



# Meath County Council

## Corporate Plan

2015 – 2019





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## 2.0 FOREWORD

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It is with great pleasure that we present our Corporate Plan for the years 2015 to 2019. This plan sets out the strategic framework within which Meath County Council will operate over this period.

Since June 2014, we have embarked on the implementation of the most far-reaching changes in local government in Meath since the establishment of local government structures in 1898. These changes embrace all aspects of local government – structures, functions, governance, operational efficiency and funding, and we will continue to keep all stakeholders apprised of progress on an ongoing basis.

The aim of the reforms is to transform local authorities and to enhance the capacity of local government in promoting economic development and social progress, including the well-being of communities and supporting job creation efforts and economic recovery.

Notwithstanding that the Corporate Plan adopts an organisation-wide approach, encompassing the services delivered by the Council, local government operates in an ever-changing environment, characterised by ongoing demographic changes and the resulting increase in demand for a range of services.

In the current climate, we are presented with many new challenges, particularly to the economic and social structure of our county. Over the period of this Plan, we must strengthen our focus on economic and enterprise development and the promotion of Meath as a prime location for business investment, while at the same time responding to the many social challenges facing the county. We must ensure that we have the infrastructural services in place to facilitate sustainable and balanced growth, and to support the needs of our existing communities, businesses and other stakeholders. Through our customer service delivery model, we are committed to putting people at the centre of what we do, and to providing the best possible service to our customers in a timely, honest and professional manner.

This Corporate Plan was prepared in conjunction with the Councillors, management and staff of Meath County Council having regard to the evolving needs and requirements of the citizens of Meath. We are focused and committed to making a real difference in Meath during the period of the plan. We also believe that we have the mechanisms in place to support our stakeholders, business partners and local communities.

Arising from the requirements of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the Corporate Plan will be supported by a series of Annual Service Delivery Plans which will develop the implementation process by outlining in detail how the objectives will be achieved. Performance measurement will form a key part of the implementation process.

Meath County Council is committed to implementing this Corporate Plan 2015 – 2019 and looks forward to achieving its vision, mission and strategic objectives in a spirit of co-operation and partnership with all our stakeholders in County Meath and beyond.

*Councillor Jim Holloway*  
*Cathaoirleach*

*Jackie Maguire*  
*Chief Executive*

### **3.0 VISION**

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Meath County Council will lead economic, social and community development, deliver efficient and good value services, and represent the people and communities of County Meath, as effectively and accountably as possible.

### **4.0 MISSION**

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To drive the economic, social, cultural and environmental growth of our county in a balanced manner, which is inclusive of all our citizens.

### **5.0 OPERATING ENVIRONMENT**

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

As at Census 2011, the county's population was 184,135 persons, having increased from 162,831 in 2006. Approximately 52.6% of the population resides in the larger growth areas such as Navan (county town), Ashbourne, Dunboyne, Dunshaughlin, East Meath, Kells, Ratoath, and Trim. However, apart from the southeast, the county remains largely rural in nature with a well-developed network of smaller towns and villages. It possesses a diverse range of landscapes, including ten kilometres of coastline, the drumlin hills in North Meath, rich pastures, tracts of peatland and raised bog in the southwest and the central upland area that includes Tara - the ancient capital of Ireland.

