

Manager's Foreword

In preparing this new County Meath Development Plan, which will guide development within the county during the period 2007 to 2013, there is a greater than ever emphasis on balanced development, in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainability.

The challenges facing County Meath cannot be underestimated. We find ourselves in a position of unprecedented growth within the residential sector, unparalleled by any other county, even those within the Greater Dublin Area or Mid-east region. However, our employment sector and economic development generally has remained low, unable to keep pace with the increases in residential population. We have provided homes for the people of the county, and for many who have migrated here, but have been unable to match this with a corresponding level of jobs, amenities, services and physical infrastructure necessary to sustain such a population.

The development plan, while addressing the planning authority's specific areas of responsibility such as Roads, Sanitary Services, Housing, Environmental Protection, Culture, Heritage, Community and Social Infrastructure, also sets out a longer term vision of the county. This vision establishes the manner in which the county can be developed and its environment protected and enhanced, employing the principles of sustainable development and social partnership.

The introduction of the 'sustainable development' concept was considered an innovative and positive force of change within planning at the time of writing the 2001 plan. However, it was not until the Planning & Development Act, 2000 that the principles of sustainable development were first statutorily introduced into the Irish planning legislation. At the time of writing the current plan (i.e. 2001 Plan), the implications and implementation of such an objective had yet to be elaborated upon and experienced.

The current county development plan review now underway has the benefit of additional national and regional guidance, which have been devised and written with greater understanding of the realities of and implications for 'sustainable development'. In particular, the need to encourage balanced growth and development within communities and across the county and where possible self-sufficient communities, is recognised as being critical to achieving sustainable development. Our true challenge in writing and ultimately adopting this new plan, will not only be to include statements that accord with the principles of sustainable development, but to include actions and targets which if followed and met will result in the sustainable communities we so desire.

The review of the County Development Plan is not a task performed in isolation. From the outset, it must be stated that the process is a review of the existing County Development Plan (adopted in 2001) and thus the existing Development Plan forms the basis of much of our deliberations. The development plan review is further guided and influenced by the Irish planning code, as outlined in current legislation and other important national and regional guidelines and strategies. Such guidelines and strategies include, inter alia, the National Development Plan, the National Spatial Strategy, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area, Dublin Transportation Office Strategy 'A Platform for Change', Transport 21, Retail Planning Guidelines, Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, Comhar Principles for Sustainable Development.

The Development Plan is further influenced by the council's own studies, plans and strategies, which seek to influence development within the county. In particular, the County Development Board Strategy, 'Le Cheile' which is a ten year strategy for the economic, social and cultural development of County Meath provides a template, guiding all public services and local development activities, in effect bringing more coherence to the planning and delivery of services

at a local level. The review of the County Development Plan must also seek to address the spatial ramifications of 'Le Cheile'.

In preparing this draft County Development Plan, we have endeavoured to address the challenges and the many issues raised by the members over the years as they present themselves in terms of their spatial implications. To this end, the planning authority published a series of Strategic Issues Papers, detailing the opportunities, constraints and challenges facing the county and sought comment regarding same. We acknowledge and welcome the participation of those who took this opportunity to make submissions and seek the continued involvement and participation of all in the community.

This draft plan, which has been prepared in accordance with Section 11 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, will when adopted replace Vol I and Vol III of the Meath County Development Plan 2001. The draft sets out a statutory strategic framework and settlement structure for the county, and will provide the necessary strategic policies and objectives to guide the preparation of the Local Area Plans, which will replace Volume II and associated book of maps. The mechanism to deliver the next county development plan is laid out in Section 1. It would be our hope that in working in partnership together, with elected members, the public and other stakeholders, that we would be able to make the decisions necessary to ensure our continued and improved economic prosperity while maintaining the particularly high-quality life that exists in Meath

Tom Dowling,
County Manager.

Chapter 1 : Policy Context

1 POLICY CONTEXT

1.1.1 Introduction

The role of a high quality planning service is a vital and central function of any Local Authority. It acts both as a guide to the requirements and policies of the Planning Authority for those interested in pursuing development as well as informing the general public as to how these development proposals are likely to be assessed.

The structure of this service is guided by planning legislation and contains two primary components (1) the Development Plan which sets general policies and development standards, and (2) Development management which is the process whereby individual applications are assessed against the policies of the Development Plan. The Development Plan plays a vital role in development promotion and regulation, and must therefore have a clear vision of the County, now and into the future. Under the Planning and Development Act 2000 each Planning Authority is obliged to make a Development Plan every six years. Development Plans comprise of a written statement and attendant maps that give a graphic representation of the objectives contained in the Plan. All Development Plans must have regard to national and regional policy.

