

# ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

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## Meath County Development Plan

**For: Meath County Council**

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County Meath

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Goals** are the *broadest* expressions of community's desires. Goals give direction to the plan as a whole. Goals are concerned with the *long term*, and often describe *ideal situations* that would result if all plan purposes were fully realised. Since goals are value-based, their attainment is difficult to measure.

**Policies** are *broad statements that set preferred courses of action*. Policies are choices made to carry out the goals in the foreseeable future. Policies need to be *specific enough to help determine whether a proposed project or program would advance community values* expressed in the goals.

**Objectives** are *specific statements* that carry out a plan in the *short term*. Objectives are *measurable benchmarks* that can be used to assess incremental progress in achieving the broader purposes expressed in policies and goals.

**Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEO's)**: Methodological measure against which the environmental effects of the plan can be tested. SEA objectives are distinct from the plan objectives although will often overlap. SEA Objectives are developed from, national, international and regional policy as set out in Section 2.1.3 and further development in Section 4.

**External Objectives**: Objectives to which the plan must have regard, inherited from higher level plans, policies or programmes to which the plan must have regard and which are external from the SEA process for various reasons.

**Scoping**: The process of determining what issues are to be addressed, and setting out a methodology in which to address them in a structured manner appropriate to the plan or programme. Scoping is carried out in consultation with the appropriate bodies.

**Significant environmental effect**: Significance is a function of impact magnitude and the importance/sensitivity of the resources of the receptor. This is dealt with more comprehensively in Section 4 of this report.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**: The formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme.

**Seveso**: The European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, 2000 (S.I. No. 476 of 2000), were signed into law by the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment on 21 December 2000 and came into effect from that date.

S.I.No.402 of 2003, European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances)(Amendment) Regulations 2003, give effect to European Directive 96/82/EC on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances, also known as the Seveso II Directive.

The regulations apply to companies where dangerous substances are present in quantities equal to or above specified thresholds.

**Mitigate**

To make or become less severe or harsh

**MRP**

Molybdate Reactive Phosphorus, MRP is a commonly used measure of nutrient enrichment/pollution based on the Phosphorus content. The sampling, monitoring, reporting of MRP forms an integral part of the Phosphorous Regulations.

**Offset**

Allowance made to counteract an effect

## **Section 1            Introduction**

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### **1.0      Introduction and terms of reference**

This is the Environmental Report of the SEA on the Meath Draft County Development Plan. It presents the range of environmental issues and objectives that need to be considered when reviewing alternatives and beginning the process of considering the Draft County Development Plan. The purpose is to provide Members with a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the future planning of the County.

The Environmental Report is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Development Plan that is prepared in order to comply with the provisions of the SEA Regulations [the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument Number [S.I. No.] 435 of 2004), and, the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004)]. This report should be read in conjunction with the Meath Draft County Development Plan.

### **1.1      Legislation and legal status of the SEA**

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required to be carried out in order to comply with the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, hereafter referred to as the SEA Directive.

The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish Law through the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument Number [S.I. No.] 435 of 2004), and, the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004). Both sets of regulations became operational on 21 July, 2004.

S.I. No. 435 of 2004 transposes the requirements of the SEA Directive for all of the sectors listed in the SEA Directive except land use planning i.e. the sectors of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications and tourism. In addition, S.I. No. 435 amends certain provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 in order to provide the statutory basis for the making of Regulations in respect of land use planning. S.I. No. 436 of 2004 transposes the requirements of the SEA Directive for the land use sector. S.I. No. 436 of 2004 requires that SEA be carried out in respect of County Development Plans.

This environmental report has been carried out with in accordance with Annex I of the SEA Directive, Schedule 2B of S.I. 436 of 2004, and, in Schedule 1 of S.I. 435 of 2004, all of which set out the information which is required to be included in SEA environmental reports. The SEA to which the environmental report accompanies has

been undertaken having regard to, where relevant, the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government's (DoEHLG's) SEA Guidelines<sup>1</sup>.

## **1.2 Relationship with existing plans and strategies**

### **1.2.0 Introduction**

The Meath County Development Plan is nested in a hierarchy of plans and strategies at the local, national and EU levels. In effect the County Development Plan takes existing international and national scale plans and strategies and applies them to the particular circumstances of County Meath.

#### **1.2.1 Land Use Strategic Actions**

The Draft County Development Plan must comply with the national and regional policy framework in which it is situated, translating key strategic decisions made at national and regional level to the local county level. The National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (NSS) and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2004-2016 (RPGs) are the two primary land use planning strategies to which the review of the County Development Plan must have regard to.

In adhering to this National and Regional Strategic Planning Guidance, the Draft County Development Plan:

- Sets a strategic population and housing unit horizon for the plan period 2007 – 2013 and which is consistent with the NSS and RPGs;
- Demonstrates how the overall outlook of Meath County Council in relation to its settlement and transportation strategy has been derived from the NSS and RPGs;
- Outlines 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 outlining aims for the other towns and villages and rural areas in order to comply with and support the NSS and RPGs, and;
- Illustrates the overall strategic approach with the use of maps.

Meath County Council is required to demonstrate how it takes into account the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area in the County Development Plan process, with key issues relating 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;

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<sup>1</sup> Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2004) *Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment- Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities*, Dublin: Government of Ireland.

- 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 appropriate infrastructural needs with a particular emphasis on public transport.

To give effect to the NSS and the RPGs, the Draft County Development Plan looks towards achieving the following objectives and policies regarding the Hinterland Area- the 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. The Draft County Development Plan lists the following policies and objectives as important to the overall proposed strategy;

- 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;

### **1.2.2 Dublin Transportation Office Strategy**

The Dublin Transport Office (DTO) launched an integrated transportation strategy for the Greater Dublin Area in 2000 which will shortly be presented to the Government for adoption as Government policy for transportation in the Greater Dublin Area up to the year 2016. It calls for greater integration between land use planning and transportation and establishes a strategy which aims to reduce the number of private car trips necessary in the Dublin region through the development of a more effective public transportation system.

The DTO Strategy has two independent variables:

1. Infrastructure & service improvements in order to increase the supply of transport, including a substantial expansion of the public transport network, some strategic road construction as well as traffic management.
2. Demand management in order to reduce the growth in travel through the application of land use and other policies while maintaining economic progress, and, in order to encourage a transfer of trips, especially at peak period, from the private car to sustainable modes of transport (such as public transport, cycling and walking).



### **1.2.3 Waste Management Planning**

Waste Management Plans for regions across Ireland are prepared under Section 22 of the Waste Management Act, 1996 in accordance with the Waste Management (Planning) Regulations, 1997. The North-East Region comprises Counties Meath, Louth, Cavan and Monaghan. The purpose of such plans are to provide a framework for the management of non-hazardous wastes over at least five years in accordance with current national and EU waste policy. County Meath belongs to the North East Region for which the North East Region Waste Management Plan (1999 – 2004) was made. This existing plan has been reviewed and North East Region Waste Management Plan (2005-2010) has been proposed. The Draft County Development Plan has an objective to implement the provisions of the Replacement Waste Management Plan.

### **1.2.4 'Le Chéile – An Integrated Strategy for Meath 2002 – 2012**

The Meath County Development Board Strategy 'Le Chéile – An Integrated Strategy for Meath 2002 – 2012 is a ten year strategy for the economic, social and cultural development of County Meath. The Strategy provides the template guiding all public services and local development activities locally, in effect bringing more coherence to the planning and delivery of services at local level.

The spatial framework for the County Development Board Strategy is consistent with that put forward in the existing County Development Plan and proposed Settlement Strategy. The key objectives of the County Development Board Strategy in this regard include:

- Co-coordinated provision of economic and social / cultural infrastructure to enable the identified primary development corridors become the primary growth areas for the County;
- the productivity and competitiveness of the productive sectors;
- Meath as an attractive location for inward investment in high valued manufacturing sectors and in internationally traded sectors;
- and increase total employment in the productive sectors, and;
- diversification of the rural economy.

The review of the County Development Plan seeks to address the spatial ramifications of the County Development Board Strategy.

