

# Healthy Meath Plan 2019–2021



Healthy  
**Meath**



comhairle chontae na mí  
*meath county council*





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# Foreword

**John Higgins Chairperson of Meath Local Community Development Committee**

**Fiona Fallon Chief Officer of Meath Local Community Development Committee**

The Healthy Meath Strategy aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of County Meath over the coming years. This plan emerges from considerable work over a short period of time involving consultation and discussion with relevant stakeholders with the aim of having a healthy Meath Moving More.

Healthy Ireland is a government-led initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Ireland. The planned Healthy Meath Strategy and the Meath LECP will ensure a better Meath for local people to live and work in. The promotion of 'health and wellbeing' in Ireland has increased over the last number of years. It is borne out of recognition that as our society develops and people are living longer, health is everyone's business. This plan aims to build on, at a local level, the goals of the Healthy Ireland strategy with a particular focus on increasing the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life and help create an environment in County Meath where every individual and sector can play their part in achieving a healthier society.

In a modern society the many risks to the health and wellbeing of people living in our county are obvious and include obesity, smoking, mental health, alcohol and drugs. The Healthy Meath Strategy aims at preventative healthy living by promoting greater awareness and information to the citizens of Meath on how to improve their health and wellbeing and motivate them on smarter lifestyle choices.

Meeting the objectives set out in this strategy will require working together and the implementation team will seek to enable the Healthy Meath Strategy to have the greatest impact possible on the quality of the lives of the citizens of our county.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge and commend all those involved in the work that has gone into the development of this strategy and we look forward to working together on the implementation of our Healthy Meath Strategy.

**Mary Murphy, Co-ordinator of Meath Local Sports Partnership**

The Healthy Meath Strategy sets out a process of translating agreed actions into local implementation plans. The success of this strategy will be realised through the continued support of key agencies (both Nationally & Locally) and commitment & contribution from local partners including the general public.

The Healthy Meath Strategy seeks to embrace and recognise national policies and plans and their need to be integrated and implemented at local level, in particular in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). We are focused on operating within existing structures by exploring how resources can be aligned and used with maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

Meath Local Sports Partnership are looking to the future with confidence in fulfilling our role in promoting and maintaining the health and wellbeing of our communities and creating the conditions for all sectors of society to get involved in making Meath a healthier place to live and work.

## Human Rights and Equality Statement

This statement reflects our commitment to address equality and human rights concerns for all in fulfilling our mandate, in particular our responsibilities with regard to the Healthy Meath Plan.

It responds to our obligations under the Irish Human Rights Equality and Commission Act 2014 (S.42) to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect human rights. It will inform the development, implementation and evaluation of this plan in a manner that reflects available resources and that is measurable and framed within the time span of the plan.

Our commitment to equality and human rights is guided by the following set of values which underpin our operations and services. These values shape our ambition to promote equality, combat discrimination and protect human rights.

Our core values are:

- Strong customer, citizen and community focus
- High standards of conduct, probity and impartiality
- Accountable, accessible and responsive
- Innovative and inclusive
- Integrity and respect for all

We are committed to ensuring that there is a culture of respect for human rights and equality among our staff and for the people to whom we provide services.

## Report Overview

Our health is affected significantly by the environment into which we are born and in which we grow and age. It is about the houses we live in, the food we eat, the education we receive, the jobs we can access, the income we earn, the communities we live in, the natural environment around us, the facilities available to us, the services we can avail of and the way we view ourselves. Improvements in health and wellbeing are not just about changes in health services. It is also about changes we can make as individuals, as communities, as businesses, as service providers and as policy makers.

The *'Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013–2025'* (Healthy Ireland) is the government's plan to improve the health and wellbeing of the nation. The *'Healthy Meath Plan'* is an initiative by Meath County Council, through the Local Community Development Committee and Meath Local Sports Partnership, to breathe life into this national policy at a local level in the county. It was developed using a range of different methods:

- The views of local people were sought through online surveys, focus groups and meetings (see appendix for details) and those views helped frame the 'Healthy Meath' priorities for the next three years.
- Local plans and strategies of service providers were examined to see what health and wellbeing related actions are already taking place around the county, how they relate to the 'Healthy Meath' priorities and identify where value could be added.
- Socio-economic data were reviewed to build a profile of the county and the people living in it, paying particular attention to those areas and communities that often face additional challenges in pursuing a healthier lifestyle i.e. those experiencing health inequalities.

This Plan has a dual purpose. Firstly, to create the right environment by the influencing of local policy decisions and resources so that conditions are ripe for people to adopt a healthier lifestyle. Secondly, to inform, support and encourage people to take responsibility for their own health through making healthier choices. These are reflected through the five priorities in the 'Healthy Meath' plan which align with the objectives set out by the World Health Organisation in 'Health 2020: the European Policy for Health and Wellbeing'; and those set by the Irish government in 'Healthy Ireland'.

Fig. 1: WHO, Healthy Ireland and Healthy Meath Priorities



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## Healthy Meath Policy Background

### 1.1 Overview

A Healthy Ireland, where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility.

*Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing, 2013-2025*

The promotion of 'health and wellbeing' in Ireland has increased over the last number of years. It is borne out of a recognition as our society develops and people are living longer, that health is everyone's business. People's health is affected significantly by the environment in which they live – the housing, the education attained, the roads, the amenities, the planned spaces, the transport, the economy, the water, the services – and it is often the factors outside the direct influence of the health services that have the greatest impact on people's health (called the 'Social Determinants of Health' – see Fig. 2).

Where a person is born, how they grow, live, work and age can be very different within and between communities and can give rise to significant health inequalities within and between communities. But it is not just about the conditions into which people are born and live. Health inequalities are also created through policy decisions around resources, about how they are distributed, about how communities are planned and built and about where power rests, how it is used and who it is used for.

**Fig. 2:** Social Determinants of Health (*Dahlgren & Whitehead Model, 1992*)



## 1.2 National Policy Overview

The importance of fostering and creating healthy cities and communities features throughout national policy documents indicating the government’s commitment to a healthier country. They include (but are not limited to):

- The ‘**National Planning Framework: Project Ireland 2040**’ which provides the blueprint for future development across the country.
- The central government policy framework for health and wellbeing ‘**Healthy Ireland – A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013–2015**’.
- The ‘**Get Ireland Active – National Physical Activity Plan**’ which aims to increase physical activity levels across the entire population thereby improving everyone’s health and wellbeing.
- ‘**Get Ireland Walking – Strategy and Action Plan 2017–2020**’ providing a blueprint for the promotion of walking.
- ‘**A Healthy Weight for Ireland – Obesity Policy and Action Plan 2016–2025**’ which aims to address the growing public health issue of obesity and overweight.

- **Tobacco Free Ireland** sets a target for Ireland to be tobacco free (i.e. with a smoking prevalence rate of less than 5%) by 2025.
- The **‘National Sexual Health Strategy’** is Ireland’s first national framework for sexual health and wellbeing and addresses a wide spectrum of sexual health services.
- The strategy **‘Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery: A health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017–2025’** outlines the governments intent to address the harm caused by substance misuse in Ireland up to 2025.
- **‘A Vision for Change’** strategy which details how mental health service provision should be reformed.
- **‘Connecting for Life’** is the national strategy for the reduction of suicide, setting out a vision for a country where fewer lives are lost through suicide, and where communities and individuals are empowered to improve their mental health and wellbeing.
- The **National Positive Ageing Strategy** plans for an ‘age friendly’ country setting out what needs to be done to make Ireland a good place to grow old.
- The **National Men’s Health Action Plan 2017 – 2021** is about supporting healthy behaviour change in men while also creating policy and community environments to support their health.



### 1.3 Regional and Local Policy Overview

Regional and local government plans take their direction from the national policy and legislative framework and essentially provide the backdrop for all developments – economic, social, physical, cultural – in the county. The key ones within the county impacting on people’s health and wellbeing include:

- The **Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy** published by the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly which aims to create a sustainable and competitive region that supports the health and wellbeing of people and places, with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunities for all.
- The **Meath County Development Plan 2013–2019** setting out the overall land use strategy, policies and objectives for the planning and sustainable development of the county.
- The **Meath Local Economic and Community Plan 2016–2021** looking to promote and support the economic, local, and community development of County Meath over the next six years.
- The **Meath Economic Development Strategy 2014–2022** setting out a range of measures aimed at accelerating the economic transformation, revitalisation and sustainable development of Meath.
- The **Meath Age Friendly Strategy 2017–2020** building on lessons learnt in the previous strategy and setting out new actions to be pursued over the three year period.
- The **Litter Management Plan 2015–2017** looking to make County Meath a litter free county with the support co-operation and involvement of the local authority, businesses, communities and individuals.
- The **Meath Heritage Plan 2015–2020** aiming to increase understanding of Meath’s heritage through awareness, education, training, promotion and management of the county’s heritage.
- The **Climate Action Plan (2018)** setting out practical actions that will help the county cope, adapt and address issues posed through climate change.

- The strategy produced by the **Meath Joint Policing Committee 2016–2020** emphasising the committee’s role in improving the safety and quality of life by the prevention of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.
- The **Meath Local Development Strategy** acting as a framework to channel rural development funding (LEADER funding and other streams) into the county.
- Meath Partnership implementing the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) which channels funding and supports to targeted disadvantaged groups and areas as specified in the **SICAP Plan for 2018–2022**.
- The **Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan** prepared by the HSE Community Health Organisation Area 8 is looking to bring about organisational change to focus on the improvement of health and wellbeing for the people living in the area and HSE staff.
- A local **Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2018–2020** was developed by the HSE as part of the Connecting for Life national strategy aimed at reducing the rates of suicide in the region.
- Meath Local Sports Partnership (LSP) strategic plan 2012–2017 “**More People, More Active, More Often**”, details how Meath LSP will promote, lead and co-ordinate opportunities which lead to increased participation in sport and physical activity by the people of Meath.
- The aim of the **Meath Children and Young People’s Plan (2018–2020)** is to ensure that all service providers in County Meath who deliver services to children and young people will work in a more co-ordinated and integrated way over the lifetime of the plan.
- **The County Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2015–2020** providing for a series of actions to conserve, enhance and raise awareness of Meath’s rich biodiversity and to maximise the contribution that it makes to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the county.

## 1.4 Summary

The range of policies that can impact on a person’s health and wellbeing are many and varied and only serves to highlight the point that health is everyone’s business. Taking positive steps to look after our own health and wellbeing is something that rests with each individual but creating the environment that nurtures and promotes these positive steps is something that rests with policy and decision makers. Commitments to health and wellbeing are threaded throughout national, regional and local policy statements (further details available in each individual strategy). These explicit commitments are important when looking to bring about healthier communities as decisions and resources, more often than not, follow these commitments.





## Profile of County Meath<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1 Overview<sup>2</sup>

County Meath is the second largest county in Leinster and while it has some large urban centres, it is still a relatively rural county with 41.4% of the population living in rural areas. It has an extensive road network and a rail infrastructure at the east of the county with stations at Dunboyne, the M3 Parkway; Enfield; Laytown and Gormanston (limited service). Bus Eireann, private bus operators and Local Link bus service 'Flexibus' run commuter, scheduled routes and expressway services within and between counties. Meath has two Gaeltacht areas and an exceptionally rich history with a unique cluster of nationally and internationally renowned historic sites leading it to be designated and marketed as the 'Heritage County'.

<sup>1</sup> The data mined for this section has been drawn from the following sources: the County Meath Economic and Community Monitor using 2016 Census data and hosted by Meath County Council <https://www.meath.ie/business/economic-development/meath-economic-and-community-monitor>; Children and Young People's Plan 2018-2020; Meath County Council – Housing Section; HSE - Mid Midlands, Louth & Meath Community Health Organisation Area.

<sup>2</sup> The detailed Socio-Economic Profile of County Meath is available to view in Appendix 2.

### 2.2 Population

The population of the county of Meath in 2016 was 195,044 an increase of 5.9% (or 10,909 persons) since the 2011 census. The highest population numbers are in towns within commuting distance of Dublin. The greatest population change has taken place in Clonee where the population has increased by +30.9% between 2011 and 2016 and in Longwood at +14.9%. The areas that show a population decrease in this period include Gormanston (-25%), Dunderry (-8.6%) and Drumconrath (-6.8%).

### 2.3 Age Profile and Age Dependency

Meath has the 6th youngest population of all local authorities in Ireland with 29.3% of the population aged under the age of 18.

**Table 1:** Age Profile of Meath Population 2016(%)

	0-4	5-12	13-17	18-24	25-44	45-64	65+
<b>Meath</b>	8.07	13.94	7.28	7.26	29.35	23.43	10.66
<b>State</b>	6.96	11.52	6.52	8.24	29.53	23.84	13.31
Carlanstown	13.86	16.11	8.13	6.78	34.94	15.51	4.67
Enfield	12.47	17.78	6.64	5.37	37.82	15.87	4.04
Longwood	11.95	19.92	7.21	3.80	38.01	14.61	4.49
Clonee	11.74	10.05	2.78	6.42	52.30	10.05	6.66
Kilmessan	11.62	14.22	6.57	4.89	36.54	20.49	5.66

	0-4	5-12	13-17	18-24	25-44	45-64	65+
Balbradagh <sup>3</sup>	7.49	22.73	9.36	4.01	28.61	22.73	5.08
Stamullan	10.24	20.83	6.87	5.89	35.70	16.48	3.99
Kentstown	7.89	20.87	7.38	5.09	31.55	19.93	7.29
Kildalkey	9.46	19.21	8.19	5.08	28.81	21.89	7.34
Gormanston	2.67	6.67	6.13	6.93	11.47	22.67	43.47
Kilmainham Wood	4.43	12.97	4.75	6.33	20.57	18.67	32.28
Kilcloon	10.36	8.93	3.21	5.00	31.07	18.57	22.86
Dunderry	6.47	15.29	5.29	7.06	19.41	24.71	21.76

The youth age dependency ratio (the proportion of the population under the age of 15 as a % of the working age population) stands at 39% reflecting the young population profile in the county, higher than the national figure of 32.3%.

## 2.4 Ethnicity & Nationality

The vast majority of people living in the county of Meath are classified as Irish with 10.1% of the population identifying as non-Irish nationals (19,601). The majority of non-Irish nationals come from Poland (4,460), Lithuania (3,443) and the UK (3,251) and reside primarily in the main urban centres of Navan, Ashbourne and Kells.