Each Development Plan must include objectives for:

- Land use zoning of areas for residential, commercial, industrial, education, recreational, community facilities, agricultural uses;
- Provision of infrastructure – transport including the promotion of public transport and road / rail development, energy, communications facilities, water supplies, waste recovery, disposal facilities, waste water services, etc. ;
- Conservation and protection of the environment;
- Protection of structures and preservation of the character of Conservation Protection Areas;
- The integration of social, community and cultural requirements with planning and sustainable development of the area;
- The preservation of the character of the landscape including preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest;
- The renewal and development of areas in need of regeneration;
- Provision of traveller accommodation;
- Preserving, improving and extending amenities and recreational amenities;
- Major Accidents Directive (siting of new establishments, modifications of existing establishments, development in the vicinity of establishments);
- Provision of community services, including schools, crèches, childcare facilities and other educational facilities;
- Protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of Gaeltacht areas.

1.1.2 Preparation of a new County Meath Development Plan

The existing County Development Plan was adopted on 5th March 2001 and remains in force until March 4th 2007, unless otherwise superseded by a new County Development Plan.

Section 11 (1) of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended states that ‘not later than 4 years after the making of a development plan, a Planning Authority shall give notice of its intention to review its existing development plan and to prepare a new development plan for the area.’ Meath County Council is now in the process of reviewing the County Development Plan for the period 2007 – 2013. This will take the form of a strategic review, aimed at determining a development strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Meath for

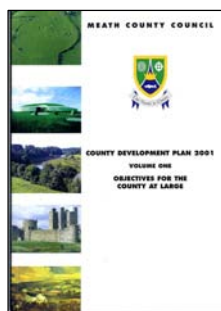
the next six years, in line with adopted council and corporate policy, as well as national and regional guidance.

The Council's existing strategic objectives are outlined as follows:

- *“To promote and implement the sustainable development of our county in partnership with local communities so as to improve the quality of life and living environment of all our citizens”*
- *“To promote the sustainable development of county Meath through an integrated approach that recognises the economic, social and cultural potential of the population, and the limits and opportunities provided by the county’s environmental and other resources.”*
(Mission Statement, Le Cheile)

1.1.3 Review Format

As the existing (2001) plan provides the starting point for the current review process, it is essential that one have an understanding of its format and context.



The 2001 County Development Plan is divided into four principal sections.

1. **Volume One (Objectives for the County at Large)** sets out the broad development strategy for the county including detailed objectives for various categories of works and development management issues.
2. **Volume Two** sets out detailed written statements and development objectives for each of the thirty individual local plan areas, which form part of the county development plan.
3. **Volume Three (Conservation)** sets out the various categories of protected structures, European sites and other heritage and environmental designations such as views and prospects listed under the county development plan including helpful guidance on the importance of these sites and areas.
4. There are 15 maps for the Rural Detail series. These provide 3 maps for each of the 5 electoral areas indicating settlement structures, environmental designations and infrastructural needs over the plan period.

As outlined above, the 2001 County Development Plan consists of three volumes, Volume I - Objectives for the County at Large, Volume II – Written Statement and Detailed Objectives for Towns and Villages inclusive of book of maps and Volume III – Conservation. In order to marry the form of the existing County Development Plan with the Planning & Development Acts 2000 – 2002, a twin-tracked approach is being adopted in this current review process. The new Draft County Development Plan will consist of a single document comprising of a revised and updated Volume I and III, whilst individual Local Area Plans for the Towns and Villages (replacing Volume II) will be prepared over the course of the next couple of years. In such instances where a local area plan (LAP) has not been prepared for a town or village (previously the subject of a town or village plan in Volume II of the 2001 County Development Plan) on adoption of the new county plan, the existing plan for the particular town or village will remain in force (i.e. will continue to operate as the statutory plan for the area) until such time as the LAP replaces it. It is intended that all such LAPs will be prepared and adopted within the immediate two years preceding the adoption of the county plan. In respect of East Meath Local Area Plans –North and South and in accordance with Section 18 (4) (6) of the Planning & Development Acts 2000-2002, it is proposed that these two would remain in effect as adopted in October 2005, unless otherwise amended in accordance with Section 18 (5), or other.

