developer shall demonstrate the availability of sufficient land for land spreading;
3. Management controls for slurry spreading shall have regard to:
 - Spreading rates based on assessment of

lands concerned;

- Storage tank capacities with at least 6 months winter storage;
 - Time of spread;
 - Distance from water-courses, with a minimum distance of 30 m in all cases,
 - Distance from houses and public buildings, with a minimum distance of 100m except with the consent of the owner.
4. Band spreading or soil injection of all slurries shall be a prerequisite for all piggery developments. Slurry spreading by splash plates shall not be permitted. The use of odour masking agents when slurry spreading shall be required in appropriate developments;
 5. Where other than the public water supply is being utilised as the source of water supply, the applicant shall satisfy Meath County Council as to adequacy of source;
 6. Proposed developments should be located a sufficient distance away from sources of drinking water. Applicants shall be required to demonstrate compliance with standards and regulations in this regard which are applicable at the time of assessment of the application, and;
 7. Proposals should pay particular attention to the potential for likely significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites.

11.13.3 Pollution Control

The Council will require that agricultural developments comply with all relevant regulations in relation to farmyard pollution and waste.

The Council will exercise its powers under the Planning Acts and the Water Pollution Act to ensure that agricultural development will not cause pollution to watercourses taking into account the requirements of the relevant River Basin Management Plans. All new and existing agricultural developments will be required to ensure that all effluent, including yard run-off, is collected and stored within the confines of the development.

When assessing the adequacy of effluent handling facilities the following will be considered to be soiled waste:

1. Slurry;
2. Soiled water run-off;
3. Milk washings;
4. Silage effluent, and;
5. Dungstead

11.14 Extractive Industry and Building Materials

The Council recognises the importance of the extractive industry in the economic life of the County, and importance as a valuable source of employment in parts of the County. Extractive developments should not adversely affect the environmental, tourism, local communities, residential qualities and/or any adjoining existing land uses in the area, Natura 2000 sites or any protected species or habitat. In addition, the Council will seek to protect areas of geological or geomorphological interest, groundwater and important aquifers, important archaeological features and Natural Heritage Areas from inappropriate development.

Control will be exercised over the types of development taking place in areas containing proven or potential extractive deposits in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development. In such areas, only development compatible with mining or quarrying activities will be permitted in areas being or likely to be used for these purposes. In appropriate circumstances the Council shall seek the safeguarding of deposits of minerals from permanent development that would prevent or hinder their subsequent extraction.

Transportation of minerals on public roads must be done in such a manner as not to cause nuisance to other road users. Such extractive operations should have good access to the National and/or Regional road network. A contribution towards the improvement of public roads serving a proposed and/or existing

extractive development which are considered to be inadequate in width, alignment or structure to carry the size and weight of loads proposed as are necessary to safely accommodate such traffic, will be required by the Council as a condition of any permission granted. Where improvements cannot be achieved the proposal will be refused.

Worked-out pits should be rehabilitated to suitable land uses and screened appropriately as part of an aftercare programme. To this end, bonds, in phase restoration/rehabilitation and landscaping plans will be required and where appropriate, provision for sinking funds under the control of Meath County Council will be required by the Council as a condition of any permission granted to ensure satisfactory reinstatement on completion of extraction.

Extractive industry proposals should pay particular attention to the potential for likely significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites due to groundwater drawdown or contamination of surface water. Policies are set down in section 10.12 of Chapter 10 of this Development Plan.

It shall be required as a minimum that development proposals are framed to address in an authoritative manner issues such as:

- Impact on groundwater, surface water and important aquifers and compliance with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (Refer to chapter 7 for further

information on Water Framework Directive);

- Impact on Natura 2000 sites, NHAs and sites of ecological importance;
- Transportation impacts¹;
- Impact on existing local communities with regard to but not limited to:
 - Noise, vibration and subsidence;
 - Effective control of gaseous emissions and dust;
- Rehabilitation and landscaping which must be in phase with extraction (suitable proposals in this regard must accompany all planning applications);
- Impact on the quality of the landscape, particularly sensitive landscapes and protected views (Refer to Map no. 9.5.1);
- Impact on archaeological and architectural heritage. Reference should be made to the contents of the 'Archaeological Code of Practice (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and Irish Concrete Federation, 2009);
- The extent of the land ownership, nature

of the deposits and details of any ancillary processes (such as crushing, concrete manufacture etc);

- Protection of identified geological or geomorphological heritage features;
- Provision of adequate securities, and;
- Assessment of impact on existing rights of way and traditional walking routes.