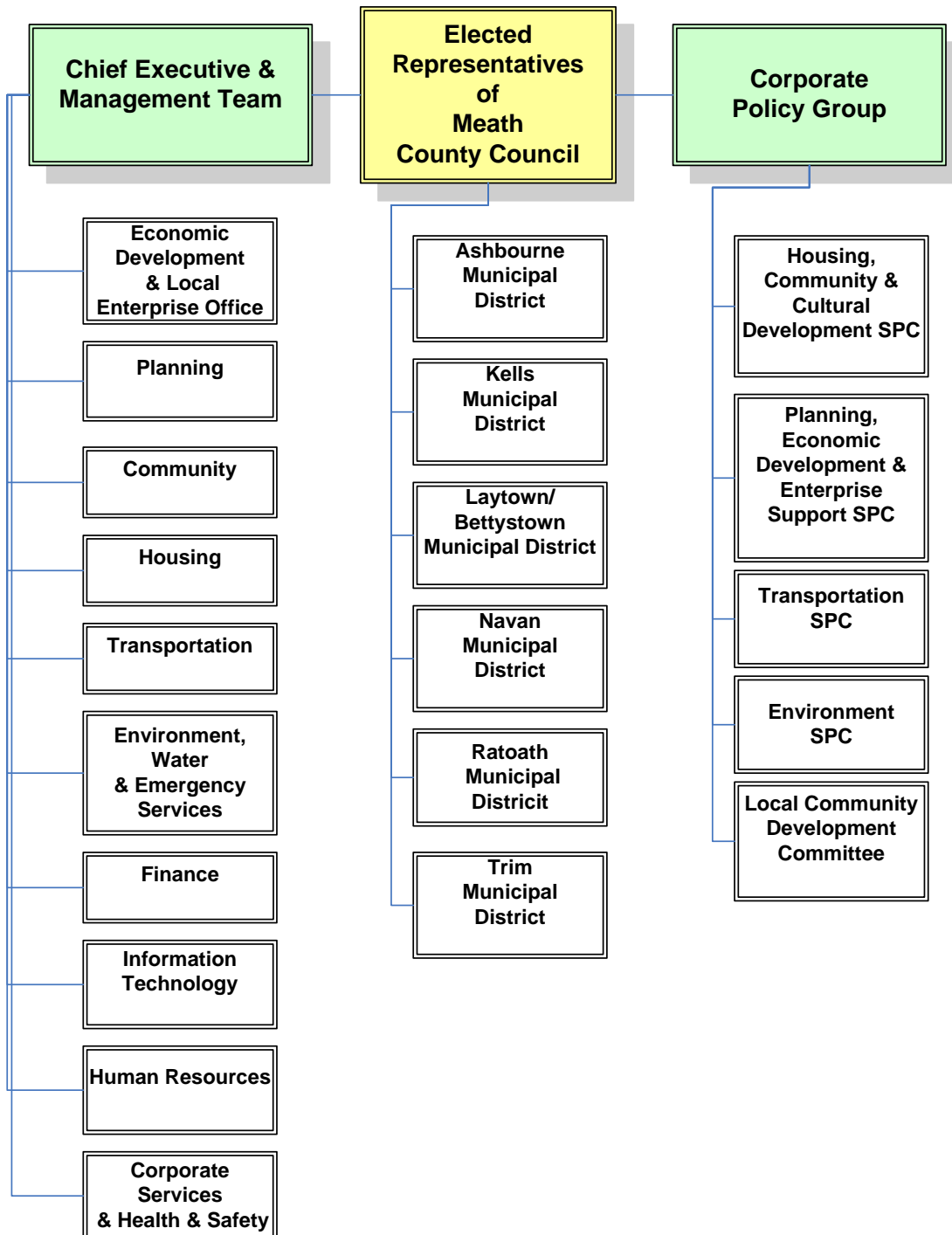
This landscape reflects the changing influences of its population over time; from the megalithic sites at Newgrange and Oldcastle, to the Norman castle ruins at Trim, the landed estates at Headfort and Summerhill, the historic and changing network of field boundaries to modern day dynamic settlements such as Navan.

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

## 6.0 LOCAL GOVERNMENT & MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL IN CONTEXT

### *Operating Structure*

The Council operates through the Councillors, who collectively act as a Board of Directors, working in partnership with the Executive, to develop and implement policy at local level. The Councillors are assigned specific 'Reserved Functions' under legislation such as the adoption of the Annual Budget and County Development Plan, and carry out these functions by way of resolution. The Executive and a number of Committees assist and advise the Council with its policy role.



### ***Municipal Districts (MD's)***

Since the 1st June 2014, the reserved functions of the Council are exercisable by the Councillors at two levels. A range of functions remains reserved for the full County Council, sometimes referred to as the Plenary Council. Other functions are performed at Municipal District level. County Meath is divided into six Municipal Districts:

- Ashbourne
- Kells
- Laytown/Bettystown
- Navan
- Ratoath
- Trim

### ***Corporate Policy Group (CPG)***

The CPG provides a forum for co-ordination and discussion of policy issues, which transcend the remit of the four Strategic Policy Committees (SPC's) and Municipal Districts and acts as a link between the SPC's and the full Council. The CPG consists of the Cathaoirleach, the Chairs of the four SPC's, and a representative from each Municipal District not already represented. The CPG is supported by the Chief Executive and the Management Team.