Having regard to the changes in legislation brought about by the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended, the new County Development Plan will remain in effect for six years, 2007-2013, with a review of it commencing no later than four years after adoption.

1.1.4 Pre-draft Public Consultations

Prior to the preparation of the draft County Development Plan, and in accordance with Section 11 of the 2000-2002 Acts, the Planning Department prepared a detailed pre-draft consultation document 'Preparation of a new County Meath Development Plan - Strategic Issues Paper'. The notice of intention of Meath County Council to review the existing County Development Plan was published in local and national newspaper. The purpose of placing the 'Preparation of a new County Meath Development Plan - Strategic Issues Paper' was to engage in public consultation pursuant to the requirements of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000- 2002. The document also ensured that adequate information was available to interested persons, groups and organisations as the basis of instigating pre draft consultations. This document was made available to any person at County Hall, at the Meath County Council Area Offices and all branch libraries in addition to being available on the Council website, its existence being advertised as part of the pre draft consultation process outlined below. The issues included in the Strategic Issues Paper related to settlement strategy, development strategy, transportation, infrastructure, economic development, retail, community, tourism, built and natural heritage and rural housing, social inclusion and cultural diversity, architecture and urban design and strategic environmental assessment.

Meath County Council publicly commenced the Development Plan review with the publication of advertisements in the Irish Independent dated 4th March 2005 and the Meath Chronicle dated 5th March 2005. The advertisements notified the intention of Meath County Council to commence the preparation of the review of the existing County Development Plan. The pre-draft consultation phase commenced on the 9th March 2005 and concluded on the 6th May 2005. The advertisements also invited written submissions/observations from any interested parties or members of the public and the closing date for the receipt of pre-draft submissions/observations was 5.00 p.m. on 6th May 2005.

In addition, the consultation process comprised of the following:

- (a) letters to prescribed bodies and service providers
- (b) a notice was placed on the Meath County Council webpage
- (c) notices were on display in County Hall, the five area offices, Town Council offices, and all branch libraries in Co Meath

Preliminary consultations have also taken place with the main service providers (i.e. providers of energy, telecommunications, transport, education, etc.) to discuss plans and policies, which are likely to have a significant bearing on Development Plan policy. Discussions have also taken place with the various County Council Departments, the elected members, SPCs and with adjoining Local Authorities.

There will be further opportunity to make submissions when the Draft County Development Plan is published, and again in respect of the preparation of the Local Area Plans.

1.1.5 Response to Pre-Draft Consultation Phase

In all 352 submissions were received by Meath County Council with respect to the preparation of the new County Development Plan. Although some of the 352 written submissions were received outside of the indicated consultation period, all were considered in the Manager's report, presented to Council on 25th July, 2005.

Table 1 gives a breakdown on submissions received on an Electoral Area basis. 38% of all submissions received related to the Dunshaughlin Area with the other Electoral Areas each receiving approximately 15% of the submissions

Electoral Area	No. of submissions received
Dunshaughlin	134
Kells	65
Navan	36
Trim	63
Slane	41
General – County wide	3
Total	352

Table 1 Break down of Total Submissions Received and Considered in this Report.

303 of the 352 submissions received consisted of proposals seeking the zoning or rezoning of lands for particular purposes, accounting for 86% of all submissions received. The magnitude and scale of submissions seeking the zoning of lands for residential, mixed residential and commercial uses and industrial / employment generating uses is somewhat alarming. The submissions lodged sought the zoning of a further 7,583 acres (3,070 hectares) of land with residential accounting for 4,833 acres (1,956 hectares), mixed residential and commercial uses accounting for 1153 acres (467 hectares) and industrial / employment generating uses accounting for 1040 acres (421 hectares). In addition, zoning submissions unrelated to existing urban centres, relating primarily to residential land use with submissions in existing and proposed graigs amounting to 2,156 acres (872 hectares).

It is obvious from the analysis carried out as part of the Manager's report to the members, that the areas under greatest influence from the Dublin Metropolitan Area – namely Drogheda Environs, Ashbourne, Ratoath, Dunboyne, Dunshaughlin, Clonee and Enfield, all on or adjacent to strategic transportation corridors, are the locations which are subject of the majority of the submissions in this regard. This pressure extends to urban centres outside of Co Meath such as Maynooth, Hansfield, Kilcock and Kinnegad, which would also comfortably fall within this category. Both the scale and the geographical spread of the zonings are key issues for the Draft Development Plan.