### **1.2.5 Lower Tier Plans**

The County Development Plan is the primary planning document that sets the policy context for the preparation of lower tier plans such as Local Area Plans (LAPs). The Draft County Development Plan contains a development and settlement strategy which strives to achieve the strategic aims and goals of the County over the life of the plan period. This outlines, in broad policy terms, the development objectives of all urban centres in the County, ranging from Large Growth Towns to villages and graigs (rural clusters). This settlement hierarchy forms the basis for allocating the

household and population growth envisaged in the County over the plan period in accordance with the Housing Strategy, again contained in the County Development Plan. The County Retail Strategy outlines the scale of retail development required in each of the urban centres throughout the County and identifies the manner and location in which additional retail floor space should be accommodated.

LAPs determine the manner in which these strategic objectives are to be realised and are therefore informed and drafted in accordance with the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan. In advance of the County Development Plan review, the preparation of LAPs began for Laytown, Bettystown, Mornington East, Mornington Donacarney, Julianstown, Stamullen and Gormanston.

It is noted that there are separate Development Plans for the towns of Kells (2001), Navan (2003) and Trim (2002) which are required to be prepared by the separate Planning Authorities, the Town Councils.

### **1.2.6 Relevant International Strategic Actions**

The following table lists international strategic actions to which the Draft County Development Plan has had regard to, detailing the main policy direction given by these documents to the County Development Plan.

<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Main Policy Direction for Plan</b>
European Union (EU) Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) 1992	Lists certain habitats and species that must be given protection
EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) 2000	Aims to prevent any deterioration in the status of any waters and to achieve at least "good status" in all waters by 2015
European Landscape Convention 2000	Encourages public authorities to adopt policies at local, national and international level to protect and manage landscapes
European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage 1992	Requires that appropriate consideration be given to archaeological issues at all stages of the planning and development process
EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) 1979	Designation of Special Protection Areas for birds
EU Urban Waste water treatment directive (91/271/EEC) 1991	Sets targets dates for the provision of specified waste water treatment infrastructure and service
Granada Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe 1985	Established common principles and strategy, informed Part IV of the 2000 Planning and Development Act 2000-2004
EU Major Accident (Seveso) directive (96/82/EC) 1996	To avoid and minimise the effects of major accidents
UN Convention of Biological Diversity 1992	To retain and enhance biodiversity

***Table 1.1 Relevant International Policy Documents***

The following is a table listing national level strategic actions to which the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan has had regard.

<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Main Policy direction for plan</b>
Sustainable development- a strategy for Ireland 1997	To promote the consideration of sustainable principles in drafting and implementation of County Development plan policy
Making Ireland's Development Sustainable 2002	Linking economic, social and environmental objectives whilst considering long term consequences in drafting policy
National Bio-diversity Plan 2002	To secure the conservation, including where possible the enhancement and sustainable use, of biological diversity in Ireland
National Climate Change Strategy 2000	Improved spatial and energy use planning
Preventing and Recycling Waste: Delivering Change 2002	Facilitation of waste prevention and recycling.
The Local Government (Water Pollution) Act, 1977 (Water Quality Standards for Phosphorous) Regulations, 1998	Rivers of good quality to be retained as such, rivers of poor quality to be improved
Healthy Ageing: a secure future (2001) - A five year strategy of the North Eastern Health Board for the delivery of services to older people.	To support older people in achieving and maximising health and social gain, to support the choice of older people to continue living in their own communities and, to provide appropriate access to high quality continuing care.
Residential Density- Guidelines for Planning Authorities 1999	Policy and standards relating to residential densities
Quarries and Ancillary Activities- Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2004	Best practice in mitigating and controlling land use and environmental issues through the planning system with regard to the operation of quarries

Architectural Heritage Protection- Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2004	The protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest, and; the preservation of the character of architectural conservation areas.
Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Rural Housing 2005	To address the issue of sustainable rural housing
Landscape and Landscape Assessment 2000- Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities	Dealing with landscape considerations, indicating specific requirements for Development Plans and for development control regarding landscape management
Wind Energy Guidelines 2004	To ensure a consistency of approach in the identification of suitable locations for wind farm development and the treatment of planning applications for wind farm developments
Boyne Valley Management Plan	Planning and conservation of the Boyne Valley Archaeological Park
Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site Management Plan 2002	Includes a number of key actions under the headings of protection, conservation, presentation and research

***Table 1.2 National policy documents relevant to this SEA***

### **1.3 Conformity with SEA Regulations**

This report has been written in accordance with Schedule 2B of S.I. 436 of 2004. The table below is a reproduction of checklist of information to be contained in the SEA environmental report taken from the aforementioned DEHLG Guidelines (2004) listing the required information and displaying the relevant sections of this report which deal with these requirements.

<b>Required Information</b>	<b>Corresponding Section of this Report</b>
(A) Outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	Section 3
(B) Description of relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the evolution of that environment without implementation of the plan	Sections 5 to 10
(C) Description of the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	Sections 6 to 10
(D) Identification of any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan, particularly those relating to European protected sites	Section 6
(E) List environmental protection objectives, established at international, EU or national level, which are relevant to the plan and describe how those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account when preparing the plan	Sections 1 to 10
(F) Describe the likely significant effects (1) on the environment (Biodiversity, human health, Fauna, etc.)	Sections 6 to 10
(G) Describe any measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse environmental effects of implementing the plan	Sections 6 to 10
(H) Give an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives considered, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken (including any difficulties)	Section 4
(I) A description of proposed monitoring measures	Sections 6 to 10
(J) A non-technical summary of the above information	Appendix A
(F) Interrelationships between each Environmental topic	Addressed as it arises in Sections 6 to 10

***Table 1.3. Information Required and Corresponding Section of this Report***

## **Section 2**

### **Methodology**

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#### **2.0 Introduction**

This section outlines the methodology used in preparing the SEA for the Meath Draft County Development Plan. SEA was carried out on the Meath Draft County Development Plan due to the mandatory requirement under S.I. No. 436 of 2004 for SEA to be carried out alongside the preparation of County Development Plans.

#### **2.1 Scoping of the SEA for the Draft County Development Plan**

A scoping report/ scoping issues paper was prepared in order to determine the scope and the level of detail to be included in the environmental report and to facilitate consultation with the prescribed environmental authorities in relation to the preparation of this environmental report. Consultation with the EPA also informed the scoping of the environmental report.

#### **2.2 Consultation with Environmental Authorities**

The SEA Directive specifies in Article 6(3) that “member states shall designate the authorities to be consulted”. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and, the Department for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources were all consulted in order to determine the scope of the SEA.

#### **2.3 Hierarchy of Strategic Actions**

The Meath County Development Plan is situated in a hierarchy of strategic actions higher level strategic actions constrain the County Development Plan while the County Development Plan in turn, constrains lower strategic actions. Potential environmental impacts that arise from the implementation of policies and objectives where dictated by higher level policy will not be assessed in this SEA. Furthermore, certain objectives that seek to provide strategic infrastructure will be the subject of EIA assessment. Where these situations arise, they will be highlighted in the appropriate appraisal.

This SEA process only relates to the County at large and to the development settlement strategy for the County which informs the preparation of lower tier Local Area Plans for towns and villages at a strategic level. It does not deal with the individual towns and villages that are subject to the preparation of Local Area Plans.

The Planning Authority has a statutory obligation to carry out SEA screening of the individual Local Area Plans. Where deemed to be mandatory or necessary, the Planning Authority will engage in the SEA process in the course of reviewing/drafting policy each of the Local Area Plans.

## **2.4 Environmental assessment methods and difficulties encountered**

Preparing the SEA involved the collation of currently available data from existing public documents in accordance with the SEA Guidelines. No primary research was carried out in the collection of baseline data. In predicting likely significant impacts of the plan, existing data sources were used as baseline data.

The Development Envisaged as arising as a result of the implementation of this Pre-Draft County Development Plan is described using Alternative Scenarios in Section 4.

Baseline mapping used to compile the maps in this report has been prepared by Meath County Council.



## **Section 3            The Draft County Development Plan**

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### **3.0     Introduction**

This report accompanies the Draft County Development Plan, the contents and objectives. The current Meath County Development Plan was adopted on the 5th March 2001 and remains in force until the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2007, unless otherwise superseded by a revised County Development Plan.

As a result of a change in legislation brought about the Planning & Development Act 2000, the preparation of Local Area Plans for towns and villages within the County Development Plan is no longer possible therefore such Local Area Plans are prepared simultaneously to the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan. There are different statutory timeframes for the preparation of a County Development Plan and Local Area Plans. It is expected that the series of draft Local Area Plans as prepared by the Planning Authority will be placed on public display by the end of July 2006.