Clonee records the highest proportion of non-Irish nationals at 35.2% of the village's population. The town of Oldcastle is also home to a significant non-Irish national population

<sup>3</sup> More commonly known as 'Robinstown'.

(26.2%), the vast majority of these being from Lithuania.

There are 971 people from the travelling community identified in Meath in the 2016 census (although it is acknowledged that the traveller identifier is often under-reported). The majority of these reside in Navan town (664 in total or 2.2% of the population), well above the state figure of 0.5% and the county wide figure of 0.7%.

The direct provision centre on the east coast of the county located in Mosney housed 727 persons in 2017. Half of the residents of Mosney are children under the age of 18.

## 2.5 Family Structure

Nearly 40% of households comprised of married couples with children in Meath in 2016.

15.4% of families with children under the age of 15 are headed by a lone or single parent.

**Table 2:** Lone Parent Families with Children under the Age of 15 (2016)

	Total Lone Parent Families with children >15 (%)	Lone Mother Families with children >15 (%)	Lone Father Families with children >15 (%)
<b>Meath</b>	15.4	14	1.4
<b>State</b>	20	18.5	1.5
Drumconrath	41.7	36.1	5.6
Athboy	23.2	21.6	1.6
Nobber	30.4	30.4	0
Ballivor	23.7	21.7	2

	Total Lone Parent Families with children >15 (%)	Lone Mother Families with children >15 (%)	Lone Father Families with children >15 (%)
Kells	23.1	21.8	1.4
Clonard	23.4	19.1	4.7
Dunderry	31.8	31.8	0
Kilmainham Wood	23.5	17.6	5.9
Summerhill	23.5	23.5	0
Oldcastle	23.4	21.2	2.2

## 2.6 Education

Just over one in ten people in the county (11%) have no formal education or have primary level education only. One in every four persons with poor educational attainment reside predominantly in the north, north-west and south-west of the county.

A total of 18.4% of the population has attained a degree and/or postgraduate degree which is just below the state figure of 20.8%.

**Table 3:** Education Level Attained in 2016 (%)

	No formal/ primary education only	Lower Secondary	Higher Secondary	Tech/ Apprentice/ certificate	Non-degree (diploma)	Degree/ Post-grad PhD
<b>Meath</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>18.4</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>20.8</b>
Drumconrath	25.5	18.6	18.2	12.1	5.6	11.7
Gormanston	23.2	15.7	18.4	8.9	11.9	13.0
Kilmainham Wood	26	12.3	14.6	12.3	7.8	5.5
Dunderry	18.7	14	18.7	15.9	10.3	18.7
Clonard	17.4	16.1	18.8	17.4	11.6	15.2
Kilcloon	7.2	10.8	18	17	14.4	30.9
Dunboyne	6.8	11.4	19.7	14.0	16.0	27.1
Ratoath	5.7	11.0	20.5	16.8	16.5	25.0
Julianstown/ Whitecross	7.9	13.3	16.2	17.9	15.7	26
Enfield	7.3	12.2	18.2	18.8	17.1	23
Dunshaughlin	6.0	12.6	21.4	16.0	18.0	23
Clonee	6.6	7	16.7	15	22.4	25.3

## 2.7 Employment and Unemployment

There was a relatively strong labour force participation rate in Meath in 2016 (64.2%) which is slightly higher than the national figure of 61.4%.

The 11.2% unemployment rate in 2016 is down significantly from 18% in 2011. Areas to the west, north-west of the county record much higher unemployment figures and they include: Oldcastle (23.2%), Kilmainham Wood (23.1%), Ballivor (21%), Drumconrath (20%), Kells (19.1%) and Nobber (17.8%).

## 2.8 Economy and Commuting

The commuting nature of the Meath population means that significant numbers of people leave the county on a daily basis for work purposes, calculated at 64% of the working population (61.4% in 2011). The majority of these people commute east, towards the county of Dublin.

## 2.9 Housing

There were 63,861 private households in Meath in 2016 with an increase of 19% (or 10,296 households) since the 2006 census period.

Social renting (5.6%) and private renting (14.6%) is lower than the state average (9.4% and 18.2% respectively). Some areas show very high social renting figures with one in every four households on average, renting from the local authority or a voluntary housing body in Nobber (28.1%), Kilmainham Wood (27.4%), Oldcastle (24.1%), Summerhill (23.3%) and Drumconrath 21.4%.

Nearly half the households in Clonee are privately rented (42.8%) and one in every four households are privately rented in Oldcastle (26.5%), Athboy 25.9%, Navan (22.7%), Carlanstown (23.7%) and Ashbourne (21.6%).

**Table 4:** Housing Tenure Breakdown across Meath in 2016 (%)

	Owner Occupier	Owner Occupied no mortgage	Owner Occupier with Mortgage	Rented Private	Rented Social
<b>Meath</b>	<b>76.2</b>	<b>43.3</b>	<b>32.9</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>5.6</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>67.6</b>	<b>31.6</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>9.4</b>
Nobber	50	22.7	27.3	16.4	28.1
Kilmainhamwood	55.6	22.6	33.1	13.7	27.4
Oldcastle	43.6	18.3	28	26.5	24.1
Summerhill	55.1	32.9	22.3	17.3	23.3
Drumconrath	62.6	24.4	38.2	9.9	21.4
Clonee	52.1	43.1	9	42.8	1.9
Oldcastle	46.3	18.3	28	26.5	24.1
Athboy	59.9	49	21.4	21.6	4.6
Navan	63.6	40.5	23.1	22.7	10.1
Carlanstown	66.0	47.4	18.6	23.7	6.5
Ashbourne	70.4	49	21.4	21.6	4.6

There are 3,746 people currently on the social housing waiting list.

There were 435 homeless presentations to the council in 2018 which comprised of 216 families (with a total of 399 children) and 219 individuals or couples. In the same year, 183 households were placed in emergency accommodation, 41 of these were families with 82 children affected.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Figures provided by Meath County Council – Housing Section.

## 2.10 Health & Wellbeing

The vast majority of the population in Meath rate their health as 'good' or 'very good'. The areas that rate their health less positively are those areas with a high proportion of older people.

11.6% people in the county have a disability which is lower than the state figure of 13.5%.

426 children in Meath have an intellectual disability which is the 12th highest rate per county in the state.<sup>5</sup> 597 children registered with a physical/sensory disability in Meath which was the third highest registration rate in the state.

A total of 295 people (123 males and 172 females) from Meath presented to emergency departments as a result of self-harm injuries in 2017.<sup>6</sup> This translates to a rate of 142 and 187 per 100,000 for males and females, respectively, which is below the national rate of 181 and 218 per 100,000.<sup>7</sup>

Meath recorded a suicide rate of 5.8 per 100,000 population in the 2016–2018 period, slightly lower than the national rate at 8.2 per 100,000 population.

<sup>5</sup> Data sourced from the State of the Nation's Children report 2016, reproduced in the Meath Children and Young People's Plan, 2018–2020.

<sup>6</sup> Methods of self-harm in Meath: drug overdose was the most common method of self-harm, involved in 68% of presentations; alcohol was involved in 40% of presentations; self-cutting was the only other common method involved in 24% of presentations; 7% of presentations involved attempted hanging and 3% involved attempted drowning. Fewer than 10 presentations involved attempted poisoning (source: HSE).

<sup>7</sup> Self-harm data collated by the National Suicide Research Foundation and suicide data collected by the Central Statistics Office.

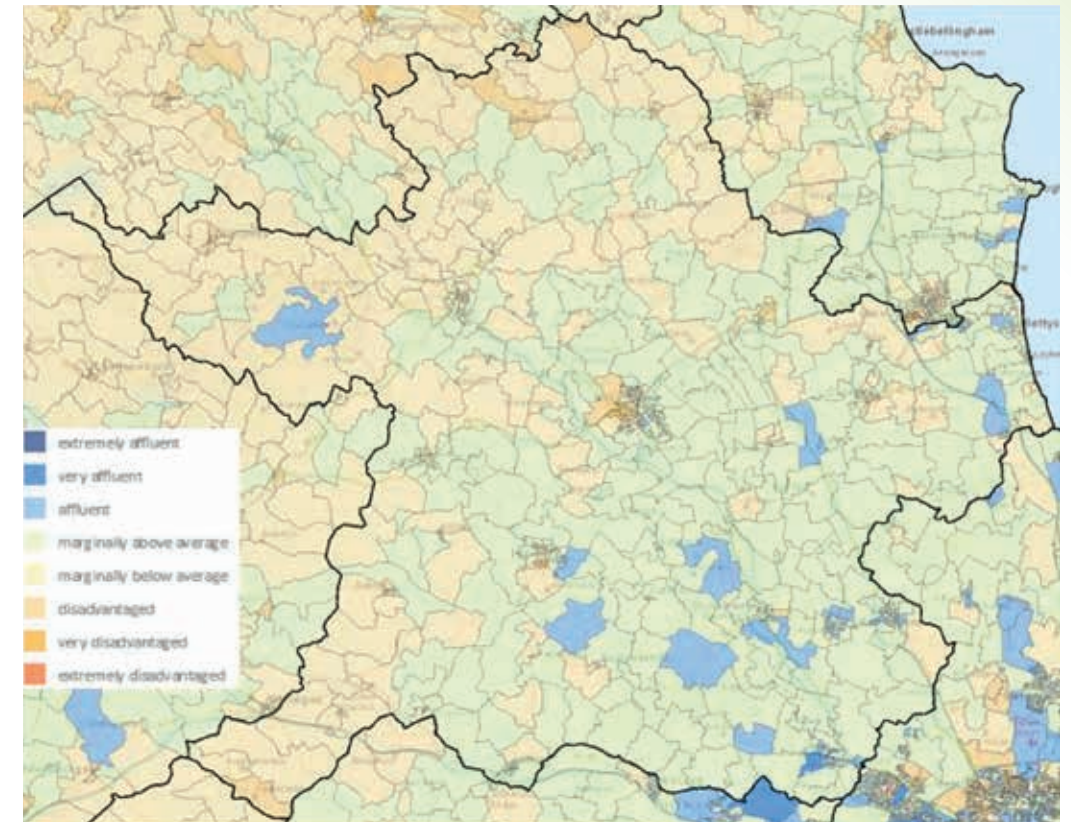


This is the lowest it has been since the 2004–2006 period where a rate of 11.1 per 100,000 was recorded although rates have fluctuated in the intervening years.

## 2.11 Deprivation

The county of Meath as a whole is ranked as 'Marginally Above Average' on the deprivation scale, relative to other areas in the country. The Ceannanus Mor (Kells) electoral district is

**Fig. 3:** Map of County Meath, Relative Deprivation (Pobal Maps)



Source: SICAP Plan for 2018–2022, Meath Partnership

the only one that falls into the ‘disadvantaged’ category.<sup>8</sup>

There were 53 small areas in Meath classified as ‘disadvantaged’ (46 small areas) or ‘very disadvantaged’ (7 small areas) in 2016.<sup>9</sup> Six of these ‘very disadvantaged’ small areas are located in Navan and one located in Trim.

## 2.12 Connectivity

Just over 70% of households in the county have access to broadband in 2016, which is slightly higher than the state average. Areas primarily in the north, west and south of the county have poor broadband connectivity, with one in three households saying they have no internet connection.

## 2.13 Summary

Meath is a relatively young county compared to other local authority areas. It is also a county with a growing population primarily along the eastern border. There is a strong non-Irish national population (10%) in the county made up mainly of Polish, Lithuanian and people from the UK. There are a large number of young families in the county reflecting the youth profile and 15% of families with children under the age of 15 are headed by a lone parent. The people of Meath are generally well educated with a strong labour force participation rate but there are pockets of areas around Meath with high levels of unemployment. Over 64% of the

<sup>8</sup> Relative deprivation scores range from -30 to +30 with the average being zero and classifies areas based on these scores as ‘extremely disadvantaged’ (-30) to ‘very disadvantaged’ to ‘disadvantaged’ to ‘marginally below the average’ to ‘marginally above the average’, ‘affluent’, ‘very affluent’ and ‘extremely affluent’ (+30).

<sup>9</sup> Small Areas’ are areas of population generally comprising between 80 and 120 dwellings created by The National Institute of Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) on behalf of the Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) in consultation with CSO. ‘Small Areas’ were designed as the lowest level of geography for the compilation of statistics in line with data protection and generally comprise either complete or part of townlands or neighbourhoods. There is a constraint on Small Areas that they must nest within Electoral Division boundaries.

people of Meath commute out of the county on a daily basis for work which has an effect on their quality of life and their ability to fully engage with their community. The vast majority of the population of Meath report very good health with just over 11% of the population with a disability. The rate of suicide and self-harm in Meath is slightly below the national rate but these rates have fluctuated over the years. While the county as a whole is ranked ‘marginally above average’ in terms of deprivation rates, there are significant pockets of disadvantaged dotted around the county in Navan, Trim and Kells and in the west, north-west and south-west of the county.