### ***Strategic Policy Committees (SPC's)***

The SPC's assist the Council in the formulation, development, and the review of policy. One third of the membership of the SPC's is drawn from sectors relevant to the work of the particular SPC. The role of the SPC is to provide the Councillors with external sectoral views and, in doing so, enhance the policy formulation process. Meath has four SPC's:

- Housing, Community & Cultural Development
- Planning & Economic Development & Enterprise Support
- Transportation
- Environment

### ***External Environment:***

The external environment, to which the Council is exposed, is dynamic and ever changing. Meath County Council works with a wide range of Government Departments and State Agencies as well as partners in the community, voluntary and business sectors. The external operating environment is also influenced by many factors, some of which are not directly within our control. Whether these factors are external or internal, they must be considered in the preparation of plans and work programmes.

Examples of external factors which influence our ability to undertake or influence works are:

- The global economy and the national and local economies
- EU Directives, national legislation, Government and regional policies
- Directives with respect to staff and financial resources
- Customer expectations
- The attractiveness of our county as a location for investment
- Infrastructural assets

Internal factors that must be considered in setting achievable objectives for our work over the life of this Plan include:

- The availability of adequate skilled staff and financial resources
- Changing work practices
- The consolidation of our offices to a new headquarters facility
- Maximisation of business process improvement in order to ensure streamlined service delivery and efficiencies.

The economic conditions experienced by the country in recent years have significantly impacted on many of the external and internal factors listed above. These must be reviewed on a regular basis, and in particular in the preparation of both the Annual Budget and Annual Service Delivery Plans.



## 7.0 ORGANISATIONAL SERVICE AREAS

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### ***Principal Activities of the Council***

The Council operates under eight service divisions which are reflected in the annual budgetary process:

1. Housing & Building
2. Road, Transportation & Safety
3. Water Services
4. Development Management
5. Environmental Services
6. Recreation & Amenity
7. Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare
8. Miscellaneous Services

The range of services under these headings includes the following:

- Beach and Coastal Management
- Building Control
- Burial Grounds
- Bus and Rail Links
- Business Parks
- Civil Defence
- Community Development and Participation
- Consumer Protection
- Corporate Estate Management
- Customer Service
- Derelict Sites
- Development Control
- Economic Marketing and Promotion
- Education Grants
- Environmental Awareness
- Environmental Enforcement
- Financial Management
- Fire Services
- Flood Alleviation
- Forward Planning
- Franchise and Elections
- Health and Safety
- Heritage and Conservation
- Housing Supports
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Internal Audit
- Leisure and Recreational Services
- Libraries and Arts
- Litter Management
- Local Authority Housing
- Motor Taxation
- New Housing Initiatives
- Planning Enforcement
- Public Lighting
- Risk Management
- River Basin Management
- Road Design, Construction and Maintenance of Non-National Roads
- Road Safety
- Service to Citizens
- Service to Councillors
- Service to Local Community Development Committee & Local Enterprise Office
- Surface Water Drainage
- Tourism Development
- Traffic Management
- Traveller Settlement
- Veterinary Section and Animal Control
- Waste Management and Pollution Control
- Wastewater Treatment
- Water Supply

## 8.0 CORE VALUES

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In the implementation of this Plan, Meath County Council will be guided by the following Core Values which underpin our operations and services:

- 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

## 9.0 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES & SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

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Set out below are six broad organisation-wide strategic objectives, with key supporting strategies, in order to guide and shape the direction of the functions of the organisation.

- Strategic Objectives:
- Deliver Excellent Services
- Lead Economic Development
- Build Strong, Influential Partnerships
- Engage the Larger Community
- Nurture a Staff Excellence Culture
- Develop System and Process Capability

### **Strategic Objective 1: Deliver Excellent Services:**

#### *Supporting Strategies:*

Meath County Council will focus on promoting and sustaining the social and environmental well-being of the people of Meath;

Increase the level of satisfaction expressed by citizens with our services.

### **Strategic Objective 2: Lead Economic Development:**

#### *Supporting Strategies:*

Meath County Council will be the lead agency in developing the economy of the county and the adjoining region;

Focus on the creation and retention of jobs for the people of Meath and will work with a view to increasing the prosperity of the region.

### **Strategic Objective 3: Build Strong, Influential Partnerships:**

#### *Supporting Strategies:*

All levels of leadership across Meath County Council will build strong influential partnerships with their key stakeholders;

Fundamentally enhance the reputation of the Council in each core area of work.

**Strategic Objective 4: Engage the Larger Community:**

*Supporting Strategies:*

Communities, individuals and Council staff will engage as a team in promoting initiatives which will deliver what is important to our citizens;

Staff will be available to listen and communicate with the citizens of Meath formally and informally on an ongoing basis.