Supporting studies and analysis should be prepared by appropriately qualified personnel.

11.14.1 Duration

The duration of permission granted will be dependent of the programme of extraction proposed by the applicant and the potential impacts of the proposed quarry.

11.14.2 Rehabilitation

All extractive sites shall be subject to rehabilitation and landscaping programmes in phase with the extraction.

11.15

Renewable Energy Development

11.15.1 All Renewable Energy Developments

In the assessment of individual proposals, Meath County Council will take the following into account:

- the proper planning and sustainable development of the area;
- the environmental and social impacts of the proposed development, including residential amenity and human health;
- impact of the development on the landscape;
- impact on public rights of way and walking routes;
- connection to the National Grid (where applicable);

- mitigation features, where impacts are inevitable, and;
- protected or designated areas - NHAs, SPAs and SACs, areas of archaeological potential and scenic importance, proximity to structures that are listed for protection, national monuments, etc.

The Council encourages and will facilitate early pre-planning discussion with providers of energy infrastructure and to support local community participation within this process.

11.15.2 Wind Energy

In considering the siting of wind energy projects, Meath County Council will assess the development siting based on locations

¹ Where deemed appropriate a special contribution will be attached to a grant of permission in accordance with section 48 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011.

identified in the Landscape Character Assessment of the County (Appendix 7), compliance with the DoEHLG Wind Energy Development Guidelines and the relevant development management standards. Regard will also be had to best practice and guidelines published in this area.

The visual impact of wind turbines is among the most important considerations to be taken into account. Wind farms are tall and their prominence is emphasised by the movement of the rotors. Given the nature of wind farms, there are areas that can be identified as unsuitable for wind development, on the basis that they conflict with existing land uses and planning policies, and are therefore excluded from consideration. The location of wind farm development must also have regard to the Landscape Character Areas of the County (Chapter 9 & Appendix 7).

The aim of this Development Plan is to promote a policy of preferential avoidance of siting wind energy projects in Natura 2000 sites, or sites that are on the flight lines of wintering birds unless it can be proven that there are no risks to the integrity of the sites (by carrying out an appropriate assessment).

Any proposals for the development of wind power will need to be supported by both a technical and an environmental statement prepared to an acceptable standard. In this regard applicants applying for wind energy development are advised to consult with Meath County Council before detailed proposals are drawn up. Consultations should also be held with the appropriate bodies, such as Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, The Irish Energy Centre and the energy providers. In addition, potential applicants are advised to consult with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Forest, Service, Irish Aviation Authority and other appropriate statutory and non-statutory bodies in areas which may require special protection.

It is important that certain design guidelines are adhered to:

- Topographical enclosures and extensive areas of degraded or previously developed lands should be identified for wind farm development to help minimise visual impacts and to harmonise wind turbines with the landscape. Where elevated sites are required, the location to site the turbines should be selected to minimise the zone of visual influence by avoiding summits and ridgelines and by using side slope locations only;
- The layout and design of the wind farm should directly relate to the key landscape characteristics, for example using a regular grid on regular surfaces such as cutaway bogs and more irregular lines on flowing topography such as foothills;
- The turbines and the landscape need to form a coherent unit and avoid visual confusion; all turbines should be of the same size and proportions, same colour and number of blades and same rotational speed. The spacing of the turbines should be regular so as to give a consistent and repetitive image;
- The use of a small amount of larger diameter turbines is recommended rather than a larger number of smaller turbines;
- In general, matt finishes and neutral colours for turbines and structures are encouraged to minimise their conspicuous nature;
- Meath County Council will support appropriate innovative design for wind farms, and;
- Measures should be taken to ensure a good acoustical design of turbines, to guarantee that there are no significant increases in ambient noise level in the nearby surroundings, which could affect private properties and wildlife, as well as the tranquillity of the landscape.

Where new access roads are required measures should be taken to ensure minimum disturbance of the proposed site. Cables connecting the wind farm to the national grid should be located underground, where feasible. Proposals for the restoration of the site after removal of the turbines should be included

with a planning application. Adequate financial security will be required by planning condition to ensure site restoration and removal of the wind farm where appropriate.