## Health and Wellbeing in Meath

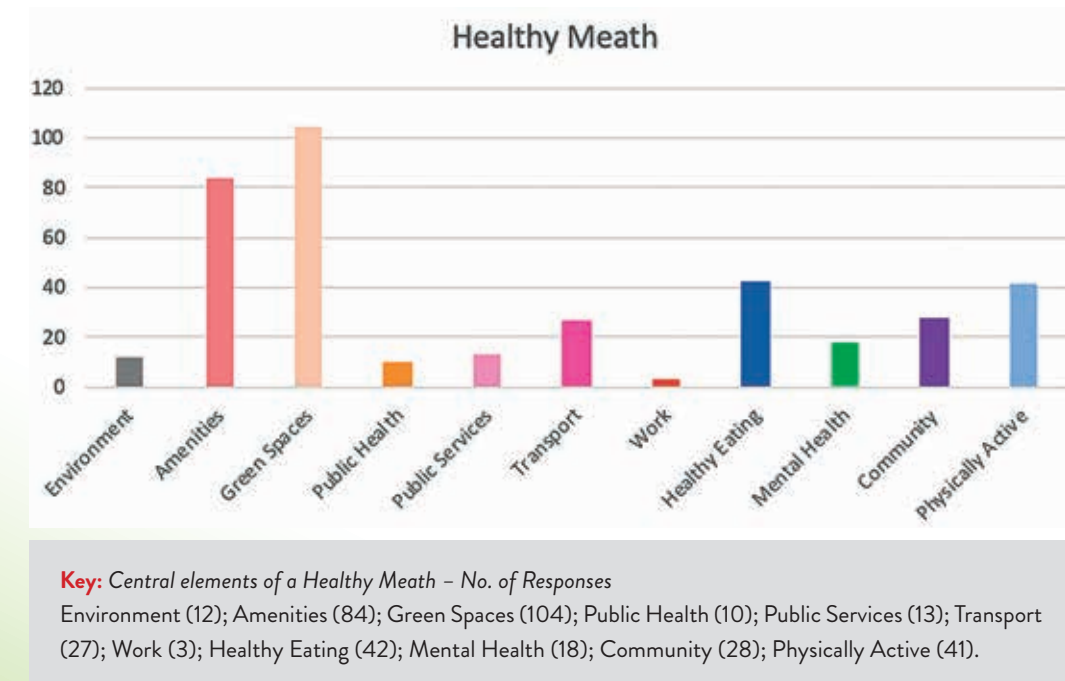
During the months of march and april 2019 a short on-line survey was circulated and advertised through various channels (Public Participation Network (PPN) contact list, service providers, local newspaper, church newsletters, local radio) seeking people's views on a 'Healthy Meath'. A total of 259 responses were received. A further seven targeted surveys were conducted with communities across the county who are more at risk of experiencing health inequalities because of age, ethnicity, disability, income and place of residence. These were distributed through key service providers and representative organisations and included migrants, travellers, families, farmers, older people, young people and people with disabilities. A total of 74 responses were received across these targeted surveys. Finally, a number of consultation meetings were held around the county with target groups to add some detail and richness to the survey responses (see appendix 1 for details). Previous relevant consultation reports were also reviewed. A summary of the survey and consultation analysis is presented below.

### 3.1 General Survey Responses

The first question probed people's thoughts on what a 'healthier Meath' would actually look like in five years' time. The majority of respondents see a county that

will have greater provision of green space and amenities with people having a healthier diet and participating in more physical activity. In reality, the green space, amenities and physical activity responses were all linked, as respondents talked about the importance of taking exercise, having green accessible and safe spaces in which to exercise, and the provision of amenities around the county to encourage people to get out and about.

#### Q. What do you think a 'healthier Meath' would look like in 5 years time?



The other element important in a healthy county singled out by respondents was the issue of safety – the common green areas (be they parks, walks or greenways) need to be both safe and accessible. The safety issue not only relates to good lighting, reduced (or no) traffic,

reduced speed, low crime risk but also relates to the maintenance of these common areas – older people and people with mobility problems in particular, are concerned about trip hazards and their ability to get around these green spaces.

A place with lots of parks and places to walk, cycle and run freely without having to worry about cars.

Access and cost also featured prominently in responses. Many respondents noted that everyone should be able to get out for a walk or a cycle in a green space as it provides both physical and mental health benefits. The opportunity to do so should not be restricted by charges which can exclude many from participating. Ease of access to footpaths, walking routes, cycle lanes, green common spaces was mentioned frequently with convenience being key: ‘a person should not have to get into a car to drive to take a walk’.

The link with healthy eating and healthy lifestyle was well made in the survey responses. A large number of respondents remarked on the number of fast food outlets in different towns and villages around the county which only encourage unhealthy eating. There was also a recognition that processed food is generally cheaper than healthier food, it is easier to prepare and takes less time. This only makes the task of changing people’s behaviour and eating habits even more challenging.

Many of the respondents emphasised the importance of community and would like to see local community connections between people of all ages strengthened in five years time. The importance of building and sustaining connections between people should be factored into how communities are planned and the services that are provided. People talked about the importance of local events, of local clubs, of local exercise groups, community gardens and community walks.

The correlation between positive mental health and physical activity and green spaces was made repeatedly throughout the survey by respondents. People talked about the importance

of a positive outlook which is impacted by the environment around us, work life balance, and the supports and services that are available to support this positive outlook.

A healthier Meath would be a county where citizens are properly facilitated and encouraged to walk or cycle safely to and from their local town and village.

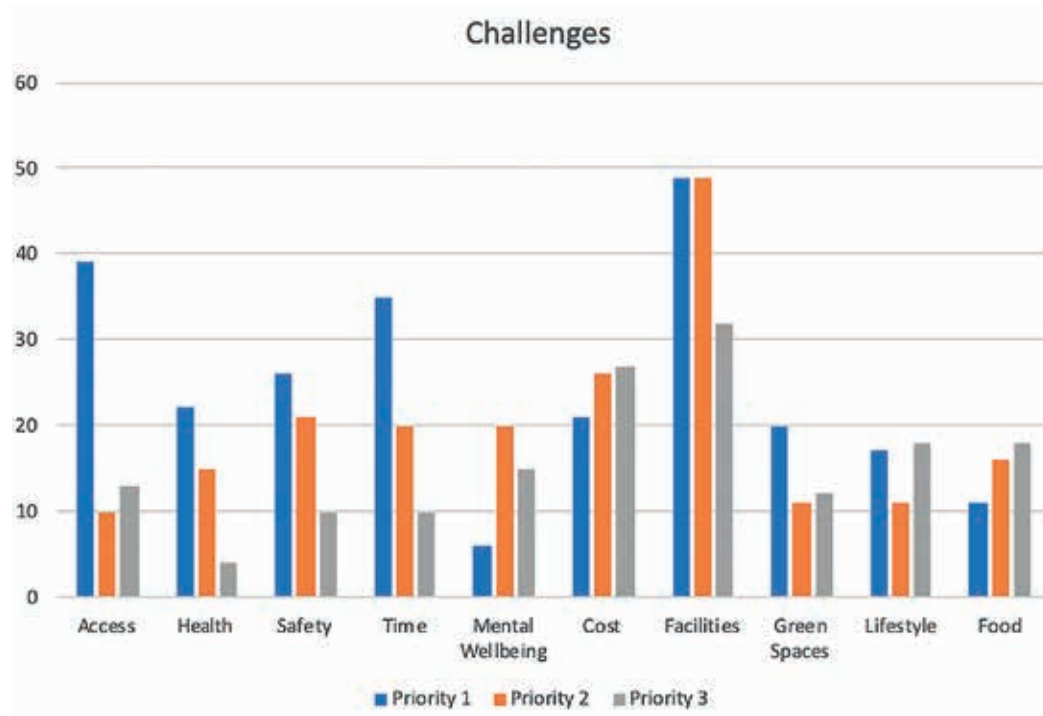
Other factors cited as central to having a healthier Meath in 5 years time included:

- **Better planning** that is focused on building communities rather than simply where to put housing.
- Transport and work were very much linked in the survey with respondents looking for ways to get out of the car and **decrease commuting time**.
- A **healthier environment** is important, tackling the scourge of litter and dumping as well as dog fouling, the importance of nature preservation through tree planting and recycling, and the reduction of plastic.
- **Public services** are central to healthy communities with housing, gardaí and health services singled out for frequent mention.





**Q. What are the main issues that influence your ability to adopt a healthier lifestyle?**



Participants were asked to rank in order of priority, the main factors or issues that affect their efforts to pursue a healthier lifestyle. The importance of facilities emerged as the main factor across all three priorities indicating the high level of demand among the people of Meath. It should be noted that the ‘facilities’ people talked about were predominantly safe walking routes, footpaths, cycle lanes, running tracks, parks, playgrounds and group fitness classes.

**No public park or free green space around where we live.**

‘Green spaces’ featured strongly again in this question and is linked predominantly with the ‘facilities’ response. People are looking for green common areas where they can play, walk, exercise and enjoy nature safely. The other factor that influences people’s behaviour is ‘access’. Accessing local facilities that are convenient has a significant impact on people’s ability to lead a healthier lifestyle. Having a local amenity or facility within striking distance of where a person lives, that is easily accessible and free or low cost, determines whether or not they get out and about.

**Lack of nearby facilities for exercising or spending time outside.**

The issues of ‘time’ and ‘lifestyle’ were both mentioned frequently as significant challenges impacting on people’s choices and behaviours. Finding the time to pursue a healthier lifestyle both in terms of physical and social activity and adopting healthier food and cooking habits is something that is an ongoing struggle. Many people work long hours, have long commutes, have family caring commitments, all of which has an impact on people’s time and energy levels.

**Time to exercise – often lack of time due to commuting hinders efforts to exercise.**

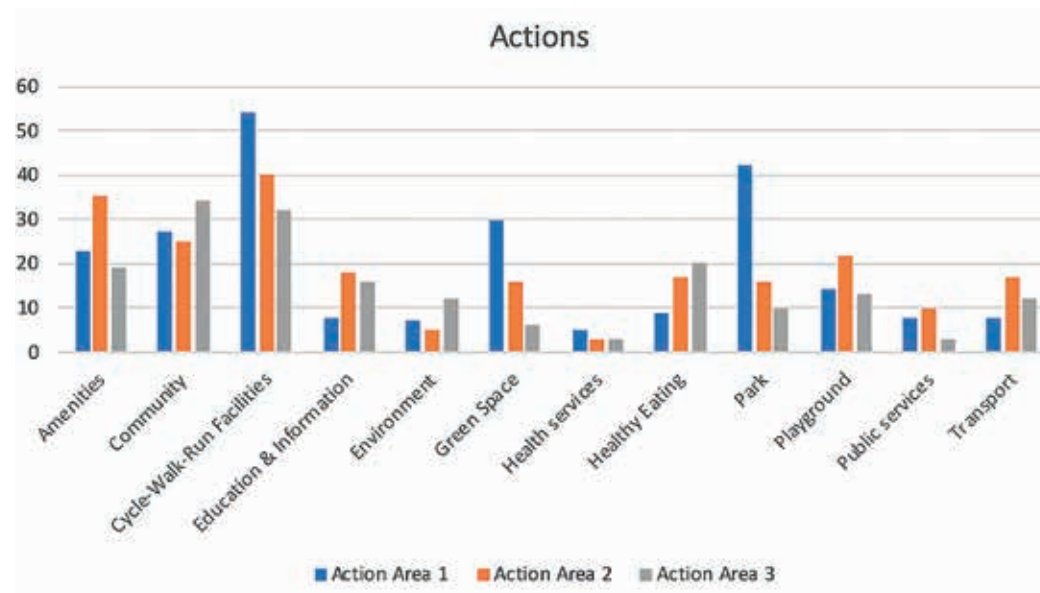
‘Affordability’ was referred to regularly throughout survey responses with people noting that the issue of cost not only arises with regard to accessing facilities, but also to the price of healthy food.

Finally, many respondents cited health issues as a key factor that impacts on their pursuit of a healthier lifestyle. A person’s physical health can be restricted through conditions like diabetes or asthma or a physical disability and also through poor mental health. Many respondents spoke of the importance of being in the right frame of mind when contemplating a healthier lifestyle and the challenge of maintaining this positive frame of mind.

The other factors that were mentioned as having an impact on the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle, but less frequently (i.e. >10 references respectively) were:

- the **weather** with people noting that poor weather and dark evenings affects their motivation
- relevant and factual **information** about healthy lifestyles
- **family** and caring responsibilities
- restricted **public services** (limited access to doctor and GP, lack of funding for local community events, withdrawal of public services from villages, lack of parking and footpaths)
- **the environment** (traffic pollution, poor public transport, access to alternative means of travel, dog control and dog fouling, littering, climate change, upkeep of local villages and towns).

**Q. Identify 3 actions you would prioritise to help make Meath a healthier place for you, your family and your community?**



The overwhelming response (fitting in with what was said above) is the provision of more cycle-walking- running facilities across the county that are well-lit and safe, and the provision of parks and green spaces which could facilitate this to happen. Responses centred around either making the roads safer through provision of cycle lanes and footpaths or providing off road opportunities through more parks and green spaces, greenways, development of walking routes and trails and opening up existing facilities.

The other proposed action that featured strongly across all responses was supporting the local community. This refers essentially to having more locally based activities that not only encourages a healthier lifestyle but greater connectivity among people as respondents highlighted the importance of local connections and services in order to maintain healthy communities. Suggestions made include park runs; community walks; community led family activities; community events such as local festivals; environmental clean ups; more activities for teenagers; sports days; walking groups; free Healthy Ireland events e.g. swim day, walking buses, healthy food market; kid friendly activities; fun sports activities, community gardens and allotments. Finally, respondents were looking for greater levels of funding for local community groups to be able to run these types of activities at a local level.

**More community focused events to deal with isolation – give a sense of belonging.**

The provision of playgrounds was mentioned regularly by respondents with particular areas identified as having higher demand: Ashbourne, Stamullen, Gormanston, Julianstown, Curraha. Other amenities mentioned by respondents included public swimming pool (mentioned most often); public gyms; community run affordable gym; outdoor gym equipment in parks; more astro pitches for sports clubs; longer opening times for facilities; greater availability of sports halls or indoor venues and skate parks.

The importance of healthy eating was highlighted throughout the survey responses with suggestions around: better and healthier menus in restaurants; convenience stores stocking healthier and more locally sourced foods; increasing the number of farmers markets; greater business support for a healthier lifestyle; healthy eating promoted in primary and secondary schools; incentivise shops/ cafes to promote and supply healthier foods; less fast food outlets; higher prices on foods that are poor quality; calorie information on menus and free or low fee 'cooking on a budget' classes.

Provide proper transport infrastructure to Meath – no train to Navan or Kells, take volume of traffic off our roads so we can use them to be active.

Other areas that were mentioned for action included:

- **Information and education:** greater involvement of schools in promoting a healthier lifestyle, better information on what is happening in local communities and family friendly events, more prominent media campaigns and more community workshops on health.
- **Transport:** this was very much tied in with responses that were given around cycle-run-walk facilities with people identifying the link between safety, traffic and the ability to walk, run and cycle.



- **Health and services:** provision of mental health services namely, supporting children's mental health, provision of counselling, support groups for mental health and social prescribing initiatives. Respondents also talked about the importance of housing developments to include green space and the building of more public housing.