**Strategic Objective 5: Nurture a Staff Excellence Culture:**

*Supporting Strategies:*

Meath County Council will be seen as the employer of choice in the region, where staff are proud to work in its progressive environment;

Both customers and colleagues will experience professional and respectful interactions in a cohesive organisational structure that encourages fairness.

**Strategic Objective 6: Develop System and Process Capability:**

*Supporting Strategies:*

The internal business process and ICT systems of Meath County Council will allow quick and easy access to information, in order to support staff and external stakeholders to make informed decisions.

## **10.0 SERVICE AREAS & ASSOCIATED STRATEGIC ACTIONS 2015 – 2019**

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### ***Economic Development***

- Operate as the lead agency for economic development and be recognised as the first point of contact for economic development in Meath.
- Be seen as positive, professional and helpful by the business community, using resources to attract, retain and support business.
- Build strong influential partnerships with other agencies nationally and locally in order to promote Meath as the investment location of choice.
- Develop Meath and the Boyne Valley as 'must go to' destinations in national and international tourism.
- Support the retail sector in key locations so it may be in a position to fulfil its true potential and reduce retail leakage from the county.
- Work towards a thriving and sustainable rural economy.

### ***Planning***

- Provide an excellent planning service.
- Deal with all planning applications and building control consent applications from our customers in a professional, consistent, fair and transparent way.
- Provide an excellent planning service to our key stakeholders including DoECLG, Regional Authority, National Roads Authority, National Transport Authority, Irish Water.
- Deal promptly, consistently and fairly with all planning enforcement issues and complaints.

### ***Community***

- Be recognised as the prime agency for Community Development in Meath. Promote well-being for present and future generations.
- Provide an excellent Arts Service and promote and develop increased access to, awareness of, and participation in the Arts across all sectors of the community.
- Manage and protect our heritage and promote the understanding and enjoyment of it.
- Be the key provider of life-long learning facilities delivering literary, social and cultural services for the community by way of the Library Service.

### ***Housing***

- Maximise all available opportunities to provide accommodation and housing support to those most in need.
- Actively promote a balanced housing policy with social inclusion a key component of this strategy.
- Respond to maintenance of our housing stock by meeting the defined time targets outlined in our Service Level Agreement.
- Operate a highly efficient, transparent and fair process for the allocation of housing and housing supports.

## ***Transportation***

- Deliver a works programme for regional & local roads which is cost effective and results in an improved road network.
- Deliver the objectives of the Economic Development Strategy in relation to a first rate multi-modal transport infrastructure.
- Lead all aspects of transport policy particularly in relation to sustainable transport.

## ***Environment, Water Services, Fire & Emergency Services***

- Be the most competent and efficient authority in the Irish Water regional structure in terms of delivery of objectives identified in multi-annual & annual service plans.
- Actively involve communities & citizens in promoting and maintaining a green and sustainable environment.
- Influence policies and work within the reconfigured regions with respect to the delivery of Waste and Water Framework Directives.
- Provide an excellent and efficient Fire Operations & Prevention Service.

## ***Finance***

- Develop future financial plans and budgets based on a transparent funding scheme with predetermined criteria including exploring new funding streams, maximising income and achieving value for money. Work towards significantly reducing financial exposure.
- Work in ways that realise better and more efficient services for customers, staff and stakeholders.
- Ensure that procurement is embedded within the culture of the organisation and provides a predictable procurement process that is operated professionally, which mitigates against risk, ensures compliance and delivers value for money.

## ***Information Technology***

- Embed information as a core asset of the organisation which is valued and maintained accordingly, and is easily accessible to support decision making at all levels.
- Support core business processes with integrated software systems that are prioritised on the basis of delivering our strategic objectives.
- Ensure information and services are readily accessible to customers via the most appropriate channels.

## ***Human Resources***

- Continue to develop human resource requirements based on a comprehensive Workforce Planning model.
- Ensure that all staff fully understand how their individual roles contribute to improving the quality of life for current and future stakeholders.
- Support staff with the information, training and technology needed to perform their roles.
- Work towards being an employer of choice.