The assessment of the individual land use zoning submissions in towns and villages is not subject to the Draft County Development Plan but the preparation of the individual Local Area Plans. The Draft County Development Plan will establish the strategic context in which the various Local Area Plans will be prepared. The manner in which land use zoning submissions relating to graigs will be incorporated into the Plan, is outlined in Section 6 (Rural Strategy).

In order to give an accurate summary of the issues based submissions, the issues raised were put under a number of category headings. The main areas of concern include the proposed settlement strategy, land use zoning, employment and economic development, infrastructure, built & natural heritage, social inclusion, cultural diversity and community infrastructure. These

issues and observations are summarised in full in the manager's report, and have been taken into consideration in the preparation of the draft Plan.

This draft, relates to that which previously fell within the remit of Volume I and III. Therefore only those submissions which pertained to the county at large have been taken into consideration to date. The Manager has already issued a report to the members, in accordance with the requirements of s.11(4)(a)(b)(c), and the members have issued direction².

The remaining submissions, relating to individual towns and villages will be taken into consideration in the various Local Area Plans (LAPs), yet to be prepared. Further consultation, as provided for under s.20 of the Act, will take place during the months of preceding the placement of this draft on public display and for up to two years after the adoption of the County Development Plan as Local Area Plans are prepared on a priority basis.

Following consultation between the elected member and officials of Meath County Council during an 8 week period, the draft County Development Plan (as per s.11(5)(c)) is placed on public display and submissions sought. Following each period of consultation, the draft plan, or amendments (as may be relevant) are placed on public display and distributed to the prescribed bodies (s.12). Submissions are sought and considered by the manager, who will report on such submissions, making his recommendations known. The adoption of the Plan remains a reserved function, i.e. it will be adopted by the elected members. In this regard procedures will adhere to the statutory provisions of section 12 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000-2002. The Plan shall be adopted no later than 4th March 2007.

In the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan and in the ultimate adoption of the Meath County Development Plan (2007-2013), the officials and elected members will have regard to national and regional guidance and strategies, in addition to complying with their statutory obligations, in particular as laid out in Sections 11 & 12 of the Planning & Development Acts, 2000-2002, the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 - 2004, as amended, and the Local Government Act, 2002.

1.1.6 The International and National Context

Physical planning in Ireland generally and Meath specifically is increasingly influenced by significant international and national reports and perspectives. At the international level, the consensus on the need to promote sustainable development is amongst the most profound influences. The term "sustainable development" refers to the meeting of societal needs of the present generation without reducing the capacity of the environment to sustain the needs of future generations. In line with Government policy and the adopted position of Meath County Council, this principle will be a major component of the County Development Plan and its aims.

The European Union will also continue to exert a major influence on the county through publications such as Agenda 2000, Local Agenda 21, the European Spatial Development Perspective, numerous and various EU Directives (as referenced in bibliography), etc.. These reports coupled to EU financial support for infrastructure improvements to transport, sanitary services and socio-economic development illustrate the depth of influence the EU will have over the Plan.

At the national level, recent reports such as the National Development Plan and Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland have been significant influences upon the preparation of this plan. Specific Planning Guidelines in relation to Retailing, Telecommunications, Renewable energy, Built Heritage, Childcare, Sustainable Rural Housing, Quarries, etc., have also been

² Directions considered as per deliberations and observations received from elected members at meetings on 03.10.05 and 21.11.05 in particular.

addressed through the development of specific policy responses detailed in the individual specific chapters and sections.

1.1.7 The Regional Context

In terms of regional context, the single greatest influence is Meath's location within the Greater Dublin Area and Mid-East Region.

In 1999 the Spatial Planning Guidelines (SPGs) were prepared for the Greater Dublin Area and Mid-East Region, providing a framework and guidance as to the direction and role of the seven authorities in this region³. The 2001 development plan had regard to these guidelines, as they pertained to Meath, as too did the plans of the other authorities prepared in the intervening period. However, when the SPGs were reviewed in 2003, and the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) for the GDA were adopted in 2004 it was found that the level of balanced growth sought and envisaged had not occurred.

The principal trends that were exhibited in the region related to the rate and scale of residential growth, in particular in the mid-east and the increased strength in the economy, again proving particularly strong in the mid-east.

'The net result of this economic growth context is that Meath is located in the fastest growing region of the country and accordingly it is reasonable to assume that the development plan must take account of a population dynamic driven by economic growth and possible net migration.' This materialised over the life of the plan, and is the single biggest challenge facing the county presenting both opportunities and threats to the county's ability to become sustainable.