The Draft County Development Plan sets out the overall development strategies for the County together with heritage and conservation elements as are required under the Planning and Development Act 2000.

### **3.1     Draft Development Plan Strategic Policy**

The Draft County Development Plan includes the following strategic policies:

1. To provide for the balanced and sustainable distribution of economic and social growth across the county focused on the development of the three prime corridors;

- the primary corridor is focused around Navan, Trim and Kells whereby the future development of these centres is on the basis of balance between growth in residential and employment generation. The development of Trim and Kells must reflect their importance as 'Heritage Towns' with their intrinsic urban character;
- the Dublin – Belfast Economic Corridor where development is encouraged at suitable locations where there is established carrying capacity in terms of sanitary services and where development would be well served by strategic transportation routes, including rail. The protection and conservation of the sensitive coastal habitat must not be jeopardised in the realisation of economic development;
- the South East Fringe covering the area between and adjoining the N2 and N3 including Ashbourne, Ratoath, Dunboyne, Clonee and Dunshaughlin along with Kilcock Environs and Enfield. Future development must be on the basis of balanced development both in terms of employment generation and on the basis of the sustainable provision of piped services.

2. To allocate 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 Co. Meath.
3. To facilitate the sustainable development of small growth towns and villages by ensuring that a higher proportion of residents of the towns and villages are employed locally so that they function as the focal points for the development of their rural catchments.
4. To promote sustainable development with regard to the 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 areas
5. To protect, conserve, manage and enhance the county's outstanding natural and built heritage and cultural resources.
6. To provide a viable option for the retention of the rural community by the promotion of the controlled growth of smaller rural villages and gauges balanced with the application of a rural housing policy specific to the circumstances pertaining to Co. Meath.

### **3.2 Envisaged Development**

The current County Development Plan, as varied, in conjunction with the Navan Development Plan (2003), Kells Development Plan (2001) and Trim Development Plan (2002) provides detailed information of the scale, type and location of significant development envisaged across the County. It is the strategic objective of the Pre- Draft County Development Plan to provide for the balanced and sustainable distribution of economic and social growth across the county focused on the development of the three prime corridors: that around Navan, Trim and Kells; the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, and; the South East Fringe. The Development Plan attempts to ensure that future development is on the basis of balanced development both in terms of employment generation and on the basis of the sustainable provision of piped services and not just residential development.

It is likely that the development of key roads infrastructure such as the M3 Motorway, N2 Ashbourne Bypass and M4 Motorway will open up opportunities in and adjoining interchanges, particularly for employment generating uses.

The preparation of the County Housing Strategy within the County Development Plan determines the allocation of the forecast population growth across the County having regard to the settlement hierarchy contained in the RPGs and existing County Development Plan.

The existing County Retail Strategy provides an indication of the scale, location and type of retail development that is required to serve the anticipated resident population.

## Section 4

### Alternatives

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#### 4.0 Introduction and Background

Article 5 of the SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to consider “reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme” and the significant environmental effects of the alternatives selected. Alternatives must be realistic and capable of implementation, and should represent a range of different approaches within the statutory and operational requirements of the County Development Plan.

As outlined in previous sections of this report, Section 3.14 of the DEHLG SEA Guidelines indicate that certain strategic issues in County Development Plans may have already been determined at national or regional level. Furthermore, lower tier plans such as Local Area Plans, will be framed in a policy context set by levels above them (such as National Spatial Strategy, Regional Planning Guidelines and by the County Development Plan itself). The preparation of Development Plans must have regard to national and regional policy and guidelines and demonstrate consistency. As a result, the strategic options available to the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan are limited.

It is a mandatory objective of a Development Plan, that sufficient lands are zoned for particular purposes, where and to such extent as the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, requires the uses to be indicated. In relation to the location of new residential development, this is largely determined by higher level plans such as the RPGs and the Housing Strategy. Alternative issues to be considered in this regard include targets for housing units to be provided from brownfield sites, which greenfield sites can be serviced, which are closest to public transport, what densities are appropriate for different locations, what areas should be avoided due to flooding and impact on heritage.





## **Section 5            Environmental Baseline**

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### **5.0     Introduction**

This section describes protection objectives relating to the environmental baseline and existing environmental issues.

### **5.1     Baseline description of the current physical environment**

#### **5.1.0   Landscape**

Landscape is a precious national asset. Meath has a high quality landscape much of it of notable cultural and historical significance. This rich landscape has been subject to significant human influence over time from the construction of Newgrange to the Royal Canal Viaduct over the Boyne to the more recent M1 Motorway Cable Stay Bridge over the Boyne.

Human interaction with the natural heritage has produced a great variety of characteristic landscapes and landscape features. The natural diversity of the landscapes of the county coupled with cultural features such as the archaeological monuments, stonewalls, hedgerows, woodlands, field patterns, settlements and buildings has given the county its distinctive character.

The landscape and how we interact with it, has a major influence on the general quality of life and the future success of the tourism industry.

Areas of Visual Quality were designated in the County Development Plan 2001 with regard to the 'sensitivity of various categories of development in areas with differing abilities to absorb development.' The particular sensitivities of these areas are set out on pages 57 and 58 of volume 1 of the Meath County Development Plan 2001. Areas of Visual Quality include:

- Area VQ1 - The Coastal zone
- Area VQ2 - Lower Boyne Valley
- Area VQ3 - River Valleys
- Area VQ4 - The Royal Canal corridor
- Area VQ5 - Slieve Na Calliagh uplands
- Area VQ6 - Lough Sheelin Environs
- Area VQ7 - Upland Agricultural Area
- Area VQ8 - North Meath Lakelands
- Area VQ9 - The Tara and Dunsany District
- Area VQ10 - Bogland Areas
- Area VQ11 - Rural and Agricultural

There are 41 protected views listed in Volume 3 of the current plan.

### 5.1.1 Natural Water Systems

The increase in population, development pressures and intensification of agriculture over recent decades has led to increased risk of environmental pollution, particularly of our natural water systems. These include groundwater and surface water systems (rivers and lakes, estuarine and coastal waters.) Water quality is not only important for ecological reasons; all development depends on quality water supplies and for surface and waste water disposal. Water based recreation is an important aspect of tourism to both residents and visitors to Meath.

Urban runoff is increasingly being highlighted as a source of pollution of water courses. Meath County Council has committed to the policies and recommendations of SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) which deal with issues in relation to urban run off.

The Water Framework Directive characterisation report is a source of considerable data on water quality accessible on the Eastern River Basin District's, [www.erbd.ie](http://www.erbd.ie).

### 5.1.2 Protected Natural Heritage

The great diversity of landscape coupled with location and climate has resulted in a great diversity of natural and semi-natural habitats in County Meath. These include agricultural, woodland, grassland, wetland, marine, coastal, river and lake habitats. This biodiversity is under pressure from development and human activity. A number of designated natural heritage sites which are protected by law exist across the County.

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are the prime wildlife conservation areas in Ireland. The legal basis on which they are selected is the 1992 Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). This Directive seeks to protect wildlife and its habitats. The European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 set out how these SACs are to be protected and managed by the relevant Planning Authorities. Table 5.1 lists SACs found in County Meath, the site synopsis of which are included in Appendix II.

Site Name	Site Code
Boyne River Islands	001862
Killyconny Bog(Cloghbally)	000006
Rye Water Valley/Cartron	001398
White Lough, Ben Loughs and Lough Doo	001810
Lough Bane/Glass	02120
Boyne Coast & Estuary	001957
River Boyne & River Blackwater	002299
Moneybeg & Clare Island Bogs	002340
Mont Hevey Bog	002342

**Table 5.1 County Meath SACs**

The Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 provides the legal basis for the establishment of a national network of sites known as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). NHAs are designated by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and

aim to conserve and protect nationally important plant and animal species, and their habitats. NHAs are also designated to conserve and protect nationally important landforms, geological or geomorphological features. Depending on their quality and importance, NHAs may also carry other designations such as SAC, SPA, Ramsar site, Statutory Nature Reserve or Refuge for Fauna. Planning Authorities are obliged by law to ensure that these sites are protected and conserved.