## ***Corporate Services***

- Strive to understand and deliver on the expectations of our customers, partners and suppliers. Ensure that citizens and customers have a high degree of awareness of our services.
- Further develop our relationships with key stakeholders, including Government Departments, in order that we may influence future strategies.
- Continue to be a transparent and reputable organisation, operating to the highest standards particularly in the areas of professionalism, conduct, behaviour and fairness.
- Optimise the use of our assets for the benefit of the organisation and the community.
- Consolidate a safety & health culture as a core value of the organisation through the implementation of our Safety Management System.

The Strategic Actions outlined above will be implemented by way of a series of operational Sub-Actions in the Annual Service Delivery Plan.

## **11.0 INTERNAL CAPACITY & RESOURCES**

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Meath County Council has a committed workforce of circa 650 staff and manages its human resource function through a suite of HR policies, including workforce planning, recruitment and induction, training and development, performance management through the PMDS process and diversity and equality. The Council, in line with the challenges arising from the national public service agreements and through the commitment and flexibility of our staff, has delivered a wide range of efficiencies within the local authority.

From 2015, Meath County Council will produce an Annual Service Delivery Plan in line with the Budget approved by the Councillors. The framing of the Annual Budget will be done within the context of available resources from both central government and local authority sources. The amount of budget available will therefore impact on the capacity of the Council to deliver on its objectives.

The Annual Service Delivery Plan will also take into account agreed priorities set out in the Corporate Plan as well as legislative and statutory requirements that must be complied with by the Council. Notwithstanding this, Meath County Council will endeavour to meet the challenges of the constantly changing external environment within which it operates.



## **12.0 IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW**

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The Corporate Plan sets out the framework for the Annual Service Delivery Plan. Section 134A of the Local Government Act 2001 (as inserted by Section 50 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014) requires that an Annual Service Delivery Plan be prepared setting out in detail the activities to be undertaken across all key functional areas so as to deliver on the Corporate Plan objectives and be linked to the budgetary process, the performance management & development system and relevant performance indicators developed by the National Oversight & Audit Commission (NOAC). The first in a series of Annual Service Delivery Plans will be presented to the Elected Councillors for adoption in early 2015.

The Executive, working with the Corporate Policy Group, will have overall responsibility for the implementation of the Corporate Plan. Each year the Objectives and Strategies contained in the Plan will be matched to the financial resources available to the Council as part of the Annual Budget process. The Executive and Corporate Policy Group will work together to maximise the resources available both from locally determined income, central government funding and other funding sources. Where sufficient financial resources are not available, objectives will be prioritised with the intention of achieving all key objectives within the life of the Plan. Metrics has also been developed in order to validate progress and the status of the strategic actions contained in the Plan (Appendix 1).

There will be an annual progress report to the Council as part of the Annual Report and updates will be provided in the Chief Executive's Monthly Management Report. The National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) will receive a copy of this Plan and will monitor the adequacy of the Corporate Plan and evaluate its implementation.

## **Appendix 1 - Metrics**

*How we will measure our achievements:*

### *Economic Development*

- Number of business enquiries to the Council's Local Enterprise Office
- Number of enquiries that translate to start-ups
- Number of fast track permissions
- Number of business visits
- Consolidated satisfaction and sentiment rating
- Number of IDA & Enterprise Ireland supported jobs relative to the national average
- Visitor numbers - Foreign and Domestic
- Percentage annual increase in visitor numbers
- Retail income increases

### *Planning*

- Delivering decisions in the minimum timeframe
- Development Plans and Local Area Plans in place and reviewed in a timely manner
- Number and percentage of decisions upheld
- Number of positive submissions to Development Plans
- Number of complaints received
- Number of prosecutions

### *Community*

- Number of community groups registered and participating in the Public Participation Network
- Annual level of community funding to Meath
- Number of communities engaging in Council assisted initiatives
- Implementation of County Arts Development Plan actions
- Number of actions from both the Heritage Plan and Biodiversity Plan implemented by Meath Heritage Forum in partnership with Meath County Council.
- Achievement of heritage objectives in the Meath County Development Plan
- Implementation of Library Development Plan user statistics
- Events & Attendances
- Performance Indicators

### *Housing*

- Total number of tenants accommodated
- Number of vacant houses

- Turnaround time to availability
- Social inclusion measures in line with policy targets
- Response times
- Number of applicant complaints received and upheld

### *Transportation*

- Number of regional & local roads in Road Pavement Condition Survey Category 1 – 4
- Cost per square metre is benchmarked
- Level of service
- Investment in transport infrastructure which directly impacts on economic development (as informed by Economic Development Strategy)
- Modal Splits
- Public Transport Accessibility
- Lengths of cycle tracks
- Traffic Counters