## 3.2 Targeted Survey Responses and Consultations

A total of seven targeted surveys and consultations took place with target communities across Meath, with groups that were identified as having particular challenges around pursuing a healthier lifestyle. Many of the issues presenting from the surveys and consultations echoed much of what was said through the general survey but there are some issues, specific to these target groups, presented below.

### 3.2.1 Families

Responding to the question of a healthier Meath in five years time, respondents talked about the importance of children and teens being able to get out and about and keep active. Central to this is the provision of a safe space to do this and facilities or amenities that give them the opportunity – cycle lanes, parks, open green spaces. These need to be either free or affordable for families and young people.

The main challenges in adopting a healthier lifestyle revolve around time to prepare food and eat properly, caring responsibilities that make it difficult to carve out time and living in a rural area where there are no safe public spaces to exercise.

The majority of respondents were looking for action around developing cycling and walking facilities as a priority, but these need to be accessible and free or at least low cost. Building the capacity of the local community to do things for themselves through investment in training programmes and funding measures would see a greater return in community engagement, interaction and connectivity.

### 3.2.2 People with Disabilities

Responses from people with disabilities around the 'Healthy Meath in 5 years time' question centred on well-lit, accessible and safe cycling and walking routes. Ramps, dog fouling, uneven paths, blocked paths were also mentioned highlighting particular issues for people with mobility problems. Respondents want to see more people out and about safely in five years time, with greater inclusivity and respect for people with disabilities and a greater reduction in suicide rates. The consultation with young people with an intellectual disability also focused on issues around getting out and about safely and independently. For this target group, doing things in groups and as part of family is also important such as social outings to cafes, group walks, dance classes – not only is this important for the individual but important for carers as well.

Not surprisingly, respondents talked predominantly about 'poor health' when asked about what influences their ability to pursue a healthier lifestyle. Basically, when people are feeling better, they are more active. They also talked about time commitments and weight as two particular challenges with the cost of accessing facilities also mentioned as a deterrent.

When asked about actions they would like to support a healthier Meath, safe cycling and walking routes as well as the provision of accessible and safe parks and playgrounds were cited most frequently.

### 3.2.3 Young People

When asked what a healthier Meath would look like in five years time, these respondents talked primarily about the environment – a cleaner county, reduction in cars, more greenery around towns and villages and more awareness about climate change. The other main issue that received attention was healthy eating, with young people talking about less processed food, less fast food outlets and a reduction in obesity.



These views were further expanded upon in the consultation with Comhairle na nÓg where the ease of access to fast food over substantial meals was mentioned – the fast food outlets, the shop deli counters situated close to the schools and how much cheaper 'junk food' is as opposed to the healthier options.

**Would have less take away restaurants and more areas for outdoor recreational activities.**

This was reflected again in the question about the factors that influence them in pursuing a healthier lifestyle. The affordable availability of healthy meal options was mentioned frequently as was the issue of limited time. Having the right mindset is also important with family, social media, school and timely information being key motivators. The other factors that were mentioned as affecting a healthier lifestyle were smoking, drinking and drugs.

Finally, when asked about the three actions they would like to see prioritised over the next five years, the one mentioned most often was the opening up and provision of amenities – the cycle paths; safe walking routes; open green spaces; greenways; group exercise and social activities (walking clubs; park runs). The environment also featured strongly for this cohort – litter free; more greenery in plants and villages; greater use of waste land for the community; sustainable transport; education and raising awareness about environmental issues; pedestrian streets; environmental workshops that are fun and engaging.

### 3.2.4 Older People

When asked what a healthier Meath would look like in five years time, respondents spoke of a county with safe areas to walk, more walking and cycling amenities that are accessible, more group activities, litter free and a health service free of waiting lists.

**It would have safe, well lit, accessible areas to work. Parking places nearby also well lit. Better lighting in towns so older people are not afraid to go out after dark – currently there is a fear of trips and falls.**

Older people are looking primarily for a good quality of life as they age, influenced by healthy eating and more exercise. The challenge for older people living in rural areas is to find local facilities and classes where they can exercise safely. The cost of facilities can also be an issue for many. Living on a limited income means that money is a real factor and accessing facilities such as swimming pools on a regular basis is difficult. During the consultation with older people, they emphasised the importance of affordable group facilities (such as the ‘Mature Movers’ class) as this not only encourages exercise but is an important social connection.

The actions older people would like to see prioritised in the pursuit of a healthier county are greater access to safe facilities and amenities – greenways, walking, cycling, open space, outdoor gym equipment. These need to be safe and well-lit ensuring footpaths and ramps are not blocked.

### 3.2.5 Travellers

In five years time, a healthier Meath for travellers is one where relevant and culturally appropriate services are in place for travellers, particularly with regard to housing. In response to the question about adopting a healthier lifestyle, the travellers consulted agreed that having a healthy lifestyle is out of the reach of most as being healthy means having money to buy

healthy food and to access facilities. The issue of self-esteem and low expectations was also raised where it was argued that travellers have internalised the inherent racism and prejudice that exists all around them. This low feeling of self-worth is one of the reasons that mental health is such an issue amongst travellers, young travellers particularly, and why the rates of suicide are so high compared to other communities.

The other central issue raised during the consultation is the stress and isolation felt by many travellers. It was argued that the traveller tradition of family is very strong – people get married young, have an above average number of children with the extended family heavily involved in rearing each others family. So being around each other is fundamental and being connected is central to good mental health. Putting travellers in houses away from each other causes isolation and contributes to mental health issues.

**For travellers, it is about the way you live, not about where you live – it is not about the house or the van but the wider family.**

The actions highlighted by the participants for the next five years centre around addressing the issue of housing. There needs to be better forward planning with regard to traveller accommodation recognising the culture and tradition around traveller families and sourcing accommodation that can facilitate this way of life. Supporting social connections through group activities, exercise programmes and healthy eating, helps combat isolation. Finally, addressing prejudice and racism in wider society through greater education and awareness is important, recognising that travellers voices and experience need to be heard in decision making.

### 3.2.6 Farmers

In the next five years, farmers would like to see people eating healthier and more locally sourced food. Stronger connections within local communities would be in place, with activities

to bring people of all ages together and more green common spaces available. There would be better and safer walking facilities, particularly in rural areas and a greater understanding about the role agriculture plays in every-day lives. People will be less stressed in five years time and those living in rural areas would be able to go to their local pub and be assured of transport home.

The primary factor in farmers ability to pursue a healthier lifestyle is time and time management with generally long working hours and a heavy workload. An additional downside of this is the stress and isolation this causes and whereas previously, a trip to the local pub for social connection and relaxation was an option, this is no longer possible.

Supports needed due to long hours of loneliness in countryside.  
Remember now very little public transport, no public houses, no drinking and driving.  
All can create loneliness and isolation and a return of crime.

Farmers would like to see action taken within local communities with local sports events and local social events to bring people of all ages together. This could be encouraged and facilitated through the provision of local walking facilities – greenways, trails, lighting. Suggestions were also made about specific exercise programmes for farmers at times and locations that are suitable, and these could also include supports around mental health. Public transport in rural areas (and not just during the day when farmers are working) is crucial. Different ways need to be explored to get people to and from social and economic centres, particularly for farmers who work on their own, for the most part, during the day leading to increased feelings of social isolation.

### 3.2.7 Migrants

A healthier Meath is one that there is access to cheaper, healthier food and less fast food outlets. An improved health service for migrants and their children would also be in place.

Cost of fresh food is more expensive than processed food.

With regard to the issues that affect migrants in pursuing healthier lifestyles, many of them centre around the isolation felt by new communities. Language barriers can feed this isolation and affects everyday interactions such as shopping, service providers and socialising. There are no cafes that open late or very few places where people gather in the evenings without alcohol.

The other factors affecting a healthy lifestyle for this community is cost. It can be difficult to feed a family a healthy meal on a tight budget while the cost of healthy food is often more expensive than convenience food. New food types can present a challenge as it is not often clear how to cook them and this is also affected by a person's ability to read ingredients or recipes in a different language (language literacy). The people living at the direct provision centre in Mosney have very particular challenges that concern the limited individual cooking



facilities available. Time pressures also prey on this group with people talking about a busy lifestyle affecting their ability to cook and exercise.

Housing for newly settled refugee families is often far away from services and facilities which only serves to heightens people's isolation.

The actions for the next 5 years suggested by this community concentrate on the provision of free or low cost facilities that people can access – parks, playgrounds, affordable gym. It has to be made easier for people to exercise and get out and about with particular supports in place for migrant communities to encourage families to get involved. Community multi-cultural local activities and family friendly events would encourage greater integration and break down the isolation felt by new communities.

# 4

## Plan for a Healthy Meath

**Vision:** Meath is a place where nurturing healthy communities is at the heart of all development and decision making and where individuals are supported to make healthy choices for themselves and their families.

### Objectives:

- To create the right environment by influencing local policy decisions and resources to support a healthy lifestyle.
- To inform, support and encourage people to take responsibility for their own health through making healthier choices.

**Strategic Approach:** The Healthy Meath plan recognises that the work of all service providers and community organisations, in one way or another, has an impact on a person's health and wellbeing. The purpose of this plan is to highlight what local people see as the important building blocks required to create a healthier county and develop actions around these priorities, pulling in the organisations that are best placed to deliver on this. Most of the suggested actions below are ones that already feature in the existing plans and strategies of organisations so they are not an 'add-on' to existing workloads. But it is about linking them to the Healthy Meath priorities and creating a space for discussion to see how these actions can

be stretched, refocused and connected with other partners. It is about exploring where value could be added to existing work that would help meet the objectives of better health and wellbeing for all. The Healthy Ireland funding will help in this process by adding additional resources, where necessary, to allow for actions to be changed or modified or introduced.

## Priority 1: Healthy Planning and Living Environment

Healthy Meath aims to build the capacity of people and systems involved in policy making and planning to ensure that healthy communities are factored into all future planning, building and development.

### 1.1 Actions

#### 1.1.1 Community Audits

<b>Action</b>	Community audits to be carried out in accordance with policy as set out in the Meath County Development Plan and future Local Area Plans. This will ensure that the necessary amenities and community infrastructure is in place for occupants of future developments.
<b>Lead Partner</b>	Meath County Council – Planning Section
<b>Support Partners</b>	Meath Local Sports Partnership; HSE Health and Wellbeing; PPN; Flexibus; Meath County Council – Community Section; Disability organisations; Meath Age Friendly Alliance; Meath Partnership; Traveller organisations; Cultur.

<b>Link to Existing Plans</b>	Meath County Development Plan Local Area Plans Meath Local Development Strategy – Objective 6 Children and Young Person’s Plan – Outcome 5, 5.3.1
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	Community Audits will be carried out in accordance with policy as set out in development plans.

#### 1.1.2 Audit of Facilities and Amenities

<b>Action</b>	Carry out an audit of facilities and amenities across the county to firstly find out what is already in existence so it can be promoted better and secondly, to find out where the gaps are and seek to fill these gaps through investment. This should be carried out across all villages and towns, in conjunction with local communities. The information sought should include: walking routes; cycle paths/ lanes; parks; playgrounds; amenity areas (parks, forests); public facilities (swimming pools, gyms); sporting facilities; community venues along with information about access and safety e.g. lighting; opening times; cost. This will be linked with the facilities information currently hosted and maintained by the Meath Local Sports Partnership on their website
<b>Lead Partner</b>	Meath County Council – Community Section
<b>Support Partners</b>	Meath Local Sports Partnership; Meath Partnership; PPN; Local community groups; Disability Organisations; Sporting groups; CYPSC



<b>Link to Existing Plans</b>	Meath Local Sports Partnership Strategy – Objective 1.3 County Development Plan – Social Policies 32 - 38 LECP – SCO 3.1 Children and Young Person’s Plan – Outcome 5, 5.3.1 Meath Local Development Strategy – Local Objective 6, SA1
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	Each community in Meath, at a very minimum, would have access to green space and public facilities that are in a convenient location to support them in their pursuit of a healthier lifestyle.

### 1.1.3 Develop Walking and Cycling Facilities

<b>Action</b>	Walking, cycling and running are activities nearly everyone can take part in and they are (for the most part) free, but the infrastructure needs to be in place or improved in order to create the environment for them to happen. Signposted walking and cycling routes should be developed around each town and village (where appropriate and feasible, linking in with the findings on Action 1.1.2 above). Footpaths in towns and villages need to be upgraded to ensure they are safe and well-lit with ramps. People living in rural areas are at a particular disadvantage in getting out and about so walking tracks within sports grounds should be developed and open to all where there is no other safe walking amenity (insurance issues will need to be addressed – see action 5.1.1).
<b>Lead Partner</b>	Meath County Council – Transportation Section
<b>Support Partners</b>	Meath Local Sports Partnership; Walking and Cycling Clubs; Meath Partnership; Disability Organisations; Sports Organisations; Meath Age Friendly Alliance; PPN

<b>Link to Existing Plans</b>	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy – Chapter 7 County Development Plan – Tran SP2; Tran Pol 14 - 23 LECP - SCO 4.4 Meath Heritage Strategy – 5.9 Climate Action Plan – M2; P6 Meath Local Development Strategy – Local Objective 4, SA1
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	Each community in Meath has access to a safe walking–cycling–running facility (on-road or off-road).

### 1.1.4 Review Traffic Calming Measures around the County

<b>Action</b>	The issue of safety goes hand-in-hand with the promotion of running, walking and cycling opportunities and traffic speed coupled with the volume of cars on the road is a central consideration in this regard. It is recommended that a review of traffic calming measures take place, on a small scale to start with, choosing 2 areas – one rural and one urban – looking at what is currently in place, what would need to happen in order to reduce speed/ calm traffic in these areas and how this would encourage greater safety for road users, other than motorised vehicles.
<b>Lead Partner</b>	Meath County Council – Transportation Section
<b>Support Partners</b>	Meath County Council – Community Section; An Garda Síochana; Meath Local Sports Partnership; PPN; community groups in these selected areas; local businesses; schools; farming organisations; Road Safety Authority; Meath Age Friendly Alliance; Disability Organisations.

<b>Link to Existing Plans</b>	County Development Plan – Tran Pol 24 Climate Action Plan – M2; P6
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	A review of one urban and one rural area is carried out complete with recommendations for action.