To date all these sites in Meath are proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)- it is Meath County Council's policy to protect them, even though some of them have not been designated yet. It is expected that they will be designated during the lifetime of the next County Development Plan. Proposed NHA's in Meath include a wide range of sites as follows (the site synopsis of these are included in Appendix II):

Site Name	Site Code
Ballyhoe Lough	001594
Ballynabarney	001573
Balrath Woods	001579
Boyne Woods	001592
Breakey Loughs	001558
Corstown Loughs	000552
Cromwells Bush Fen	001576
Doolystown Bog	001577
Dowth Wetland	001861
Duleek Commons	001578
Girley Bog	001580
Jamestown Bog	001324
Lough Naneagh	001814
Lough Sheelin	000987
Lough Shesk	000556
Molerick Bog	001582
Mount Hevey Bog	001584
Rossnaree Riverbank	001589
Royal Canal	002103
Slane Riverbank	001591
Thomastown Bog	001593
Trim Wetland	001357

***Table 5.2 County Meath pNHAs***

The Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds), adopted in 1979, is concerned with the long-term protection and management of all wild bird species and their habitats throughout the European Union. All Member States are, therefore, responsible for protecting all wild bird species and their habitats. The Directive requires that Special Protection Areas (SPAs) be established to protect migratory species and species which are rare, vulnerable, in danger of extinction, or otherwise require special attention.

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requires that Special Protection Areas (SPA's) be established to protect migratory species and species which are rare, vulnerable, in danger of extinction, or otherwise require special attention. The Meath coast is especially important for its bird life. The protection and management measures for SPAs are exactly the same as the protection and management regime which is in place for SAC's. There are two SPAs in County Meath: the Boyne Estuary SPA (Site Code: 004080) and Lough Sheelin SPA (Site Code: 004065), the site synopsis of which are included in Appendix II.

Certain plant, animal and bird species are also protected by law. This includes plant species listed in the Flora Protection Order, 1999 (or other such Orders) and animals and birds listed in the Wildlife Act, 1976 and subsequent statutory instruments, those listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive, and those listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive. The protection of designated areas as previously listed is intended to have the effect of protecting designated species located therein. No data set has been identified for the purpose of establishing a baseline with regard to protected species in County Meath.

There are somewhere in the region of 300 measured trees in County Meath surveyed as part of the Tree Register of Ireland (TROI) Project 1999.

### **5.1.2 Habitats**

Habitats on which the settlement centres are located beside include Inland Waters, Maritime Wetlands, Inland Wetlands, Scrub, Broadleaf Forests, Mixed Forests and Agricultural or Cultivated Land. The following descriptions for these habitats are taken from the Heritage Council's *A Guide to Habitats in Ireland* 2000.

#### *Inland Waters*

Lakes and ponds- include all bodies of open or standing freshwater that lack a strong unidirectional flow of water. These can be either natural, modified or entirely artificial, as in the case of some reservoirs, ornamental lakes, or flooded quarries and gravel pits, and may be either temporary or seasonal as in the case of turloughs and some ponds. Artificial linear water bodies with no obvious connection to a wider drainage network are also included here. To distinguish a lake from a wide stretch of river, most of the water in the former should be either standing, moving imperceptibly or circulating within the basin, as opposed to moving with a strong unidirectional flow. Note that no distinction is made between lakes and ponds. Only the area of open water, with or without floating or submerged aquatic vegetation, is included here. This is taken as the area normally occupied by a water body in situations where water levels fluctuate, or as the normal limit of flooding in the case of seasonal or temporary lakes and ponds. Swamps, which may include floating mats or surface scraws of vegetation, and any other peripheral wetland habitats, are excluded. Note that some tall reeds die back in winter and have a late but vigorous growing season; their full extent may not be evident before about mid-May. The classification of most open water bodies is largely based on the trophic, or nutrient status of the water. The concentrations of phosphorus and phytoplankton, which require measurements in the laboratory, have well defined categories to recognise oligotrophic, mesotrophic and eutrophic water bodies.

Rivers, Canals and Drainage Ditches- Rivers are divided into watercourses that are mainly eroding, as in the case of upland streams, and those that are mainly

depositing, as in the case of lowland rivers. No distinction is made between streams and rivers. Rivers differ from most artificial watercourses in that they have a strong unidirectional flow of water. They are dynamic systems where water levels and flow rates can fluctuate markedly. The entire channel is included as part of the river habitat, irrespective of water levels at the time of the survey. Natural watercourses may flood beyond the limits of their banks but note that floodplains are excluded.

### *Maritime Wetlands*

**Intertidal Flats-** flats are classified according to sediment type since this determines the water-holding properties of the substratum and reflects, to some extent, the conditions of wave exposure. Both factors are important in influencing species distributions. The littoral zone is taken as the area between the uppermost limit of the strandline and the mean low water springs tide mark. It includes the supralittoral zone which is subject to wetting by sea spray and wave splash, and excludes the sublittoral fringe, or extreme lower shore. The strandline is a zone on the upper shore where organic debris from the sea (mainly decaying seaweed) is deposited by the falling tide. Strandlines, at their upper limit, may support open communities of terrestrial vascular plants. Note that all other coastal or intertidal habitats that are characterised by terrestrial vascular plants should be considered elsewhere in the classification.

**Salt Marshes-** Salt marshes are stands of vegetation that occur in marine and brackish water conditions on a range of substrata that are wet, waterlogged or periodically submerged by the sea. They are typically found between the upper limits of the neap and spring tides in protected bays, estuaries, and other sections of sheltered coastline. Salt marshes are often associated with sand shores, muddy sand shores and mud shores, but can also be found along the margins of tidal rivers and in some lagoons and saline lakes. The underlying sediments are mainly sands or muds, sometimes with mixtures of coarser material. The vegetation of salt marshes varies considerably depending on the degree of submersion by the sea, the salinity of the substratum or of the water (estuarine or lagoonal salt marshes), and on the intensity of grazing by livestock. Salt marshes are divided here into two types: lower and upper. Examples of both can usually be found in most salt marsh systems. Lower and upper salt marsh may form distinct zones in some situations, particularly along the east coast of Ireland. Complex mosaics may also occur where the underlying topography is varied. Pools, known as pans, and tidal creeks and channels are a common feature of many salt marshes, and of the larger ones in particular.

### *Inland Wetlands*

**Freshwater Marshes-** Marsh is found on level ground near river banks, lakeshores, and in other places where mineral or shallow peaty soils are waterlogged, and where the water table is close to ground level for most of the year. Unlike swamps, standing water is not a characteristic feature except, perhaps, during very wet periods or in winter months. Marsh is comparatively species-rich and supports a high proportion of wetland species in addition to the typical dominants: rushes (*Juncus* spp.), sedges (*Carex* spp.) and Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*). Grasses such as Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Tall Fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*) and Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) may be present but not abundant. To be considered as marsh, the proportion of sedges and grasses should not exceed 50%. The broadleaved herb component may include Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Marsh Pennywort

(*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*), Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*), Common Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*), Ragged-robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*), Purple-loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Marsh Woundwort (*Stachys palustris*) and Marsh Cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*). Marsh may also support horsetails (*Equisetum* spp.), Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), reeds and other large grasses and sedges but these should not dominate. Herbs that are characteristic of drier ground are rare or absent in marshes. Mosses, particularly *Calliergon* and *Climacium* spp., may be plentiful. Marsh differs from swamps in that the vegetation is usually more species-rich, standing water is absent for much of the year, and reeds and other tall or bulky grasses and sedges, and tall herbs are not overwhelmingly dominant in the former. The distinction between marsh and wet grassland is less clear but, in marsh, wetland herbs should be prominent, and species of drier ground should generally be absent. If there is greater than 50% cover of grasses and sedges, the habitat should be considered under grassland or, if it is a peat-forming system, under fens and flushes. Marsh is not a peat-forming habitat.

**Peat Bogs-** Peatlands are subdivided into two main types, bogs and fens. Bogs are ombrotrophic (rain-fed) peatlands where almost all inputs of water to the system are derived from precipitation and where acid, oligotrophic peat deposits accumulate. Fens are minerotrophic peatlands that, in addition to precipitation, are fed by groundwater or moving surface waters. They have a higher nutrient status than bogs and can be either acid or base-rich. Flushes, which may or may not form peat, are included with fens as they support similar vegetation communities. Any peatland areas that are dominated by trees or shrubs, including conifer plantations, are excluded.