Broadly Meath's key trends are identified as:

- Unforeseen and intense increase in residential population, in particular in the population available to work;
- Influx of immigrants from Dublin comprising young working professionals;
- Residential development locating along commuter belts;
- Increasing employment/participation levels;
- Altering the dominant type of work, being more public administration/ office/commercial based as opposed to involvement in local industry or agriculture;
- Local job creation unable to meet or keep pace with residential growth; and
- Significant and unsustainable commuting population.

Local job creation and improving its jobs to labour force ratio are paramount if Meath is to become sustainable. The RPGs have set Meath a target, increasing this ratio from its current (2002) levels of 0.49 to 0.57 by 2011. The RPGs have introduced the concept of dynamic clusters. It is proposed that these clusters would be developed in a mutually dependent way so that the amenities and economies of the whole are greater than the sum of the parts.

The RPGs designated a number of clusters for Meath, as follows: Primary Dynamic Cluster: Navan, Trim and Kells and Dunboyne and Ashbourne, as a secondary dynamic cluster. Having regard to Meath's somewhat unique in terms of its ability to attract economic and employment generating activities, this draft explores the opportunities associated with this concept and elaborating on it, providing for five dynamic clusters (as outlined in detail in Chapter 3 : Economic Development).

³ i.e. Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, Dun-Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, South Dublin County Council, Kildare, Wicklow and Meath County Councils.

1.1.8 Implications of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area

These Guidelines, published in July 2004 and currently the subject of review⁴, have profound implications for the types of policies to be framed in this development plan and the long-term future of the county.

In summary, the main implications for the county are listed below.

- That the town of Navan has considerable potential in a regional context to become a self sustaining town in the "*hinterland*" of the GDA, identified as a Large Growth Town I (i.e. Primary Growth Town), and connected to other urban areas by high quality road and possibly rail linkages.
- That the settlement hierarchy identified for the region be respected in the county development plan and subsequent and associated local area plans, providing for population and significant economic expansion in the county's large and moderate growth towns and within its metropolitan area, with a corresponding slow-down in the smaller centres.
- Promote and provide for sustainable linkages between the county's urban centres and the metropolitan area, in particular the rail line to Dunboyne (phase 1) and on to Navan (phase 2).
- That continued and uncurbed increases in the county's commuting population are unsustainable and the requirement to slow down population growth, in the hinterland areas is critical.
- That every effort be made to adopt a positive and proactive approach to economic and employment generating development, in particular focusing on the county's dynamic clusters.
- That the landscape, environmental and cultural heritage qualities of the Meath countryside have a significant amenity role to play in the future of the greater Dublin area which should be protected, employing new planning tools such as landscape character assessments, Landscape Conservation Area designations and / or the preparation of the local area plans for areas such as Brú na Bóinne, the Tara Skreen Area and Loughcrew / Sliabh na Calliagh. .
- That other strategic resources such as agricultural land and building materials raw materials need to be protected for strategic regional and national roles.
- To work with adjoining authorities, such as Kildare, Fingal and Drogheda Borough Council to facilitate the sustainable development of Large Growth Towns and metropolitan urban centres predominately located within the areas of our neighbouring authority but influenced and assisted by development in Meath.
- To seek the same level of support and co-operation from our neighbouring authorities when devising and implementing our policies in large urban centres which adjoin/straddle jurisdictional borders.

This Development Plan has been prepared as an implementation mechanism for the strategy as it would apply to county Meath and a wide range of policies have been developed to respond to the issues raised.

1.1.9 Compliance with the RPGs

To adhere to the National and Regional Strategic Planning Guidance, the new County Development Plan must :

Set a strategic population and housing unit horizon for the plan period 2007 – 2013 and beyond that is consistent with the *NSS* and *RPGs*;

Demonstrate how the overall outlook of the Planning Authority in relation to its settlement and transportation strategy has been derived from the *NSS* and *RPGs* for the GDA;

⁴ having regard to the recent findings and results of ERSI population and economic forecasts

Include a short statement outlining high level aims for Navan (and Drogheda) as primary development centres and for Ashbourne, Dunboyne / Clonee, Kells and Trim as recognised moderate growth towns as well as aims for the other towns and villages and rural areas to support the *NSS* and *RPGs* for the GDA;

Illustrate the overall strategic approach with maps and diagrams, for example by reproducing the key strategic maps from the *RPGs* for the GDA;