## Priority 2: Community Connectivity

Healthy Meath will work to support initiatives in local communities that encourage and promote a healthier lifestyle (physical, social, emotional, cultural) and also help bring people of all ages together to increase community connectivity and cohesiveness.

### 2.1 Actions

#### 2.1.1 Conduct a Transport Mapping Project in the County

<b>Action</b>	The issue of access and timely access to services and activities has a significant impact on people’s quality of life. There are a range of options currently available through public transport, Flexibus, community car schemes, self-drive initiatives but it is difficult to know where exactly the gaps are in terms of areas, times and needs. A mapping project that would assist in identifying routes, times, providers and accessibility covering all community and public forms of transport would address this and look to fill these gaps through different initiatives e.g. expansion of new routes and times; greater support for different community car schemes; Gocar.ie initiative; car-pooling; transport aides such as seating at bus stops, bike racks at bus stops, access for people with disabilities. Particular attention should be paid to outlying rural areas and to
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	the transport needs of target groups and areas identified in this plan: farmers and access to social outlets in the evening; older people and access during the day to services, particularly health services and appointments; people with mobility problems.
<b>Lead Partner</b>	Flexibus – Meath Accessible Transport Project
<b>Support Partners</b>	Meath County Council; Bus Eireann; Private transport operators; PPN; Meath Age Friendly Alliance; Meath Partnership; Disability Organisations.
<b>Link to Existing Plans</b>	County Development Plan – Tran Sp 10 & 13 LECP – SCO 3.2.3; 3.2.4 Meath Age Friendly Strategy – Theme 2 (2.2; 2.3) Climate Action Plan – M4; P4
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	Each community around the county will be aware of what transport options are available in their area and new initiatives will be developed to address identified gaps.

#### 2.1.2 Support and Develop Local Community Activity Events

<b>Action</b>	Support at least one local community activity event in each area per calendar year. Suggestions include: park runs; community walks; community-led family activities; festivals; fun sports days; walking groups; clean-up days; intergenerational events. All events should be captured and promoted as part of a ‘Healthy Meath Calendar’ and linked with action 4.1.4 below. Priority should be afforded to integration of the more disadvantaged communities
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	(e.g. travellers) and target communities with a greater proportion of new communities i.e. Kells, Oldcastle, Navan, Drumconrath, Ashbourne, Clonee, Oldcastle and Athboy.
<b>Lead Partner</b>	Meath County Council – Community Section
<b>Support Partners</b>	Meath Local Sports Partnership; Meath Partnership; PPN; Sporting Organisations; Schools; Businesses; Meath Age Friendly Alliance; Traveller organisations; CYPSC; Meath County Council – Arts section; Joint Policing Committee; Development Officers – FAI, GAA, Rugby; Meath Library; Cultur.
<b>Link to Existing Plans</b>	CYPSC – Outcome 3, 3.1.1 LECP – SCO 4.4 Meath Age Friendly Strategy – Theme 5 (5.2) Litter Management Plan – Objective 4 Joint Policing Committee Strategic Plan – 1.4 SICAP – Goal 1 Meath Local Development Strategy – Local Objective 3, SA2&3
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	Through regular community events, the cohesiveness and linkages within communities will grow stronger thereby contributing to improvements in the quality of life for all people within that community.

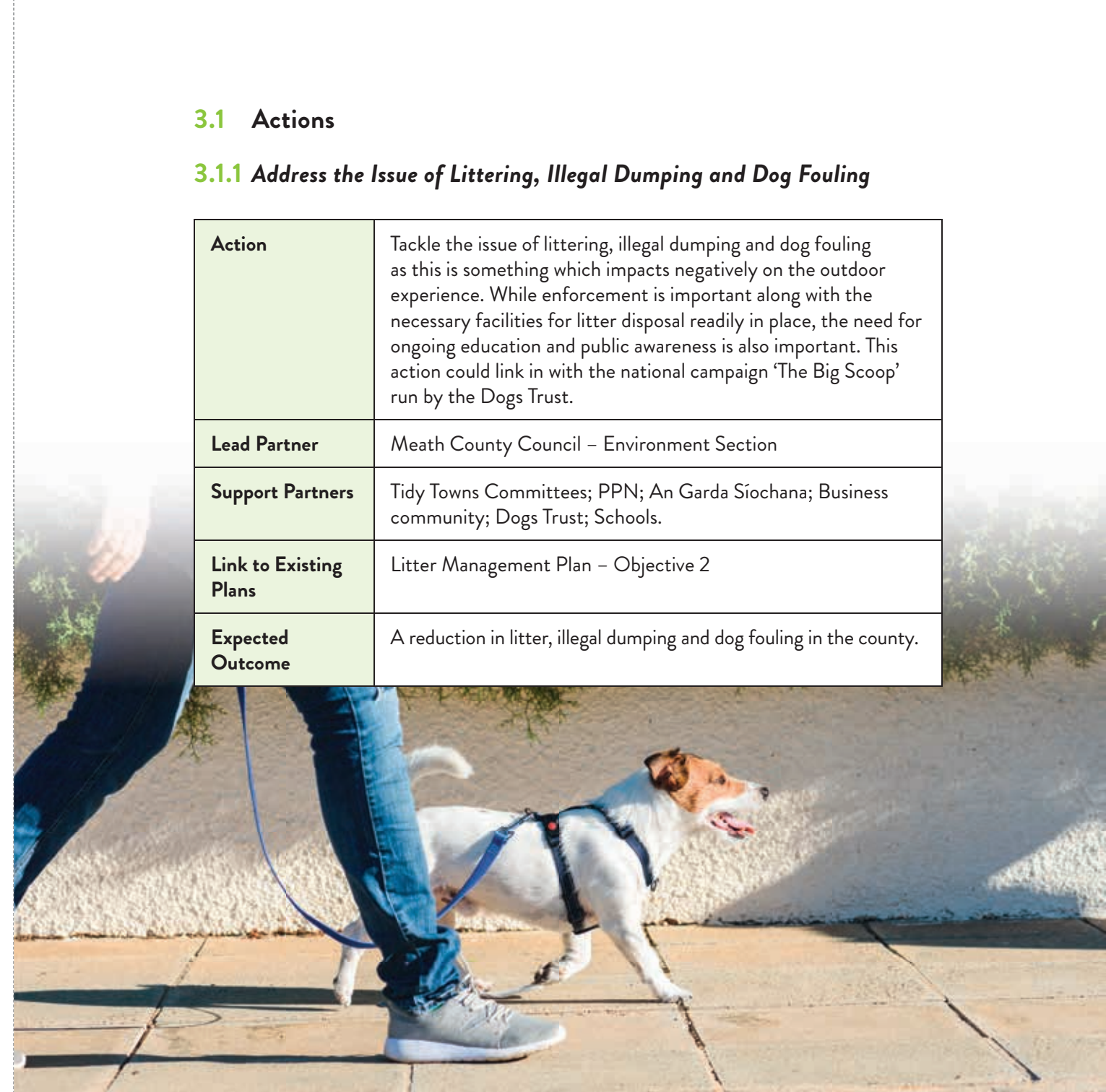
### Priority 3: Healthy Lifestyle

Healthy Meath aims to create a conducive environment for a healthy lifestyle and encourages everyone to take responsibility for healthy changes within their own lives and the lives of their families.

## 3.1 Actions

### 3.1.1 Address the Issue of Littering, Illegal Dumping and Dog Fouling

<b>Action</b>	Tackle the issue of littering, illegal dumping and dog fouling as this is something which impacts negatively on the outdoor experience. While enforcement is important along with the necessary facilities for litter disposal readily in place, the need for ongoing education and public awareness is also important. This action could link in with the national campaign ‘The Big Scoop’ run by the Dogs Trust.
<b>Lead Partner</b>	Meath County Council – Environment Section
<b>Support Partners</b>	Tidy Towns Committees; PPN; An Garda Síochana; Business community; Dogs Trust; Schools.
<b>Link to Existing Plans</b>	Litter Management Plan – Objective 2
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	A reduction in litter, illegal dumping and dog fouling in the county.



### 3.1.2 Promote Healthy Eating and Cooking

<b>Action</b>	Run cooking healthy food on a budget events or workshops around the county using where possible, local produce and easily available ingredients, building on work already taking place in this regard by the HSE. The workshops should concentrate on healthy meals in the shortest possible time and effort so that people can factor them into their lifestyles. They should be supported with recipe cards (pictures and words) or short video clips with particular attention paid to people with language or literacy problems (e.g. new communities), communities with poor health outcomes (e.g. travellers) and priority afforded to disadvantaged areas.
<b>Lead Partner</b>	HSE Health and Wellbeing
<b>Support Partners</b>	Cultur; Meath Primary Health Care Project for Travellers; Traveller Organisations; Youth Organisations; Meath Intercultural Organisation; Meath County Council; PPN; Schools; Meath Partnership.
<b>Link to Existing Plans</b>	Midlands, Louth, Meath CHO Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan – 4.1.
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	Greater emphasis on healthy cooking and meal planning within families.

### 3.1.3 Better Management of Health Conditions

<b>Action</b>	The HSE have a number of proactive programmes aimed at supporting people to better manage their health conditions.
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	These include ‘Self Management Support’ and ‘Making Every Contact Count’ and will be actively promoted on the ground with local communities around Meath.
<b>Lead Partner</b>	HSE – Health and Wellbeing; HSE Self Management Support Co-ordinator.
<b>Support Partners</b>	Meath Age Friendly Alliance; Meath County Council; PPN; Meath Local Sports Partnership
<b>Link to Existing Plans</b>	Midlands, Louth, Meath CHO Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan – 4.2
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	People living with chronic conditions will be able to manage their health better and improve their chances of participating in physical and social activity in their community.



## Priority 4: Education, Information and Awareness

Healthy Meath aims to increase awareness and improve health information and education for everyone in the county, with particular attention paid to those who experience health inequalities.

### 4.1 Actions

#### 4.1.1 Community Health Workshops

<b>Action</b>	Introduce community workshops on health along with walk-in health clinics and local health check-up and health promotion events in local communities – this could be done through a mobile health promotion roadshow ‘pop-up’ idea that moves around the county with particular priority afforded to areas that have high proportion of older people (Gormanston, Kilmainham Wood, Kilcoon, Dunderry), areas that are disadvantaged (Drumconrath, Navan, Kells and Oldcastle, Athboy) and targeting communities of interest (farmers; travellers; new communities; young people).
<b>Lead Partner</b>	HSE Health and Wellbeing
<b>Support Partners</b>	PPN; Meath County Council – Community Section; Sports Groups; Community Groups; Sports Clubs Health and Wellbeing officers (where they exist); Farming organisations; Meath Primary Health Care Project for Travellers; Traveller organisations; Cultur; Older person organisations; CYPSC; Irish Heart Foundation; Meath Age Friendly Alliance; PPN; Meath Local Sports Partnership; Meath Library; Meath Partnership; Disability Organisations.

<b>Link to Existing Plans</b>	LECP SCO – 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 CYPSC – Outcome 1 SICAP Plan – Goal 1 Public Library Strategy and Action Plan Priorities for 2019
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	Individuals are empowered to make changes to their own lives through greater information, knowledge, awareness and support.

#### 4.1.2 Healthy Business Campaign

<b>Action</b>	Look at ways to encourage and incentivise businesses to promote healthy eating or a healthy lifestyle (similar to the Green Flag initiative in schools). Ideas include healthy menus, calorie count on menus, promotion of local produce, café opening hours extension in the evenings, healthy workplace initiatives (such as the programme rolled out through the Irish Heart Foundation – Workplace Wellness Programmes). This is also linked to action 4.1.4 below.
<b>Lead Partner</b>	HSE Health and Wellbeing
<b>Support Partners</b>	Chamber of Commerce; Local Enterprise Office; Business organisations; Irish Heart Foundation.
<b>Link to Existing Plans</b>	New Action
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	Local businesses are supported to make changes that promote a healthier lifestyle in their workplaces and in their communities.

### 4.1.3 Environmental Information Campaign

<b>Action</b>	Run environmental workshops around the county (in schools and in communities) that focus on the local environment – what is in county Meath, how we are linked to our environment, how it is affected by development, the effects of changes in our environment, the link between environment and health, agriculture and farming and how this links with the environment; sustainable travel. The workshops should be structured in such a way to encourage engagement, particularly with younger people and linked with actions that could be taken to make local communities more environmentally friendly e.g. planting more greenery; a biodiversity area; how to tackle litter; ways to recycle and re-use locally.
<b>Lead Partner</b>	Meath County Council – Environment Section
<b>Support Partners</b>	Farming organisations; Meath Library; HSE Health and Wellbeing; Schools; PPN; MCC – Heritage Section; Sports Partnership; Libraries.



<b>Link to Existing Plans</b>	LECP – SCO 3.2 & 3.2.6 Litter Management Plan – Objective 1 Meath Heritage Plan – Strategic Theme 1 Climate Action Plan – R2
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	A greater awareness among people of how our living environment impacts on our health and wellbeing.

### 4.1.4 Healthy Meath Identity and Promotion

<b>Action</b>	The ‘Healthy Meath’ brand will be promoted intensively around the county through a number of ways (a) the identification of local people in each community who will be ‘Healthy Meath Champions’. These people will work with the Healthy Meath implementation group and assist with the roll out of the Healthy Meath actions within communities e.g. the proposed facilities audit, group activity classes, community events, encouraging local businesses (b) yearly awards which will acknowledge and recognise the communities (and champions) that have made significant progress in developing healthier communities (c) a ‘Healthy Meath’ recognition for businesses (d) a ‘Healthy Meath’ website and accompanying social media presence that will advertise and promote information on what is going on across the county.
<b>Lead Partner</b>	Meath County Council – Community Section & Meath Local Sports Partnership
<b>Support Partners</b>	Communities; Businesses; Meath Volunteer Centre; Local Media; PPN; Schools; Meath Library.

<b>Link to Existing Plans</b>	New Action
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	A growing awareness of Healthy Meath and it's objectives.

## Priority 5: Working in Partnership

Healthy Meath aims to work in partnership with all interested parties at local and national level to help bring about positive change in the health and wellbeing of all the inhabitants in the county.