11.15.3 Hydro Energy

An application for the installation of a hydro electric plant shall require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) where it exceeds the thresholds specified in Schedule 5, Part 3(h) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001. The Council shall require that proposals for hydro energy installations have regard to the following:

- The free passage of fish and other water based amenity activities;
- Any hydro-energy proposal within the Boyne catchment should be accompanied by an appropriate assessment that addresses the potential impacts on bankside habitat loss, passage of salmon and lamprey and the impacts on otters, and;
- Any proposal for tidal or wave-energy should be accompanied by an appropriate assessment that addresses the potential impacts on wintering birds, coastal habitats and their supporting ecosystems.

The Council shall have regard to the recommendations of the Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI), the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage

and the Gaeltacht in assessing development proposals.

11.15.4 Energy Networks

As outlined in Chapter 8, it is a policy of the Council in principle to facilitate the provision of energy networks and network extensions. In the assessment of proposed energy network extensions, the following issues will be taken into account by Meath County Council:

- The development is required in order to facilitate the provision or retention of significant economic or social infrastructure;
- The route proposed has been identified with due consideration for social, environmental and cultural impacts;
- The design is such that will achieve least environmental impact consistent with not incurring excessive cost;
- Where impacts are inevitable, mitigation features have been included;
- Where it can be shown the proposed development is consistent with international best practice with regard to materials and technologies, that will ensure a safe, secure, reliable, economic and efficient and high quality network and;
- Natura 2000 sites, proposed NHAs, areas of archaeological potential, landscapes of exceptional or high value, international or national importance and high sensitivity, proximity to structures that are listed for preservation, national monuments etc.

11.16

Public Lighting

It is essential that all public lighting schemes comply with the current CEN (European Committee for Standardisation) and BS (British Standards) Code of Practices.

Meath County Council requires the installation of energy efficient public lighting schemes, using the best available technologies. Measures

which shall be required to achieve this include the use of lanterns with modern optics which minimise light pollution, optimise scheme layouts, only accept the use of modern energy efficient lamps and control gear which comply with best practice and take account of the 'Campaign for Dark Skies' issues where appropriate. Therefore, all public and

decorative lighting schemes shall incorporate the requirements of the document "Guidance notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution" issued by the Institution of Lighting Engineers and available as a download from its website www.theilp.org.uk

All street lighting designs shall meet the requirements of the current CEN code of practice EN 13201: 2003 and BS5489: 2003. Furthermore, ESB Networks (DSO) requirements for supply shall be undertaken with reference to conditions being established by the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) in Ireland.

The lighting designs for all new schemes and modifications to existing developments must include provision for up-grading street lighting at existing junctions, entrances and access roads in addition to any lighting requirements for the proposed development.

Where appropriate, low brightness energy efficient lighting schemes shall be considered with a view to enhancing the nighttime scene and improved security.

The installation of lighting schemes in Residential Areas shall comply with the Code of Practice for Public Lighting ET211: 2003, the National Rules for Electrical Installations (ET 101: 2008) current at time of issue (or as otherwise updated). The provision of a Customer Service Pillar(s) in accordance with the requirements of ESB Networks National Code of Practice for Customer Interface (current edition) is a prerequisite.



All public lighting installation shall be in accordance with Meath County Council's policy document "*Public Lighting Design Requirements Guidance Manual*" latest edition. All queries pertaining to the design and alteration of public lighting installations in County Meath are required to be directed to the Public Lighting Section of Meath County Council.

Public lighting proposals within 100m of the River Boyne should consider the potential for likely significant effects on sensitive species.

11.17

Development in Proximity to Approach Zones/Noise Zones of Airports and Airfields

Developments shall be restricted (and where appropriate, prohibited) in public safety zones and approach zones of airports and airfields, and in noise zones associated with airport flight operations as illustrated on map no. 11.1.

In the assessment of such applications regard shall be had to the relevant policy documents and consultation shall take place with the relevant authorities.

11.18

Archaeology

In considering developments which might impact on archaeology, Meath County Council will:

- Seek archaeological impact assessments as part of the planning submission when a proposed development could affect a Recorded Monument, a Zone of Archaeological Potential, or as yet unidentified elements of archaeological heritage, and;
- Require that a licensed archaeologist carries out all necessary archaeological works when permission is granted for development that requires mitigation of impacts on the archaeological heritage.