In setting out detailed objectives, Meath County Council will strive for maximum consistency between the objectives and policies of the *RPGs* and those of the new County Development Plan. A report demonstrating such consistency must be prepared and submitted to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) following the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan. The DoEHLG have published Guidelines to assist, and these Guidelines indicate that this report should address the following headings:

- The responsiveness of the settlement structure in the development plan to the strategic aims of the *RPGs* including land use and transportation issues;
- The degree to which the housing strategy fits with the *RPGs* and the nature of any modifications required;
- The extent to which the provision of development land is in line with the guidelines;
- The extent to which strategic infrastructure priorities in the development plan reflect those of the *RPGs*,
- Any cross boundary or inter regional issues identified in the *RPGs* that need to be responded to with new or updated development plan objectives and policies in relation to matters such as infrastructure corridors, renewable energy, landscape, upland or coastal management.

Meath County Council must therefore demonstrate how it takes into account the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area in this process. Key issues that arise therefore, as expressed in the current County Development Plan, will relate to:

- The allocation of the majority share of the forecast population growth for the county primarily to Navan but also to Ashbourne, Trim, Kells, Dunboyne – Clonee with additional significant population also directed to the environs of Drogheda and Kilcock located in County Meath;
- Restraint in relation to the further expansion of the south east Meath towns of Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, Summerhill, Longwood and Enfield and the coastal strip of the County, which are primarily expanding in a dormitory nature;
- Protection of the countryside, and
- Framing an appropriate infrastructural needs with a particular emphasis on public transport.

To give effect to the *NSS* and the *RPGs*, the new County Development Plan must strive towards achieving the following objectives and policies regarding the Hinterland Area, that covers the majority of the County and the Metropolitan Area that includes Dunboyne, Clonee and the Environs of Kilcock and selected large and moderate growth centres. It is likely that the following policies and objectives will be paramount to the strategy proposed in the new County Development Plan;

- Development and growth of each of the selected urban centres should be generally restricted to the maximum extent possible, so that they function as the focal points for the development of their rural catchments;
- Development of small growth towns and villages should be carried out in a more sustainable manner, to ensure that a higher proportion of residents of the towns and villages are employed locally;
- Clear definition of the boundaries of urban centres should be given to ensure a visible division between rural and urban areas;

It is an objective of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area to facilitate the Government objective of assisting the provision of an affordable housing scheme through the use of lands attached to the former airfield at Gormonston. The Council will endeavour to facilitate this Government objective. Any development at this location is predicated upon resolving issues pertaining to provision of affordable housing and existing deficits in water services infrastructure deficits.

To this end, Meath County Council will pursue investigations into the provision of a sub regional wastewater treatment facility and outfall to the Irish Sea in the vicinity of Gormonston. The provision of this sub regional facility would reduce Meath County Council's dependence on adjoining Authorities for the provision of essential physical infrastructure. This would provide an alternative solution than that contained in the GDSDS, releasing capacity for the strategic urban centres of Dunboyne / Clonee and Ashbourne. In respect of the urban centres along the East coast, these would be diverted to a sub regional facility at Gormonston, providing an alternative solution thus releasing adequate capacity for Drogheda. The provision of this sub regional plant would facilitate each of the centres to develop in line with the objectives of the RPGs, the Draft Greater Drogheda Planning Strategy and the Draft CDP.

In the event, of the former airfield being developed to facilitate the realisation of this objective, the requirement to prepare a subsequent LAP for these and surrounding lands may materialise.

In all instances the council should seek the promotion of high-quality urban design that balances the achievement of densities with the provision of high quality services, the management of public safety and the provision of high quality access and permeable networks.

Development in all instances should be sustainable thus regard should be had to availability of public transport infrastructure, socio-economic profile, creation of appropriate and sustainable levels of employment and commercial activities commensurate with residential development within each centre and protection of the rural hinterland and greenbelt.

1.1.10 Strategic Environmental Assessment

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

The Draft Development Plan, and any amendments to same, will be the subject of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), in accordance with the DoEHLG SEA Guidelines. The Environmental Report has proofed the strategic policies and objectives against 'environmental' objectives, setting out the potential environmental impacts of the policies or objectives of the Plan were they to be implemented

The Strategic Environmental Assessment of the draft Development Plan is only carried out in respect of decisions yet to be taken. As the Plan is required to adhere to national and regional plans or programmes, decisions taken at this higher level and then incorporated into the county plan are not the subject of SEA (as per Section 3.14, DoEHLG SEA Guidelines).

An Environmental Report has been prepared to accompany the Draft Development Plan.