### 5.1 Actions

#### 5.1.1 Address the Issue of Insurance

<b>Action</b>	The issue of insurance and access are intrinsically linked and many facilities refuse access to people on the grounds of insurance. In a county where facilities and amenities are in high demand and are much needed to foster better health and wellbeing, this is an issue that has to be addressed. While it is recognised that the issue of rising insurance is not limited to Meath, it is an area in which Meath County Council has a role to play in leading the charge in lobbying for change nationally. This campaign will be informed by research done through Action 1.1.2 (facilities audit) and Action 5.1.2 below.
<b>Lead Partner</b>	Public Participation Network

<b>Support Partners</b>	Local businesses; Chamber of Commerce; PPN; Federation of Irish Sport; Schools; Education and Training Boards; Traveller Organisations; Meath County Council.
<b>Link to Existing Plans</b>	LECP 4.4
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	A national change is made to insurance restrictions and costs faced by many facilities which would ensure greater access at local level.

#### 5.1.2 Opening Existing Venues to the Wider Public Pilot Project

<b>Action</b>	The problem of availability of venues and access to facilities in local communities to run local events, local exercise classes, support groups was raised frequently during this plan preparation process. Local facilities, including schools, which were developed on the back of local fundraising efforts, do not allow access for those same people outside of certain hours. The insurance issue (mentioned in 5.1.1 above) is one of the key obstacles. A working group will be formed to look at this issue locally (taking one area as a pilot) and see what exactly is available, what the main obstacles are in allowing greater access to these facilities and examine innovative ways these obstacles could be addressed e.g. shared services type of arrangement; social membership arrangement.
<b>Lead Partner</b>	PPN
<b>Support Partners</b>	Education and Training Board; Schools; businesses; community groups; Parish Churches; Meath Local Sports Partnership; Meath Partnership; Meath County Council – Community Section.

<b>Link to Existing Plans</b>	LECP 4.4 Meath Local Sports Partnership – Objective 1.1
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	The working group will produce a report outlining clearly the issues identified and ways they could be addressed.

### 5.1.3 Create More Local Job Opportunities

<b>Action</b>	The work-life balance for many people in Meath is unhealthy as the majority of working people face long commutes out of the county for work purposes. It is one of the main issues affecting healthy lifestyle in the county with little time or energy left for activity in the evening. One solution to this lies in the creation of more jobs locally and the exploration of new forms of working that could be taken on board by employers and employees e.g. better broadband connectivity to facilitate working at home.
<b>Lead Partner</b>	Meath County Council – Economic Section
<b>Support Partners</b>	Chamber of Commerce; Businesses; Local Enterprise Office.
<b>Link to Existing Plans</b>	Meath Economic Plan Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy – Chapter 6 LECP SCO 1.2; SEDO 2.1 – 2.15 Climate Action Plan - E1.6; M7 Meath Local Development Strategy – Local Objective 2
<b>Expected Outcome</b>	An increase in jobs created locally, more innovative working arrangements between employers and employees and a decrease in the proportion of people are commuting on a daily basis.



## Implementation

The Healthy Meath Plan will be implemented over the next three years, in line with the timeframe of the Local Economic and Community Plan. A new Healthy Meath implementation group will be established to oversee progress on the plan and will constitute a working group of the Local Community Development Committee of Meath County Council.

It is recommended that a key person be identified within the Council who will have responsibility for driving implementation of the plan. This could be a newly created role, it could be the ring-fencing of time in an existing role or it could be a service that could be contracted out for delivery purposes. The implementation group and Council will decide on this but it is important that some-one is appointed, resourced and supported in this work.

It is the responsibility of the named lead partners in each action to pull together the supporting partners (both ones that are named in this document and others that may have a role) and work through the implementation details of their respective actions. It should be noted that the actions contained in this plan are suggested only, recognising that some may or may not be possible to be rolled out as envisaged, once discussion takes place on the ‘how’ of the action. Lead partners



will be required to report back on their progress at an annual meeting set by the Healthy Meath implementation group.

Funding available through 'Healthy Ireland' will be linked to the rolling out of actions contained in this plan. It will be channelled towards the refocusing of, or adding value to, existing actions, or introducing new actions where necessary and where it is evidenced that the actions support the five priorities identified and the overall objectives of the plan.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Consultation Details

#### Survey:

General Survey:	259 Responses
Targeted Survey:	74 Responses

- Families (9)
- Disability (11)
- Travellers (5)
- Migrants (7)
- Farmers (19)<sup>10</sup>
- Older People (6)
- Young People (17)

<sup>10</sup> There was a low response initially to the targeted farmer survey so a further push was given to farm organisations, resulting in the IFA circulating a hard copy of the survey to farmers during one of their meetings in May. This resulted in a better take-up and the responses were returned to the consultant via post.

## Consultation Meetings:<sup>11</sup>

Travellers (Navan Travellers Workshop) – 9 participants

Young People (facilitated by Comhairle na nÓg) – 16 participants

Migrants (Navan) – 4 participants

Families (Kells Family Resource Centre & Trim Family Resource Centre) – 35 participants

Disability (Kells – organised through Prosper) – 9 participants

Older People (Athboy – organised through Meath Local Sports Partnership) – 20 participants

Service Providers (Navan – organised through Meath County Council, Community Section)

– 8 participants

<sup>11</sup> Information from recent consultation exercises that had taken place as part of the preparation of other plans and strategies were also reviewed – Meath Age Friendly Strategy; Children and Young People’s Plan 2018–2020.

## Appendix 2: Socio-Economic Profile of County Meath

### Overview

County Meath is the second largest county in Leinster and while it has some large urban centres, it is still a relatively rural county with 41.4% of the population living in rural areas. The physical landscape of the county ranges from a short coastline of 12 km in the east to tracks of peat land and raised bogs in the southwest, rolling drumlin hills in the north and rich pastures of the Boyne and Blackwater Valleys. It has an extensive road network and a rail infrastructure at the east of the county with stations in Dunboyne, the M3 Parkway, Enfield, Laytown and Gormanston (limited service). Bus Eireann and private bus operators run commuter and expressway services within and between counties. The Local Link bus service ‘Flexibus’, operates across the counties of Meath, Louth and Fingal with scheduled bus routes and door-to-door services during the day and also some evening services. Meath has two Gaeltacht areas and an exceptionally rich history with a unique cluster of nationally and internationally renowned historic sites leading it to be designated and marketed as the ‘Heritage County’.

### Population

The population of the county of Meath in 2016 was 195,044 with a relatively even split between men and women. This is an increase of 5.9% (or 10,909 persons) since the 2011 census and the county population has been increasing steadily in the last decade. The most populated towns are set out in the table below, showing highest population densities in the towns within commuting distance of Dublin.

**Table 1:** Population Numbers across Settlements in Meath, 2016

Settlements	Population Numbers
Navan	30,173
Ashbourne	12,679
Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington	11,872
Ratoath	9,533
Trim	9,194
Dunboyne	7,272
Kells	6,135
Duleek	4,219
Dunshaughlin	4,305
Stamullen	3,361
Enfield	3,239

Between the 2011 and 2016 census period, the greatest population change has taken place in Clonee village where the population has increased by +30.9% followed by Longwood at +14.9%. The areas that show a population decrease in this period include Gormanston (-25%), Dunderry (-8.6%) and Drumconrath (-6.8%).

## Age Profile and Age Dependency

The county has the 6th youngest population of all local authorities in Ireland with 29.3% of the population aged under 18 (compared to the national figure of 25%). Just over one in

every three people in the municipal districts of Navan (30.36%) and Slane (30.67%) was under the age of 18 in 2016 which is of significance for organisations providing children and family services.

Drilling down further into the data, there are some places within the county that have a particularly high young population and a significantly high older population. It is important to note that the greatest numbers of younger people and older people reside in the larger urban areas like in Navan and Ashbourne but if we take the proportion of the population in settlements around the county, we can see a much more detailed picture:

- A significant proportion of the population in Carlanstown and Enfield fall into the 0–4 age group in comparison to county and state figures.
- One in every 5 persons in Balbradagh<sup>12</sup>, Stamullen and Kentstown are aged 5–12, much higher than the county or state average.
- Longwood and Enfield have particularly high proportion the 0–12 age group (nearly one in every three persons). These areas also have above the state and county averages of the 25–44 year old age bracket along with Clonee, where one in every two persons living here is within this age range.
- Nearly half the population in Gormanston (43.47%) are aged 65 or older and significant older populations also in Kilmainham Wood (32.28%) and Kilcloon (22.86%).
- The areas that have either very high proportions of young and older people also have quite low proportions in the 18–24 year old age bracket.

<sup>12</sup> More commonly known as 'Robinstown'

**Table 2:** Age Breakdown in 2016 (%)

	0-4	5-12	13-17	18-24	25-44	45-64	65+
<b>Meath (%)</b>	<b>8.07</b>	<b>13.94</b>	<b>7.28</b>	<b>7.26</b>	<b>29.35</b>	<b>23.43</b>	<b>10.66</b>
<b>State (%)</b>	<b>6.96</b>	<b>11.52</b>	<b>6.52</b>	<b>8.24</b>	<b>29.53</b>	<b>23.84</b>	<b>13.31</b>
Carlanstown	13.86	16.11	8.13	6.78	34.94	15.51	4.67
Enfield	12.47	17.78	6.64	5.37	37.82	15.87	4.04
Longwood	11.95	19.92	7.21	3.80	38.01	14.61	4.49
Clonee	11.74	10.05	2.78	6.42	52.30	10.05	6.66
Kilmessan	11.62	14.22	6.57	4.89	36.54	20.49	5.66
Balbradagh <sup>13</sup>	7.49	22.73	9.36	4.01	28.61	22.73	5.08
Stamullan	10.24	20.83	6.87	5.89	35.70	16.48	3.99
Kentstown	7.89	20.87	7.38	5.09	31.55	19.93	7.29
Kildalkey	9.46	19.21	8.19	5.08	28.81	21.89	7.34
Gormanston	2.67	6.67	6.13	6.93	11.47	22.67	43.47
Kilmainham Wood	4.43	12.97	4.75	6.33	20.57	18.67	32.28
Kilcloon	10.36	8.93	3.21	5.00	31.07	18.57	22.86
Dunderry	6.47	15.29	5.29	7.06	19.41	24.71	21.76

The age dependency ratio (measured as the proportion of the population under 15 years of age or over 65 as a % of the working age population) essentially reflects the health of the local economy – a balanced economy is one where there is a significant active labour force

<sup>13</sup> As above.

alongside an inactive labour force (i.e. children and older people). The age dependency ratio across the county in 2016 was 55.6% (52.7% in the state as a whole) basically indicating that for every one person working in Meath, there is one person dependent on public services such as health and education.

Reflecting the relatively young population in the county, the youth age dependency ratio (the proportion of the population under the age of 15 as a % of the working age population) stands at 39% which is higher than the state average of 32.3%. At the other end of the age spectrum, the old age dependency ratio is 16.6%, lower than the state average of 20.4%, again reflecting the youthful population profile of the county.

### Ethnicity & Nationality

The vast majority of people living in the county of Meath are classified as Irish with 10.1% categorised as non-nationals (19,601). The majority of non-Irish nationals are from Poland (4,460), Lithuania (3,443) and the UK (3,251) and reside primarily in the main urban centres of Navan, Ashbourne and Kells. Nearly one in every five persons living in Ashbourne is classified as a non-Irish national living in the town (19.3% or 2,430) but it is Clonee that records the highest proportion of non-nationals at 35.2% of the villages population. The town of Oldcastle is also home to a significant non-Irish national population (26.2%), the vast majority of these being from Lithuania.

Looking at ethnic identifiers, 82.2% of the population of Meath identify as ‘White Irish’. Reflecting the non-national figures above, there are strong showings of ‘Other White’ in Clonee (30.8%), Oldcastle (24.5%), Ashbourne (18.4%) and Navan (15.5%). The largest number of people identifying as ‘Black or Black Irish’ reside in Navan, Ashbourne and Kells.

There are 971 people from the travelling community identified in Meath in the 2016 census (although it is acknowledged that the traveller identifier is often under-reported). The majority of these reside in Navan town (664 in total or 2.2% of the population). This is

well above the state figure of 0.5% and the county wide figure of 0.7%. Trim also registers significant traveller numbers with 105 members from this community living there, followed by Athboy (22 people) and Kells and Dunshaughlin (13 people registered in these areas).

Finally, there is a direct provision centre on the east coast of the county located in Mosney which housed 727 persons in 2017, half of which are under the age of 18. A significant proportion of the residents in the centre (circa 50%) come from Africa (majority from Nigeria), with strong numbers from the Middle East and Syrian.<sup>14</sup>

## Family Structure

Nearly 40% of households comprised of married couples with children in Meath in 2016. A further 5% of households were cohabiting couples with children and almost 10% of households were headed by single parent mothers (8.2%) and single parent fathers (1.5%). A significant number of households were comprised of one person households (17.9%) with a further 3.5% of households comprising of co-habiting couples (with no children).

Turning to families in the county, 15.4% of families with children under the age of 15 are headed by a lone or single parent. This is lower than the state average of 20%. Table 3 below shows that a number of areas around the county record proportions far higher than the state average – in Drumconrath, nearly one in every two families is headed by a lone parent, one in every three in Nobber and Dunderry. The majority of these families are headed by lone mothers (14%) with lone fathers making up 1.4% of the family structure. Some areas within the county have particularly high proportion of lone fathers with children strongly evident in places like Crossakeel (7.7% of families), Drumconrath (5.6%) and Clonard (4.7%).

<sup>14</sup> Meath Children and Young People's Plan 2018–2020 (pg. 35)

**Table 3:** Lone Parent Families with Children >15 (2016)

	Total Lone Parent Families with children >15 (%)	Lone Mother Families with children >15 (%)	Lone Father Families with children >15 (%)
<b>Meath</b>	15.4	14	1.4
<b>State</b>	20	18.5	1.5
Drumconrath	41.7	36.1	5.6
Athboy	23.2	21.6	1.6
Nobber	30.4	30.4	0
Ballivor	23.7	21.7	2
Kells	23.1	21.8	1.4
Clonard	23.4	19.1	4.7
Dunderry	31.8	31.8	0
Kilmainham Wood	23.5	17.6	5.9
Summerhill	23.5	23.5	0
Oldcastle	23.4	21.2	2.2

The impression of Meath as a relatively youthful county is underpinned by the family cycle data. It shows a large proportion of families at the early school through to adolescent phase of the family cycle (40.4%) in far greater numbers than is evident at national level (25.6%).