### *Scrub*

This broad category includes areas that are dominated by at least 50% cover of shrubs, stunted trees or brambles. The canopy height is generally less than 5m, or 4m in the case of wetland areas. Scrub frequently develops as a precursor to woodland and is often found in inaccessible locations, or on abandoned or marginal farmland. In the absence of grazing and mowing, scrub can expand to replace grassland or heath vegetation. Trees are included as components of scrub if their growth is stunted as a result of exposure, poor soils or waterlogging. If tall trees are present, these should have a scattered distribution and should not form a distinct canopy.

Scrub can be either open, or dense and impenetrable, and it can occur on areas of dry, damp or waterlogged ground. Common components include spinose plants such as Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Juniper (*Juniperus communis*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and erect or scrambling roses (*Rosa* spp.), in addition to a number of willows (*Salix* spp.), small birches (*Betula* spp.) and stunted Hazel (*Corylus avellana*). Scrub may also contain Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*) and Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*). The field layer is often impoverished and poorly-developed but, in some situations, may be similar to that of woodland. Low-growing Western Gorse (*Ulex gallii*) and prostrate Juniper (*Juniperus communis*) can also be components of heath.

### *Broadleaf Forests*

This general category includes woodland areas with 75-100% cover of broadleaved trees, and 0-25% cover of conifers. It should be used in situations where woodland stands cannot be classified as semi-natural on the basis of the criteria outlined above. Trees may include native and non-native species. Plantations of broadleaved trees are included if the canopy height is greater than 5 m, or 4 m in the case of wetland areas. Stands of immature or sapling trees are excluded. If a number of different broadleaved tree species contribute significantly to the canopy, the term 'mixed' should be used in the habitat title.

### *Mixed Forests*

This general category includes woodland areas with mixed stands of broadleaved trees and conifers, where both types have a minimum cover of 25%, and a maximum of 75%. Trees may be either native or non-native species. Mixed broadleaved/conifer plantations are included if the canopy height is greater than 5 m, or 4 m in the case of wetland areas. Stands of immature or sapling trees are excluded.

### *Agricultural or Cultivated Land*

**Arable Crops-** Agricultural land that is cultivated and managed for the production of arable crops, including cereals (wheat, barley, oats, maize), and root, leaf, energy or fibre crops such as sugar beet, turnips, rape and flax. Fields of potatoes can be included here, but most other vegetable crops are excluded, as are market gardens. If small plots of any of the above crops are mixed with other vegetables or grown in glasshouses or polythene tunnels, they should be classified as horticultural land. Note that rye-grass leys planted as part of an arable rotation are excluded. Depending on the intensity of fertiliser or herbicide use, seed sources and soil type, arable crops may harbour a variety of weed species. Common Poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*), Bladder Campion (*Silene vulgaris*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Common Field-speedwell (*Veronica persica*), Corn Spurrey (*Spergula arvensis*), Corn Marigold (*Chrysanthemum segetum*) and knotgrasses (*Polygonum* spp.) may be abundant in some arable fields. Other weeds that were formerly very common in corn or flax fields in Ireland but are now extremely rare include Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) and the grass, Darnel (*Lolium temulentum*).

**Horticultural Land-** This category includes areas of land that are cultivated and managed for the production of vegetables, fruit crops, culinary or aromatic herbs, flowers and other ornamental plants. It should also be used for market gardens, tree nurseries, garden centres, greenhouses, polythene tunnels and smaller vegetable plots in gardens and allotments. Horticultural land may support a variety of weed species depending on soil type and the intensity of management. Fertiliser, herbicide and pesticide use may range from very high in some market gardens, to almost none in the case of organic gardens. Some of the commoner weeds of cultivated land include Charlock (*Sinapis arvensis*), dead-nettles (*Lamium* spp.), Common Chickweed (*Stellaria media*) and Fumitory (*Fumaria* spp.).

**Tilled Land-** This category should be used in situations where land has been tilled and prepared for planting but where the type of crop, or future use of the land, cannot be established. Areas of reclaimed or cleared land should only be included here if they have been prepared for planting.

**Pasture-** This category is used for intensively managed or highly modified agricultural grassland that has been reseeded and/or regularly fertilised, and is now heavily grazed and/or used for silage making. It includes regularly-reseeded monoculture grasslands and rye-grass leys that are planted as part of an arable rotation. These differ significantly from areas of permanent grassland. Improved agricultural grassland is typically species-poor. Sward quality varies depending on soil type, fertility, drainage and management. Rye-grasses (*Lolium* spp.) are usually abundant and may entirely dominate the sward, often in association with White Clover (*Trifolium repens*). Many improved varieties or cultivars of these plants are now widely sown. Other grasses that may be prominent include meadow-grasses (*Poa* spp.), Timothy (*Phleum pratense*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*) and Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*). Among the more frequently occurring 'agricultural' herbs are Dandelion (*Taraxacum* spp.), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), plantains (*Plantago* spp.), Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), thistles (*Cirsium arvense*, *C. vulgare*) and docks (*Rumex* spp.). Some reseeded but poorly-drained fields may support abundant rushes.

### **5.1.3 Soil**

Soil is a biologically active complex mixture of weathered minerals, organic matter, organisms, air and water which provides the foundation for life in terrestrial ecosystems. Soil however, is not merely the sum of minerals, organic matter, water and air but a product of their interactions. It can be considered a non-renewable natural resource because it develops over very long timescales. A soil is distinguished from weathered parent material by the vertical differentiation it exhibits due to biological activity, so that the properties that are singled out in most systems of soil classification must be displayed in the soil profile.

Soil occurs and is formed in the pedosphere, the envelope where soils occur and soil forming processes are active. Soil only develops where there is a dynamic interaction between the air, water, living organisms and geology. It is these dynamic interactions which contribute to the multiple functions which soils perform. These include supporting plant life and life within the soil, biogeochemical cycling of elements, energy cycles, water storage and exchange and ecosystem productivity. ('Developing a Soil Protection Strategy for Ireland' EPA). County Meath contains a range of soils which support various habitats and land uses and provide valuable mineral resource potential. These soils can be impacted upon by water quality.

### **5.1.4 Water Supply**

Water supply is an important aspect of planning development. There are a number of water supply resources in Meath - river abstraction, lake abstraction and boreholes. With difficulties arising in increasing abstraction levels from the main rivers to meet demand, it is evident that greater dependence will be placed on groundwater to satisfy the increasing demand particularly to the east and south east of the county.

Details regarding abstraction points are set out within the Eastern Regional Basin District Characterisation Report. Public Water Supplies obtained from surface water abstraction are located at: the River Boyne at Roughgrange which services Drogheda; the River Boyne at Scurroughstown which services Trim; the River Blackwater at Liscartan, and; Lough Bane. Public Water Supplies obtained from ground water abstraction include: Athboy; Ballivor; Castle Town; Clonard; Dunshaughlin; East Meath Curragh borehole; Enfield; Kilmainham Wood; Kilmessan; Longwood; Moynaltyp; Nobber; Slane, and; Summerhill.

Group water Schemes, from Ground water sources, include: Kiltale; Meath Hill; Robinstown; Clooney Raffin; Pottlereagh; Drumgill and; Lions Den.

The County Meath Groundwater Protection Scheme provides a detailed baseline with regard to aquifer potential and vulnerability. Unaccounted water represents a considerable proportion of water treated for distribution in County Meath with a loss of 54% reported in 2000. (Meath Outline Rural Water Strategic Plan and Report)

### **5.1.5 Waste Water Treatment and Discharge**

Meath has a large number of watercourses to which effluent is discharged by Meath County Council from its municipal waste water treatment plants and privately by license issued by the Environment Section of Meath County Council. The assimilative capacity of these water courses represent a significant asset to facilitate development within the county.

### **5.1.6 Mineral Resources**

Mineral resources are amongst the more significant environmental resources of County Meath. The utilisation of natural resources contribute strongly to the economy of the County and include lead and zinc mining in Navan, cement production in Duleek and Kinnegad and extensive quarrying and concrete product manufacturing at various locations. The appropriate utilisation of the county's mineral resources is an important element of the sustainable development of the County.