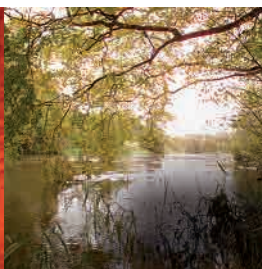
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- 12.1 Introduction
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Implementation and Monitoring

12

Implementation and Monitoring

12



Implementation and Monitoring

12.1

Introduction

Under the Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011, Meath County Council has a statutory obligation to secure the implementation of the objectives of the County Development Plan. Meath County Council is fully committed to the implementing this Development Plan. The Council will actively undertake a leadership role to progress and secure the Development Plan policies and objectives to achieve the sustainable development of communities, the economic repositioning of the County and the promotion of the County's unique cultural and natural heritage.

In providing this leadership role, the Council will foster a collaborative approach with citizens, stakeholders, sectoral interests, and adjoining authorities to achieve collective support and successful implementation of the Plan.

The successful implementation of a significant number of the policies and objectives of the

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

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

12.2

Local Area Plans

An important driver of the Development Plan strategy is to bring policies to a more detailed local level through Local Area Plans. The strategic and broad-ranging policies of the County Development Plan provide a general framework, but not necessarily the detailed

treatment required for significant proposals in certain areas. Local Area Plans have proven successful in the detailed implementation of the County Development Plan policies and objectives.

12.3

Phasing

It is an objective of Meath County Council to promote the implementation of the Development Plan in a rational and sequential

approach that is in keeping with the proposed development strategy. It is also an objective of the Council to ensure that essential facilities

(such as road infrastructure, water, sewerage etc.) are secured and provided in tandem with proposed developments. This is qualified by the

Core Strategy and the requirement to amend the Local Area Plans to ensure compliance with same.

12.4

Sources of Funding

12.4.1 Public Private Partnerships

A Public Private Partnership (PPP) involves a partnership agreement between the public and private sector for the delivery of specific projects relating to public services and infrastructure.

Such an approach can ensure a commitment to funding due to interlinked public and private assistance, and aims to ensure the most economically efficient manner of development. Education, local services, health, housing, public transport, roads, solid waste, water/waste water and other public services can benefit from the approach of a PPP. Other partnership approaches will be pursued with other state and public organisations.

12.4.2 Additional Funding Sources

It is considered reasonable that contributions be paid towards Local Authority investment in the provision of infrastructure and services by developers who benefit from such provision. Additional national and EU level programmes include Urban Renewal Schemes, the RAPID programme, the NeighbourWood Scheme, National Lottery Facility Funding, as well as other funding mechanisms available from the various Government Departments and other agencies. Such bodies have varying criteria

regarding the type of developments they fund and may be useful to consider in the achievement of development objectives.

12.4.3 Development Contributions

Meath County Council may, when granting planning permission, attach conditions requiring the payment of contribution(s) in respect of public infrastructure and facilities, benefiting the development. Details of such contributions must be set out in a Development Contribution Scheme. Meath Local Authorities Development Contributions Scheme 2010-2015 was adopted in 2009 and is available to view on Meath County Council's website www.meath.ie

12.4.4 Bonds

To ensure the satisfactory completion of development on a site which has been the subject of a grant of planning permission, a bond or cash lodgement may be required until the development has been completed to the satisfaction of the Council. The bond or cash lodgement may be sequestered in part or in its entirety where the development has not been satisfactorily completed. Meath County Council will determine the amount of such bond or cash lodgement.

12.5

Monitoring & Review

The Planning and Transportation Department of Meath County Council is the main section responsible for monitoring and implementing the Development Plan, mainly through the development management function. However, it is important to note that this Plan co-ordinates the work and objectives of other key

departments within the local authority, such as Economic Development, Water Services, Environment, Housing and Community. In some cases, the body responsible for the implementation of certain plan objectives may be external, such as the National Roads Authority, the National Transport Authority etc.

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

The Planning & Development Acts 2000–2011 provides under:

Section 15 (1) that it shall be the duty of a Planning Authority to take such steps

within its powers as may be necessary for securing the objectives of the Development Plan, and;

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

OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of Meath County Council:

IMP & MON OBJ 1:	To endeavour to prepare an annual monitoring and evaluation report on the progress achieved in securing the objectives of the Plan to be given to the Elected Members, subject to the availability of the necessary resources.
IMP & MON OBJ 2:	To prepare a preliminary monitoring evaluation report on the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the County Development Plan within two years of the making of the Plan (as per section 15) of the Environmental Report. (This could coincide with 2 nd annual review of the Development Plan on the progress achieved in securing the Development Plan objectives as per IMP & MON OBJ 1).
IMP & MON OBJ 3:	To undertake monitoring as set out in Chapter 8 of the Environmental Report.