- There are high proportion of families in the pre-school cycle in Clonee (26.1%), Carlanstown (20.1%) and Enfield (18%).

- There are a high proportion of families in the early school cycle in Ashbourne (18.8%), Stamullen (21.3%), Enfield (21.6%) and Longwood (20.2%).
- There are a high proportion of families in the pre-adolescent/ adolescent family cycle in Kildalkey (39.2% of all families), Balbradagh<sup>15</sup> (40%), Longwood (33.1%), Stamullen (34.1%) and Oldcastle (32.6%).
- There are a high proportion of families who are retired in Gormanston (24.4% of all families), Kilcloon (24.4%), Dunderry (18.8%) and Kilmainham Wood (16.4%). This is almost double the county rate of 8.2%.

## Education

There are 116 primary schools (including 3 special schools) 21 post primary schools and 3 special schools in the county. Nine schools have DEIS status – 5 primary schools (4 in Navan and 1 in Kells) and 4 post primary (1 in Longwood, 1 in Nobber, 1 in Navan and 1 in Trim).<sup>16</sup>

Just over one in ten people in the county (11%) have no formal education or primary level education only. This is below the state figure of 12.5%. The greatest numbers of people with no formal or primary education only reside in the larger population centres of Navan, Ashbourne and Kells. But some of the smaller areas have significantly much higher proportions of the population (one in every four persons) with primary education only predominantly in the north, north-west and south-west of the county e.g. Drumconrath, Gormanston and Kilmainham Wood.

<sup>15</sup> More commonly known as ‘Robinstown’

<sup>16</sup> SICAP Plan for 2018–2022, pg. 46

**Table 4:** Educational Attainment in Meath in 2016 (%)

	No formal/ primary education only	Lower secondary	Higher secondary	Tech/ apprentice/ certificate	Non- degree (diploma)	Degree/ post-grad PhD
<b>Meath</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>18.4</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>20.8</b>
Drumconrath	25.5	18.6	18.2	12.1	5.6	11.7
Gormanston	23.2	15.7	18.4	8.9	11.9	13.0
Kilmainham Wood	26	12.3	14.6	12.3	7.8	5.5
Dunderry	18.7	14	18.7	15.9	10.3	18.7
Clonard	17.4	16.1	18.8	17.4	11.6	15.2
Kilcloon	7.2	10.8	18	17	14.4	30.9
Dunboyne	6.8	11.4	19.7	14.0	16.0	27.1
Ratoath	5.7	11.0	20.5	16.8	16.5	25.0
Julianstown/ Whitecross	7.9	13.3	16.2	17.9	15.7	26
Enfield	7.3	12.2	18.2	18.8	17.1	23
Dunshaughlin	6.0	12.6	21.4	16.0	18.0	23
Clonee	6.6	7	16.7	15	22.4	25.3

Looking at third level attainment, a total of 18.4% of the population has attained a degree and/or postgraduate which is just below the state figure of 20.8%. A significant proportion of the population also achieved technical/ apprenticeship qualification (16.6%) which is higher

than the national figure of 14.7% and a further 13.6% attained diploma level certification in Meath, again higher than the national figure of 12.6%. Certain areas around the county have fared better than others when it comes to degree level attainment such as Dunboyne, Kells and Ratoath.

Just over 80% of young people in schools progressed to third level education in 2017 which is slightly above the state figure of 79.6%. Out of this figure, the majority attended Institute of Technology campuses (44.3%) and 37.5% attended universities.

## Employment and Unemployment

There was a relatively strong labour force participation rate in Meath in 2016 (64.2%) which is slightly higher than the national figure of 61.4%. Out of the total labour force in Meath, there was 11.2% unemployed in 2016 which is down significantly from 18% unemployed in 2011. There are some areas around the county which record much higher unemployment rates and they include: Oldcastle (23.2%), Kilmainham Wood (23.1%), Ballivor (21%), Drumconrath (20%), Kells (19.1%) and Nobber (17.8%). It should be noted that these are areas that lie in the west/ north west of the county.

The live register, while not a measurement of unemployment per se, gives an indication of trends in the labour market at a local level.<sup>17</sup> The live register was at its highest in July 2011 with 12,350 people signing on around the county – 4,707 female; 7,643 male and 2,138 of these were under the age of 25. As of January 2019, this figure dropped to 4,581 (2,054 female; 2527 male) and 86 under the age of 25.

The majority of people working in Meath work in commerce and trade (24.4%) followed by professional services (21.5%), manufacturing (11.5%), transport and communications

(9.6%), building and construction (7.4%) public administration (5.7%) and agriculture, forest and fishing (4.5%). There are some variations within the county: large numbers of people in Nobber and Drumconrath are employed in the agriculture/forestry industry; Oldcastle has a strong manufacturing dependence; Rathmoylan has a strong showing with building and construction industry and significant numbers of people in Dunderry are employed in professional services.

Fig. 1: Occupation Breakdown by Geographic Area

Location	Agriculture, for..	Building and c..	Commerce an..	Manufacturing ..	Other	Professional s..	Public adminis..	Transport and ..
Ashbourne	0.5	5.7	29.7	9.4	17.2	18.4	6	13.2
Athboy	1.7	8.2	22	12.3	21.2	22.6	5	7.1
Balbradagh	1.3	7.3	24.5	15.9	8.6	23.2	9.3	9.9
Ballivor	1.9	8.6	22.3	13.5	20.1	20.2	3.9	9.6
Carlanstown	2.5	9.5	31.7	9.5	22.2	14.4	5.3	4.9
Ceanannas Mór (Kells) T..	2.8	8.4	22.5	12.7	18.4	21.1	6.5	7.5
Clonard	1.4	10.4	22.9	11.8	17.4	21.5	6.3	8.3
Clonee Village	0.4	4.4	26.3	16.4	16	18.3	4.2	13.9
Crossakeel	2.8	5.6	25	15.3	22.2	15.3	4.2	9.7
Donore	1.3	5.6	19.4	16	24.8	17.2	5.3	10.3
Drumconrath	5.3	6.8	26.5	10.6	21.2	16.7	4.5	8.3
Duleek	1.1	11.8	21.2	12.4	19.5	18.7	4.3	11
Dunboyne	0.6	6.3	27.9	9.7	13.9	23.4	6.7	11.5
Dunderry	1.6	15.9	14.3	12.7	12.7	36.5	1.6	4.8
Dunshaughlin	1.4	6.1	26.9	9.6	12.9	23.2	7.8	12
Enfield	0.9	7.7	26.3	11	18.5	19.8	6.3	9.5
Gormanston	3.7	3.7	37	10.2	13.9	13.9	10.2	7.4
Julianstown/Whitecross	2.3	4.5	27.1	9.4	12.4	24.4	8.3	11.7
Kentstown	1.2	6.2	24.2	13	16.3	17.8	6.4	14.9
Kilcloon	0.8	12.6	27.7	10.1	11.8	26.9	7.6	2.5
Kildalkey	0.8	10.5	21.8	13.2	11.7	24.4	6	11.7
Kilmainham	2.5	11.3	20	11.3	13.8	27.5	1.3	12.5
Kilmessan	4.6	8.3	19.5	7.9	22.4	22.8	5.3	9.2
Laytown-Bettystown-Mo..	0.4	5	25.6	8.7	16.7	22.5	5.7	15.3
Longwood	1.5	9.3	20.9	11	15.2	24.8	6.2	11
Navan (An Uaimh) Town	1.4	6.7	24.7	12.8	16.5	23.2	5.6	9.1
Nobber	10.8	10.1	21.6	11.5	15.5	23.6	4.1	2.7
Oldcastle	4	5.9	19.6	36	16.2	12.8	1	4.5
Rathmoylan	3	15	26.3	6	12	22.6	7.5	7.5
Ratoath	0.5	5.6	28.2	9.9	12.9	20.8	7	15
Slane	2.2	5.7	23	11.8	19	21.4	7.5	9.3
Stamullen	2	6.1	22.5	9.6	13.4	23.2	6.3	16.8
Summerhill	2.9	6.9	27.7	13.9	17.9	19.4	4	7.2
Trim Town	1.4	5.8	24.4	11.6	19.7	22.6	6.8	7.6

Source: Meath Economic and Community Monitor.

<sup>17</sup> The Live Register records the number of people signing on at local Social Protection Offices including part-time workers, seasonal and casual workers entitled to Job Seekers Benefit and Job Seekers Allowance.

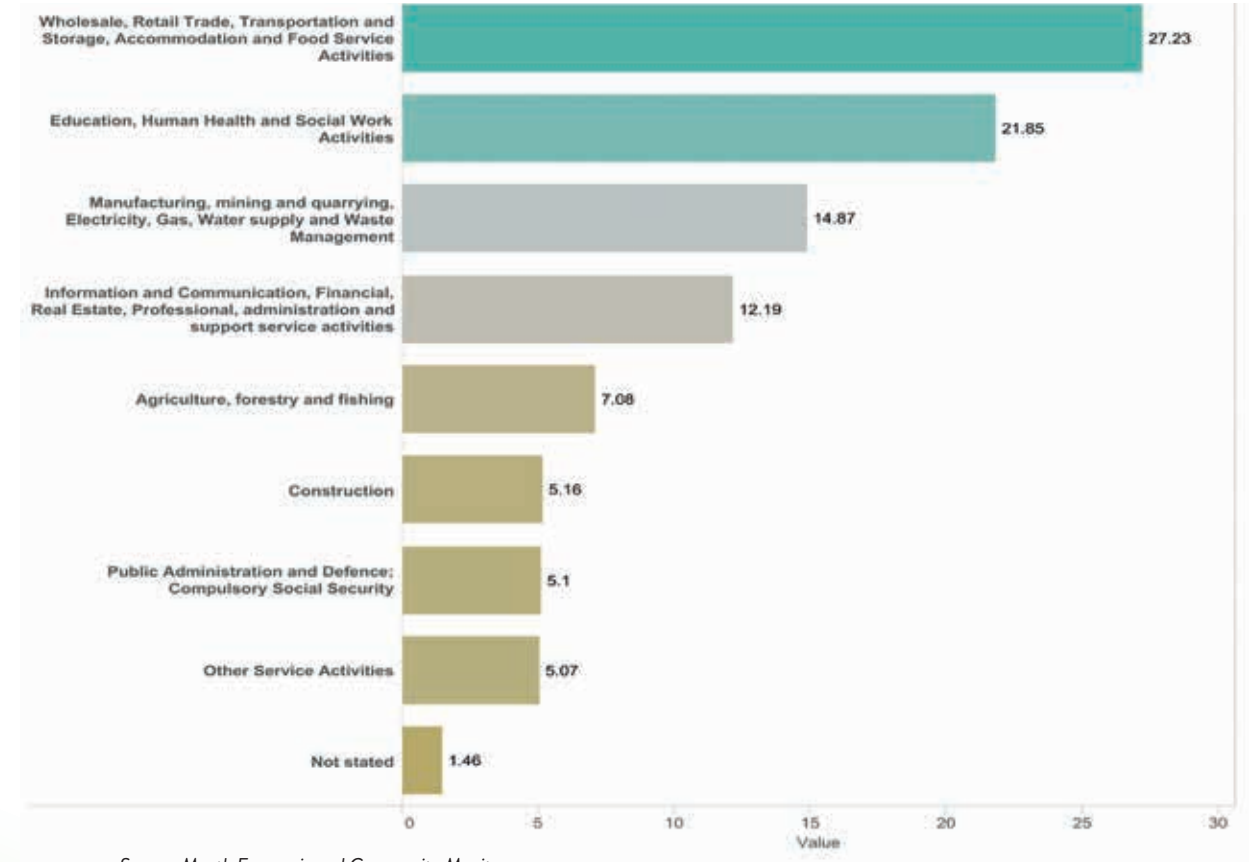
## Economy and Commuting

The commuting nature of the Meath population means that significant numbers of people leave the county to attend their jobs on a daily basis, calculated at 64% of the working population (61.4% in 2011). The majority of these people commute to the east towards the county of Dublin:

- Dublin City 16.18%
- Fingal 12.27%
- Mobile workers 10.36%
- Louth 4.39%
- South Dublin 3.57%
- Kildare 3%
- Dun Laoghaire Rathdown 1.4%
- Cavan 1.06%
- Westmeath 0.84%
- Monaghan 0.24%

The main job industries located in Meath are concentrated in the wholesale-retail-transportation-food service industry, followed by education-human health-social work. The Meath economic strategy notes that the county is particularly strong in agri-food (beef and dairy farming), mining/ quarrying, manufacturing and transportation. Growth has also been experienced in the utilities (electricity/ gas/ water), wholesale and retail, hospitality, financial services and public services.

Fig. 2: Job Industries located in Meath



Source: Meath Economic and Community Monitor.

## Housing

There were 63,861 private households in Meath in 2016 with an increase of 19% (or 10,296 households) since the 2006 census period. Nearly three quarters of these households (76.2%) were owner occupied some with a mortgage (32.9%) and others with no mortgage (43.3%).



The renting figure overall, both social renting (5.6%) and private renting (14.6%), is lower than the state average (9.4% and 18.2% respectively). While the vast majority of households renting are located in the larger urban centres, there are some pockets around the county that have particularly high renting figures. One in every four households, on average, are renting from the local authority or a voluntary housing body in the areas of Nobber (28.1%), Kilmainham Wood (27.4%), Oldcastle (24.1%), Summerhill (23.3%) and Drumconrath 21.4%.

Nearly half the households in Clonee are privately rented (42.8%) and one in every four households in Oldcastle (26.5%), Athboy 25.9%, Navan (22.7%), Carlanstown (23.7%) and Ashbourne (21.6%).