### **5.1.7 Forestry**

Coillte own a total of 38 properties in County Meath, the largest of which is in Summerhill at 143ha and the smallest is in Coole at 3 ha. There is a mix of both broadleaf and coniferous species amongst these plantations. Coillte's total landholding in County Meath is 1443.5 ha. Approximately 80-100 ha of Coillte's land in Meath is harvested and planted per annum. There is also considerable private forestry in County Meath administered by the forestry service.

### **5.1.8 Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)**

Section 81 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 places a statutory obligation on Planning Authorities to ensure that all development plans must now include objectives to preserve the character of a place, area, group of structures or townscape that is:

- a) of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value, or
- b) contributes to the appreciation of protected structures.

These areas are to be designated as Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA). The designation of these ACAs is a reserved function of the Council. ACAs have been designated within each of the town plans of Navan, Kells and Trim which have been reviewed since the implementation of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. Navan, Kells and Trim town centres have been designated as ACAs.

#### **5.1.9 Areas of Archaeological Potential**

The National Monuments Acts 1930-2004 provide for the protection of the archaeological heritage. The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) was established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 and structures, features, objects or sites listed in this Record are known as Recorded Monuments. Areas of Archaeological Potential are designated under this legislation.

The Development Plans for Navan, Kells and Trim along with a number of individual Written Statements and Detailed Objectives for Towns and Villages contained in Volume II of the current County Development Plan have identified areas of archaeological potential, to which specific objectives apply.

#### **5.1.10 Preservation Orders**

National Monuments Acts, 1930 –1994 includes provisions for preservation orders. There are a number of preservation orders in County Meath and include earthen enclosures, mounds, ringforts, Motte and Bailey and Trim Town wall. A comprehensive list has been requested from the Heritage Service to be included in the environmental baseline.

#### **5.1.11 Protected Structures**

The existing Record of Protected Structures (RPS) is contained in Volume III of the County Development Plan, as amended. Section 10(2)f of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended makes the protection of architectural heritage mandatory.. The proposed RPS will be made up of the existing RPS and the ministerial recommendations arising from the NIAH surveys.

#### **5.1.12 The Boyne Valley World Heritage Site**

The Boyne Valley World Heritage Site is protected under the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1972: seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity.

## **5.2 Types or patterns of development which may be linked to environmental issues or have particular environmental advantages**

### **5.2.0 Seveso sites**

Major Accidents Directive (Control of Major Accidents Hazards involving Dangerous Substance) Regulations, 2000 (SI 476 of 2000). There are currently no sites in Co. Meath subject to these regulations.

### **5.2.1 Industrial sites**

A survey of existing lands zoned for industrial purposes and other lands used for industrial purposes is being carried out as part of the preparation of the new County Development Plan.

### **5.2.2 IPPC and other Licences**

IPPC licensing is the responsibility of the EPA as part of the EPA act 1992 it replaces and enhances IPC licensing. Local Authorities are consulted in relation to IPPC licenses as the majority discharge to municipal sewers and also to water bodies and air. Monitoring and enforcement is carried out in relation to the licences. Nationally non-compliance notices were issued to 35% of licensed facilities. This monitoring provides a useful data set in establishing the environmental baseline for the county. As of June 2005, twenty six IPPC licences have been granted in County Meath

Section 4 licenses are generally trade effluents discharging to water bodies and are issued by local authorities. The Eastern Regional River Basin Characterisation report states that there are thirty three such licenses in Meath with twenty one of those monitored. Section 16 licenses cover discharges of effluent to sewers, the Eastern Regional River Basin Characterisation report states there are ten Section 16 licenses in Meath.

Thirteen waste licenses have been granted in County Meath.

### **5.2.3 Quarries**

As and from 27 April 2005, Meath Co. Council has received a total of 71 applications for the registration of quarries as required under Section 261 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000..

### **5.2.4 Dwellings Served by Individual Wastewater Treatment System**

Base line data will be generated for the likely extent and distribution of individual waste water treatment systems by using the An Post Geodirectory data to identify dwellings outside areas serviced by public or group waste water treatment plants. This data set may be layered with the ground water protection maps to establish the loading of individual waste water treatment systems in sensitive areas.



## **5.3 Existing Significant Environmental Issues in County Meath**

### **5.3.0 Introduction**

There are a broad range of environmental issues of significance in County Meath. Many of these issues require national and even international policy responses such as air quality, major infrastructural, climatic and marine issues. Other issues such as the status of waterways, impacts on built heritage location and extent of zonings are in the direct control of the Local Authority. Only issues which are of relevance to, and which can be influenced in the context of a County Development Plan will be dealt with in this section of the report.

Development by its very nature has moulded our current environment in County Meath. Our environment facilitates development and is altered, both directly and indirectly, by development. Development is deemed to have a significant effect where it affects the capacity for use of the environment by future generations.

### **5.3.1 Population and Human Health**

Significant environmental issues exist with regard to the population of county Meath. It is well known that the settlement pattern in County Meath has resulted in a pattern of unsustainable commuting which has a negative impact on the health of the population. Related to the length of the journey times is the time that people leave their homes in the morning. The 2002 Census of Population indicated that one fifth of workers leave before 7.00 a.m. and another 18% leave home before 7.30 a.m. There is a growing strength of the desire among commuters to obtain work locally as an alternative to their ever lengthening daily commute to and from work. This is a major issue which the County Development Plan in conjunction with the County Development Board must strive to rectify over the next decade.

Human health issues arise with regard to water quality issues and these will be dealt with under the water section.

The ratio of recreation and amenity facilities to population in County Meath represents a significant issue in terms of population and human health.

### **5.3.2 Landscape**

Meath has high quality landscapes within its borders, which are of both national and international importance. Determination of significance, as discussed in Section 6 of this report, is at least partially dependant upon the importance of the resource upon which the impact occurs.

There are a number of likely significant environmental impacts on the landscape in Meath such as:

Infrastructural developments e.g.

- the M1, M3 & M4 Motorways
- the north - south Gas Line (Bord Gais)
- the proposed Clonsilla – Dunboyne / M3 Pace Interchange Rail line way extension.

However, the control of development which may result from with this infrastructure provision must be assessed in the Environmental Report associated with the County Development Plan. For example, whilst the provision of the M3 Motorway will not be assessed, the pressure for development at the Interchanges will be assessed.

Other developments which entail a potential impact on the landscape include;

- rural housing
- golf courses
- suburban type housing developments on approaches to towns and villages
- quarries
- large buildings breaking skyline and dominating important views
- many high quality demesne landscapes have been substantially altered; many of the surviving demesne and other designed landscapes are coming under increased development pressure.

### **5.3.3 Water**

Both water supply and waste water disposal are acting as significant constraints to development. The quality of water bodies in County Meath is suffering damage from inadequacy in the capacity of both private and local authority systems and the assimilative capacity of receiving waters. This is affecting river and estuarine water quality, ground water, and seawater.

### **5.3.4 Natural Heritage**

Biodiversity is in decline internationally and Meath is no exception. Development is at least partially responsible. The development of green field sites, as has been the case for much of the recent development in County Meath inevitably results in a reduction in habitat diversity and quantity of ecosystems. The processes leading to this impact include drainage of wetlands, removal of the banks of rivers and stream to increase capacity, building on flood plains, building on lands used by migratory birds, overcharging watercourses with phosphates and nitrates, the removal of hedgerows, the culverting of streams and an increased recreational use of natural assets due to increased population.

In addition to the negative impacts, development can also result in positive impacts on the natural environment. Examples of environmental improvements arising from development include the increased quality of many watercourses resulting from the recent upgrading of wastewater treatment plants. The availability of financial contributions from development being provided towards the provision of recreational and amenity facilities throughout the county can also be seen as a positive impact.

### **5.3.5 Soil**

There are a number of existing environmental issues in relation to soil within the county of which only a few can be linked to development plan issues. The rural housing policy and the effect of inappropriate or malfunctioning individual waste water treatment systems for dwellings has a significant effect on soils and also has the potential to impact upon ground waters as discussed in the section below.

The loss of soil through development and its encasement under artificial surfaces impacts upon many of its wider environmental functions.