### *Environment, Water & Emergency Services*

- Irish Water balanced scorecard
- Increased business potential based on performance
- Numbers of community groups involved in 'Tidy Towns' & 'Pride of Place' competitions
- Number of visits to Meath recycling centres
- Number of sections of roads sponsored by community or business
- Number of incidents of illegal waste / water pollution
- Compliance with targets for the county with respect to East & Midland Region Waste Management Plan and River Basin Management Plan
- Number of Inspections versus No. of incidents
- Benchmark against other Authorities
- Achieving objectives of Keeping Communities Safe document

### *Finance*

- Percentage of revenue within MCC control
- Budgetary control metrics
- Value of exposure
- Interest payments
- Number of improvement projects completed annually
- Number of staff involved in improvement projects annually/to date
- Real savings achieved in both monetary and resource efficient terms.
- Continuity of strong supply linkages with the external market.
- Customer satisfaction

### *Information Technology*

- Management satisfaction rating on decision support capabilities
- Information quality audit results
- Time savings and other value achieved through new IT projects
- "State of the infrastructure" assessment
- Number of services available via electronic channels
- Percentage transactions completed via electronic channels
- Post-transaction customer satisfaction ranking

### *Human Resources*

- Annual review of the Workforce Plan
- Number of PDPs prepared and subject to mid-year review and end-of-year evaluation
- Assessment of average PDP ratings in terms of staff competency
- Age profile of staff completed and continually updated
- Analysis and assessment of skills audit
- Review of training needs analysis and measurement of staff competency levels
- Number of applications for vacancies in all posts/grades
- Number of staff accessing promotional opportunities both within the Council and the wider public service

### *Corporate Services*

- Number of customer surveys carried out including analysis of the results
- Number of formal complaints received and upheld
- Annual performance review of national service indicators
- Percentage of applications and payment facilities available electronically
- Number of active networks at defined levels of the organisation e.g. management team, senior management group & middle management
- Number of complaints received, statutory investigations initiated, and formal returns made
- Media coverage
- Percentage utilisation and potential benefit of our land, buildings & equipment
- Number and category of accidents, incidents and near misses

## **Appendix 2 – Policies**

Role of Meath County Council in progressing and playing its part in existing relevant national policies and existing/future national partnership agreements.

### *National*

- National Development Plan for the period to 2016
- Infrastructure & Capital Investment Programme and associated strategies
- DoECLG Strategy Statement 2011 – 2014 and any subsequent Strategy Statements
- National Spatial Strategy
- Public Service Reform Plan 2014 – 2016
- Construction 2020 – A Strategy for a Renewed Construction Sector
- Homelessness Policy Statement 2013
- Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018
- Keeping Communities Safe – Fire Services Framework
- National Climate Change Adaptation Framework
- National Disability Strategy
- National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011 – 2016
- Social Housing Strategy
- Action Programme for Effective Local Government, Putting People First
- Implementation Plan on the State’s Response to Homelessness
- “Opportunities for All” – A Strategy for Public Libraries 2013 – 2017
- Medium-Term Economic Strategy 2014 – 2020, Action Plan for Jobs, Construction 2020
- Our Sustainable Future – a Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland
- Open Government Partnership Ireland National Action Plan 2014 – 2016
- National Policy Framework for Children 2014 – 2020
- Food Harvest 2020
- Making it Happen – Growing Enterprise for Ireland
- Delivering our Green Potential – Government Policy Statement on Growth and Employment in the Green Economy
- Developing a Green Enterprise
- Our Cities: Drivers of National Competitiveness
- Energising Ireland’s Rural Economy – Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA)
- Local Government Sectoral Strategy to Promote Employment and Support Local Enterprise – “Supporting Economic Recovery and Jobs – Locally”
- Supporting Enterprise, Local Development and Economic Growth

### *Regional*

- Regional Planning Guidelines & Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies
- The Regional Indicators Report – monitoring Framework for the Implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines
- Regional Waste Management Plan
- Strategy Plans of other Regional Bodies, for example, HSE, Garda Síochána

*Local*

- Economic Strategy
- County Development Plan
- Local Economic & Community Plan
- Local Area Plans & Studies
- Annual Service Delivery Plans
- Capital Programme
- Heritage Plan
- Biodiversity Strategy
- Arts Plan
- Sports Strategy
- Housing Strategy