**Table 5:** Housing Tenure Breakdown across Meath in 2016 (%)

	Owner Occupier	Owner Occupied no mortgage	Owner Occupier with Mortgage	Rented Private	Rented Social
<b>Meath</b>	<b>76.2</b>	<b>43.3</b>	<b>32.9</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>5.6</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>67.6</b>	<b>31.6</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>9.4</b>
Nobber	50	22.7	27.3	16.4	28.1
Kilmainham Wood	55.6	22.6	33.1	13.7	27.4
Oldcastle	43.6	18.3	28	26.5	24.1
Summerhill	55.1	32.9	22.3	17.3	23.3
Drumconrath	62.6	24.4	38.2	9.9	21.4
Clonee	52.1	43.1	9	42.8	1.9
Oldcastle	46.3	18.3	28	26.5	24.1
Athboy	59.9	49	21.4	21.6	4.6

	Owner Occupier	Owner Occupied no mortgage	Owner Occupier with Mortgage	Rented Private	Rented Social
Navan	63.6	40.5	23.1	22.7	10.1
Carlanstown	66.0	47.4	18.6	23.7	6.5
Ashbourne	70.4	49	21.4	21.6	4.6

There are currently 3,746 people on the social housing waiting list in Meath (of which 1,865 are in receipt of the housing assistance payment), an increase on the figure of 3,422 recorded in June 2018. The number of cases presenting as homeless to the council in 2018 amounted to 435 comprising of 216 families (with a total of 399 children) and 219 individuals or couples. A total of 183 households received emergency accommodation placement in the same year, 41 of these were households with children. This has decreased from 2017 where 217 households sought emergency accommodation placements. So far this year (from 1st January 2019–31st March 2019), a total of 46 households sought emergency accommodation, 15 of which included households with children.<sup>18</sup>

## Health & Wellbeing

The vast majority of the population in Meath rate their health as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ with just 1.2% of the population saying it is ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’ which is below the state figure of 1.6%. Some areas within the county rate their health less positively – 2.8% of people in Crossakeel say their health is ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’, 3.2% of the population of Gormanston and 2.8% in Kilmainham Wood which interestingly corresponds with those areas that have a high proportion of older people.

<sup>18</sup> Figures provided by Meath County Council – Housing Section.

In the county as a whole, 11.6% say they have a disability which is lower than the state figure of 13.5%. But within the county, there is a radically different picture with some areas (interestingly reflecting the health rating above) recording a high proportion of the population with a disability – 33.6% of the population in Gormanston (which is essentially one in every three persons), 32% in Kilmainham Wood and 17.1% in Dunderry. These areas also correspond to the parts of the country where there is a high proportion of older people.

The picture of younger people and disability is evidenced in the recent Children and Young People’s Plan 2018–2020 where it states that 426 children in Meath have an intellectual disability (data from the 2016 State of the Nation’s Children report) which is the 12th highest rate per county in the state. A total of 597 children registered with a physical-sensory disability in Meath which was the third highest registration rate in the state.

The trends in deaths caused by cancer, heart disease & stroke, respiratory diseases and injuries/ poisoning are all below the national average and have been decreasing since 2007. Cancer incidence rates for the main causes of cancer are average except for female malignant colorectal cancer which is the second highest rate nationally. The rate for male malignant prostate cancer is also high compared to the national average.

Mental health indicators are reflected through self-harm and suicide rates across an area.<sup>19</sup> During 2017, a total of 295 people (123 males and 172 females) presented to emergency departments as a result of self-harm injuries. This translates to a rate of 142 and 187 per 100,000 for males and females respectively which is below the national rate of 181 and 218 per 100,000.

The same person can present a number of times to an emergency department with self-harm injuries and if we look at these figures, a total of 371 presentations (146 male and 225

<sup>19</sup> Self harm data collated by the National Suicide Research Foundation and suicide data collected by the Central Statistics Office.

female) were made in Meath. The highest number of presentations occurred in the 15–44 year age group (71%).<sup>20</sup>

**Table 6:** Self Harm Presentations by Age and Gender in Meath in 2017

Self Harm Presentations by age and gender							
	<20yrs	20 – 24yrs	25 – 34yrs	35 – 44yrs	45 – 54yrs	55+yrs	Total
Male	31	22	30	28	20	15	146
Female	51	33	37	42	44	18	225

Meath recorded a suicide rate of 5.8 in the 2016–2018 period, slightly lower than the national rate at 8.2 per 100,000 population. This is the lowest it has been since the 2004–2006 period where a rate of 11.1 per 100,000 was recorded although rates have fluctuated in the intervening years. It should be noted that the 2017 and 2018 rate figures are provisional.

**Table 7:** Suicide Rate in County Meath

	2004-2006	2005-2007	2006-2008	2007-2009	2008-2010	2009-2011	2010-2012	2011-2013	2012-2014	2013-2015	2014-2016	2015-2017*	2016-2018*
Ireland	11.6	11.0	10.9	11.3	11.4	11.7	11.6	11.5	11.0	10.1	9.6	8.8	8.2
Meath	11.1	7.5	9.3	10.8	10.9	8.3	7.5	8.7	9.1	9.8	9.0	8.0	5.8

\*Rate for 2017 and 2018 are provisional

<sup>20</sup> In Meath, drug overdose was the most common method of self-harm, involved in 68% of presentations (n=251). Alcohol was involved in 40% of presentations (n=148). Self-cutting was the only other common method, involved in 24% of presentations (n=87). There were 24 (7%) presentations involving attempted hanging and 12 involving attempted drowning (3%), fewer than 10 presentations involved attempted poisoning.

## Deprivation

At county level, there has been an improvement in measures of deprivation between the census period of 2011 and 2016. The county of Meath as a whole is ranked as 'marginally above average' in terms of measures of deprivation relative to other areas in the country.<sup>21</sup> The Ceannanus Mor (Kells) electoral district is the only one in Meath that falls into the 'disadvantaged' category.<sup>22</sup>

Looking at the small area statistics that allows analysis at a more local geographic level, there were 53 small areas in Meath classified as 'disadvantaged' (46) or 'Very disadvantaged (7 small areas)' in 2016.<sup>23</sup> Six of these 'very disadvantaged' small areas are located in Navan and one is located in Trim. The number of people living in disadvantaged areas stands at 11,725 and the number of people living in very disadvantaged areas is 2,180.

<sup>21</sup> Relative deprivation scores range from -30 to +30 with the average being zero and classifies areas based on these scores as 'extremely disadvantaged' (-30) to 'very disadvantaged' to 'disadvantaged' to 'marginally below the average' to 'marginally above the average', 'affluent', 'very affluent' and 'extremely affluent' (+30).

<sup>22</sup> SICAP Plan, pg. 52.

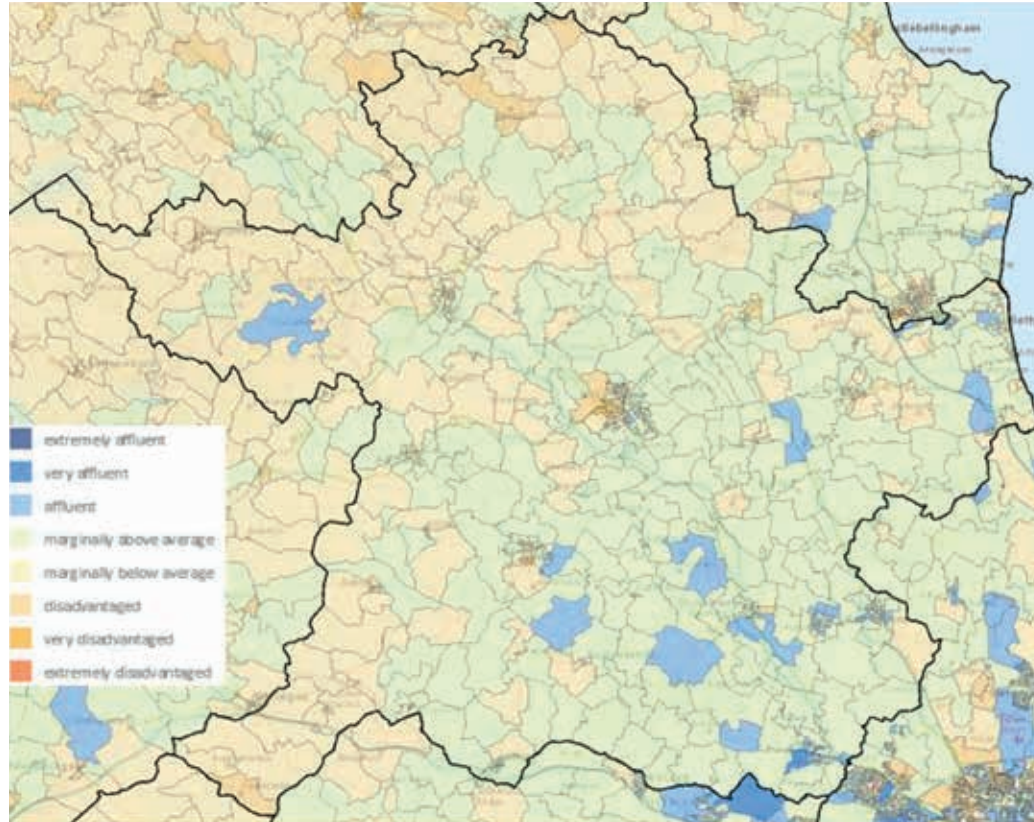
<sup>23</sup> Small Areas' are areas of population generally comprising between 80 and 120 dwellings created by The National Institute of Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) on behalf of the Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) in consultation with CSO. 'Small Areas' were designed as the lowest level of geography for the compilation of statistics in line with data protection and generally comprise either complete or part of townlands or neighbourhoods. There is a constraint on Small Areas that they must nest within Electoral Division boundaries.

**Table 8:** Disadvantaged Small Areas in Meath

Areas (Specifically)	Number of Disadvantaged Small Areas	Combined Population of Small Areas
Navan Area	17	4,832
South West (Oldcastle, Castlejordan, Killaconnigan)	7	1,714
Kells Area	7	1,384
Duleek / Slane	5	1,351
South East (Ashbourne, Ratoath, Dunshaughlin, Ardath, Dunboyne)	5	1,362
Trim Area	4	1,153
North Meath (Drumconrath, Kilmainham Wood, Ardagh)	4	964
East Meath (Bettystown, Layton, Julianstown/Mornington)	3	611
Athboy & South West Rural	2	536
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>13,907</b>

Source: SICAP Plan, pg. 54.

**Fig. 3:** Map of County Meath, Relative Deprivation (Pobal Maps)



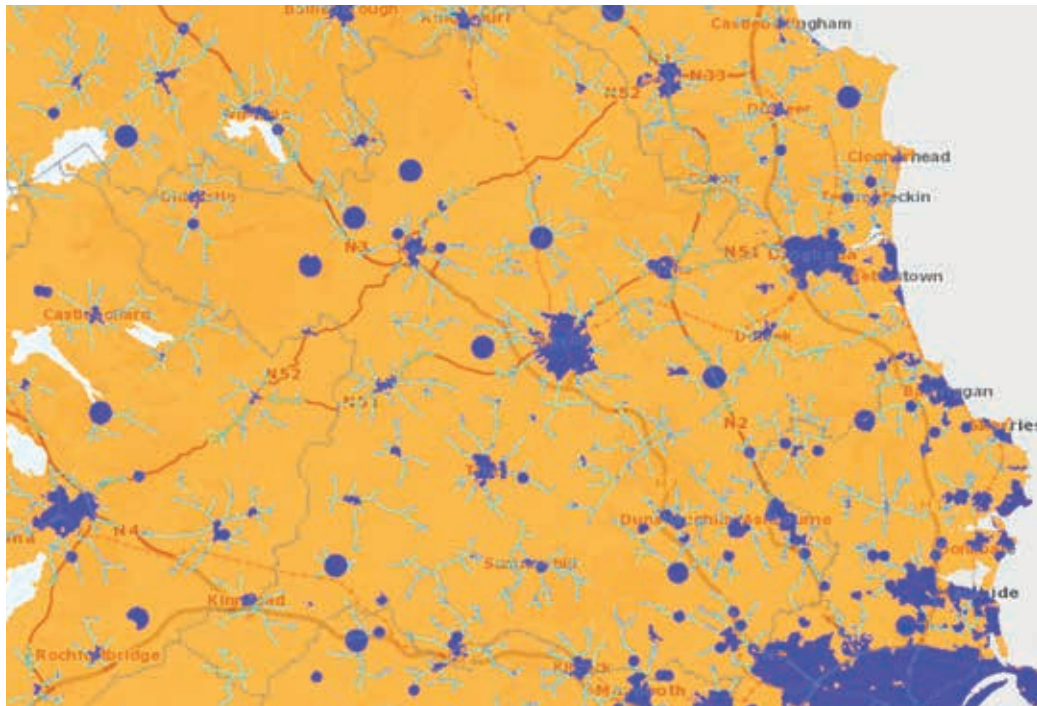
Source: SICAP Plan for 2018–2022, Meath Partnership

## Connectivity

Just over 70% (73%) of households in the county have access to broadband in 2016, which is slightly higher than the state average. A further 8% they have ‘other’ options for internet connection and 16% (nearly one in every five households) state they have no broadband service. The picture is a little more patchy across the county where areas primarily in the north, west and south of the county have poor broadband connectivity with one in three households saying they had no internet connection. Areas in the east of the county on the other hand (like Dunboyne and Ratoath), fare somewhat better with just under 10% of the population stating they have no internet connection. This is a bit more evidenced in the high speed broadband map below which identifies locations and premises as being ‘amber, light or blue’. The blue area depicts where commercial operators are delivering or have indicated plans to deliver high speed broadband services. The light blue areas are where commercial providers (in this case Eir) have committed to commercial rural deployment plans to rollout high speed broadband. The amber areas are the target areas for state intervention through the national broadband plan which in the case of Meath, will be significant for people living in the north and north west of the county, once a decision is taken on the procurement process at national level.

The other way people connect around the county is through cars and car ownership and public transport. Fitting in with the pattern of a commuter county, the CSO reports that Meath has the highest proportion of households in the state with at least one car (90.3%), followed closely by Cork county (89.0%). Meath also had the largest proportion (43.3%) of households with two cars. 7.5% of the population in the county do not own any car which is lower than the state figure of 15%. Drilling into the data across the county shows a somewhat different picture between areas – 40% of households in the Kells urban area do not own a car, followed by the urban areas of Navan and Trim town at 30% and 25% respectively. The importance of public transport in and out of these urban centres is highlighted by this data. A significant proportion of households in Kilmainham Wood and Oldcastle (16% and 17% respectively) do not own a car reflecting perhaps the cohort of older people living in these areas.

Fig. 4: Highspeed Broadband Map



Source: Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources <https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=99c229dc4c414971afc50818b25337ef>

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