### **5.3.6 Waste water disposal**

Municipal facilities:

Impacts on river water quality are measured by the increase in Molybdate reactive phosphorus (MRP) concentration between the upstream and downstream of outflows under summer low flow conditions (July-August 2005). MRP is a commonly used measure of pollution. This testing was carried out in attempt to focus on the effects of the individual outflows. Findings indicate that in 6 cases the increase in MRP d/s in the watercourse was in excess of 0.05mg P/l. It would appear from this data that the outflow from these treatment plants is having a significant environmental impact upon these watercourses. In a further 11 cases the increase in MRP concentrations was between 0.014 mg P/l and 0.048 mg P/l although not of comparative significance, these are still considered to have a lesser impact but are nonetheless having a negative impact upon water quality.

On site systems for one off houses:

There were 17,577 detached housing units served by on site treatment systems recorded in the 2002 census. These systems vary in age, levels of maintenance and suitability to site-specific conditions. There is a large proportion of existing septic tanks within the county which were not designed to deal with the quantity and make up of the throughput arising from modern lifestyles. These systems have a potential negative impact upon both ground and surface water quality.

Private small and medium scale treatment plants:

In an increasing number of cases around the county, where there are constraints in municipal sewage treatment facilities, small and medium scale treatment facilities have been licensed. There are a number of such plants in Meath, all of these are monitored as a condition of the license. The cumulative impact and long term maintenance of these facilities may have long term environmental consequences.

Urban runoff:

The pollution potential of the surface water run off is becoming increasingly of concern particularly its cumulative impact over entire catchment areas.

### **5.3.7 Water supply**

Network:

The ageing water distribution network and consequent unaccounted for water loss in the older settlements in Meath is of ongoing concern. The abstraction and processing of this water which is lost has environmental as well as economic consequences both in relation to its abstraction and treatment.

Municipal facilities:

There is a significant abstraction from the major water courses in County Meath, in particular the River Boyne. The relationship between flow rates, abstraction rates, assimilative capacity, and consequent impact on environmental factors into the future is an ongoing concern.

Private boreholes:

In an increasing number of cases where development has been restricted by deficiencies in water supply infrastructure, boreholes and water treatment facilities have been provided by developers. Although good mapping now exists with regard to the location, and broad capacity of aquifers in the county, the rates at which they replenish has not been established.

### **5.3.7 Air and Climatic Factors, including flooding and drought.**

Flooding has arisen as a significant issue in several areas of Meath where it has impacted upon potential and existing developments.

Flooding issues have been identified at the following locations:

- in East Meath, related the Boyne Estuary and its tributaries. This flooding is likely to increase in line with the anticipated sea level rise. A flood relief scheme has been drawn up by consultants the implementation of which will involve significant environmental impacts upon sensitive and designated habitats.
- in Kells (backlands). This has been examined and a flood protection scheme is being considered by the Infrastructure Section for previously zoned lands this will involve significant environmental impacts.
- in Navan at the confluence of the Boyne and Blackwater Rivers.
- in Clonee up to Batterstown
- in the Broadmeadow, Ashbourne
- in the Nanny, Duleek where extensive remedial works have been carried out by the OPW,
- and within the environs of Maynooth

### **5.3.8 Material Assets**

The utilisation of the county's material assets leads directly and indirectly to environmental issues arising. For the purpose of this report, material assets are deemed to include items such as wastewater treatment infrastructure, existing and proposed transport infrastructure, and the existing building stock. The use of these assets are significantly affected the implementation of national, regional and county plans and programmes.

Existing issues include:

- capacity in relation to the train line in east Meath and the need to extend the rail network to serve Dunboyne and Navan;
- capacity of the road network;
- capacity of water supply infrastructure;
- capacity of wastewater infrastructure; and
- high level of demolition for the purposes of replacement both in rural areas and within the towns and villages of Meath.

### **5.3.9 Cultural Heritage, including archaeological, architectural and linguistic heritage.**

There are archaeological issues pertaining to the development of infrastructure as highlighted during the assessment of the proposed M3 Motorway adjoining the Hill of Tara archaeological complex. The character of many of Meath's towns and villages is changing rapidly. These changes are brought about at least in part due to the replacement of many buildings of architectural heritage value and the subsequent loss of their historical associations and contribution to the character of those areas. The Record of Protected Structures as stated in the pre draft submission to the County Plan Review is taken to be a subset of architectural heritage and not a comprehensive list.

Many of the Demesnes's associated with country houses in County Meath are coming under increased pressure for development for recreational/leisure facilities and for residential development.

## **5.4 Existing Development Entailing Environmental Issues**

### **5.4.0 Introduction**

Development by definition has an impact upon its environment. Impacts can be positive or negative, direct or indirect, and individual or cumulative by its nature. Development has the effect of creating new environments as well as altering existing environments. The following sub sections outline the types of development with particular environmental impacts, which impacts have been summarised.

The scale of a given development can directly impact upon the significance of an impact and can only be considered in the context of the individual type of development and its location.

Development inevitably results in the consumption of non-renewable resources, sand and gravel, and energy in the production of building products, the transportation of building materials and over the full life cycle of the development. These issues are only dealt with below where they are of particular magnitude to that type of development.

### **5.4.1 Infrastructural development**

Road projects, train lines, pipelines, wastewater treatment systems and other large-scale infrastructural developments give rise to significant environmental issues. As indicated earlier, the majority of such projects are not initiated or executed by the Planning Authority. A level of indirect impact is inevitable with infrastructural development, as it facilitates, and is facilitated by, most other forms of development.

### **5.4.2 Waste disposal**

Waste disposal has significant potential impacts and is dealt with in the Regional Waste Plan, which is currently in draft format. By its very nature the waste plan will deal with the environmental issues in considerable detail.

### **5.4.3 Quarrying/mineral/peat extraction**

Quarrying takes place throughout County Meath.

There is extensive mining of Lead and Zinc in Boliden (formerly Tara Mines) in Navan, and cement production in Platin near Duleek.

Peat is extracted at a number of locations in the county with a major Bord na Móna operation at Ballivor bog.

The impacts of the above are potentially wide ranging from energy consumption in the production of cement manufacturing to the release of atmospheric carbon from harvesting of peat.

### **5.4.4 Golf Courses**

There has been a steady increase in the number of Golf Courses in County Meath. Golf Courses can have a significant effect on the flora fauna, biodiversity and landscape. These effects include the permanent alteration of designed Demesne and other landscapes, draining of wetlands and destruction/modification of habitats. The location of existing/proposed golf courses and European designated sites often coincide.

### **5.4.5 Greenfield Residential**

Residential development can have far ranging environmental impacts. Where significant residential development occurs in locations where the resident population travel long distances to work, particularly by private car, the resultant environmental impacts include:

- human health
- water quality
- air pollution
- greenhouse gas generation
- energy use

Such development can also negatively impact upon the use of material assets such as motorways which are intended for long distance travel and assisting in balanced regional development.

Habitat destruction through the removal of trees and hedgerows, drainage of wetlands, building on floodplains, culverting of watercourses, etc. are also associated with residential development on greenfield sites. Alterations to surface water drainage dynamics and the pollution potential of run off from urban areas can have significant environmental effects.

### **5.4.6 Brownfield Development**

Town and village centre redevelopment and the replacement of rural houses result in the generation of significant quantities of construction and demolition waste compared to the refurbishment of existing buildings.

There is often considerable negative impact on the established character of towns, villages and rural landscape where existing structures are replaced with modern structures often not in keeping with the established character. This must be evaluated against the more efficient use of zoned and serviced lands in central locations for a higher density of residential development that can reduce the number of trips made by the private car.

#### **5.4.7 Industrial**

There are a number of significant industrial developments in County Meath. Industrial development can have indirect impacts. The location of major employment generating uses relative to residential development and transport networks can considerably influence travel patterns. Industrial development can have significant water, energy and waste disposal requirements.

#### **5.4.8 Commercial**

The scale and location of commercial development has an impact on travel patterns within, into and out of the county. Limited retail offer in several areas of Meath has lead to significant trip generation from those areas.<sup>2</sup>.

#### **5.4.9 Development in areas liable to flooding**

Development in areas liable to flooding can have a range of direct and indirect impacts. Draining of land, modification and/or culverting of drainage channels, importation of material to raise ground levels and building of flood defences all have significant impacts on the biodiversity of complex transitional habitats. Flood relief works also have the potential to affect areas up stream and downstream of the development in question both inside and outside of administrative boundaries.

#### **5.4.10 Development within European designated sites**

Development within European designated sites may or may not have a significant impact. Where a development does not have an impact upon the features, which led to its designation, it would be deemed not to have a significant impact upon flora, fauna or biodiversity.

#### **5.4.11 Development within sensitive landscapes**

Where a landscape has been designated as being of particular visual quality and sensitivity, the impact of a development could be significant. Such developments include afforestation, wind farms, the provision of antennae, peat harvesting and residential development.

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<sup>2</sup> The Planning Department is currently preparing plans for town centre expansion in Navan and Kells and has already prepared plans for town centre expansion in Ashbourne and Trim to address this leakage. Furthermore, prudent planning of higher order goods and bulky goods (retail warehousing) require a critical population mass to sustain themselves and result inevitably in car borne trips to access same

#### **5.4.12 Scale**

The scale and extent of each type of development has a bearing on the significance of an environmental impact of any given development. Developments, which individually would not have a significant effect, can have a cumulative effect, as is the case with rural housing. The visual character of a rural area can be altered considerably and permanently through a proliferation of poorly designed and sited single rural housing, ground water can be permanently polluted by a proliferation of inadequate waste water treatment systems.



## **Section 6        Environmental Characteristics Likely to be significantly affected**

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### **6.0     Introduction**

The environmental characteristics, both assets and constraints, which are likely to be significantly affected as a result of implementation of the development proposed by the County Development Plan are identified and mapped in this section. In identifying these environmental characteristics attention has been paid to the fact that SEA should focus on significant issues relating to the prediction of impacts and disregard the less significant ones. The focus on these characteristics has come about as a result of the scoping process together with the results of initial baseline data collection.

### **6.1     Environmental Assets**

The most important natural resources in County Meath likely to be affected by the County Development Plan are Unpolluted River Catchments which were identified and mapped with reference to the Environmental Protection Agency's (2005) 'Water Quality in Ireland 2001-2003'. Unpolluted River Catchments which were identified include a number of sub-catchments of the Boyne Catchment as shown per Map 6.2.

The five most Traditional Villages in County Meath were identified and are shown on Map 6.3. These villages are Oldcastle, Athboy, Summerhill, Slane and Moynalty.

Mineral resources are also an important natural resource. A detailed crushed rock and aggregate potential mapping project was completed by the Geological Survey of Ireland on behalf of Meath County Council in January 2004. Rock Aggregate Potential & Rock Granular Potential has been taken from this data in order to compile Map 6.1.

All environmental assets are shown together on Map 6.4. Concentrations of environmental sensitivities are shown by a darker green colour.

### **6.2     Environmental Constraints**

#### **6.2.0   Introduction**

Identified environmental constraints, or sensitivities, which exist in County Meath include Ancient Areas [Map 6.5], Extremely Vulnerable Regionally Important Aquifers [Map 6.6], Habitats [Map 6.7], Landscapes of Exceptional Value [Map 6.8] and Polluted River Catchments [Map 6.9].

All environmental sensitivities are shown together on Map 6.10. Where the mapping shows a concentration of environmental sensitivities [darker red] here there is an increased likelihood that development will conflict and cause environmental deterioration. This is particularly the case where cumulative development of small-scale projects – such as rural housing – gradually cause a slow deterioration of a resource – such as water quality.

The environmental sensitivities are used, alongside the topics of population, material assets, air and climatic factors, in order to help to facilitate the evaluation of likely effects which the County Development Plan would have if implemented. Mitigation measures are subsequently proposed in order to avoid or reduce these impacts.

### **6.2.1 Ancient Areas**

Ancient Areas which are identified and mapped include [Reference: Meath County Council (2006) Draft Meath Landscape Character Assessment]: parts of the River Dee Valley, parts of the Owenroe or Moynalty River Valley, parts of the River Blackwater Valley, parts of the River Boyne Valley-including the lower valley-, parts of the River Nanny Valley, parts of the Royal Canal Corridor, the Tara and Dunsany District and the Slieve na Calliagh Uplands.

Ancient areas are landscapes which have undergone most historic influence from humans, encompassing features such as archaeology, mythology, burial sites and other structures which are of important historic value.

### **6.2.2 Extremely and Highly Vulnerable Regionally Important Aquifers**

It has been identified in the description of the current environmental baseline that rural housing developments, which individually would not necessarily have significant adverse effect on groundwater, have had cumulative adverse effects as ground water can be permanently polluted by a proliferation of inadequate waste water treatment systems. Groundwater is likely, therefore, to be significantly affected as a result of implementation of the County Development Plan. This SEA has identified the two most vulnerable aquifer classifications- 'Extremely Vulnerable Regionally Important Aquifers' and 'Highly Vulnerable Regionally Important Aquifers' from the Geological Survey of Ireland's Aquifer Vulnerability Ratings of County Galway (2004) Aquifer Vulnerability Classification. These classifications are used in order to facilitate the evaluation as to whether the County Development Plan would, if implemented, have significant effects on groundwater quality.

Aquifers are underground layers of rock which contain water and which are capable of yielding it to surface waters such as streams and rivers. 'Major Vulnerable Regionally Important Aquifers' and 'Highly Vulnerable Regionally Important Aquifers' are aquifers which important at a regional level and which are most sensitive to an imposed contaminant load. Areas of County Meath covered by both classifications are shown on Map 6.6.

### **6.2.3 Landscapes of Exceptional Value**

It has been identified in the description of the current environmental baseline that infrastructural as well as other developments, including rural housing developments, have had cumulative adverse effects on areas of high landscape sensitivity. Landscapes are likely, therefore, to be significantly affected as a result of implementation of the County Development Plan. This SEA has identified the most valuable landscapes which are rated as being of Exceptional Value from Meath County Council's Draft Landscape Character Assessment (2006). The identification of these most valuable landscapes is used in order to facilitate the evaluation as to

whether the County Development Plan would, if implemented, have significant effects on these landscapes.

Landscapes of Exceptional Value those which are perceived by the communities that inhabit them to be of the most value. This value arises from intrinsic attributes such as visual beauty, ecology, archaeology, social history, religious sites, and mythology. The following is a list of Landscapes of Exceptional Value in County Meath as are mapped and as are defined in the Landscape Character Assessment: Loughcrew Hills, Boyne Valley, Rathmoylan Farmland and the Tara Skryne Area.

#### **6.2.4 Biodiversity**

It has been identified in the description of the current environmental baseline that biodiversity is in decline in County Meath as a result of certain developments. Greenfield developments have replaced semi natural and natural areas with artificial surfaces causing a gradual loss of habitats and biodiversity. Other developments such as the drainage of wetlands, the removal of the banks of rivers and stream to increase capacity and golf courses have resulted in habitat and biodiversity loss.

Rather than concentrating exclusively on the designated sites of SACs, SPAs and NHAs, which represent a relatively small area of the County's habitats, this SEA has considered, alongside designated sites, the Coordination of Information on the Environment (CORINE) habitat database in order to facilitate the evaluation as to whether the County Development Plan would, if implemented, have significant effects on habitats across the County, protected or not. Map 6.8 shows SPAs [National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2006], SACs [National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2006], as well as High-Biodiversity Habitats as sourced from the CORINE database including Inland Waters, Maritime Wetlands, Inland Wetlands, Scrub and Forests. 'Agricultural or Cultivated Land' is excluded from this High Biodiversity Map due to the relative low biodiversity which this habitat type supports.

#### **6.2.4 Polluted River Catchments**

It has been identified in the description of the current environmental baseline that waste water disposal is acting as significant constraint to development and that the quality of water bodies in County Meath is suffering damage from inadequacy in the capacity of both private and local authority systems and the assimilative capacity of receiving waters. Development is deemed to have a significant effect where it affects the capacity for use of the environment by future generations therefore the identification of Polluted River Catchments, i.e. those which have exceeded their carrying capacity, helps to facilitate the evaluation of likely effects which the County Development Plan would have if implemented. The catchments are shown on Map 6.9 and include [Reference: EPA (2005) Water Quality in Ireland 2001-2003]: part of the Boyne Catchment, the Nanny Catchment, the Mosney Catchment, the Broad Meadow Catchment, and the Tolka Catchment.

## **Section 7            Likely Significant Effects on the Environment**

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### **7.0    SEA Objectives**

Strategic Environmental Objectives are environmental protection objectives, which, if complied with in full would result of environmentally neutral impact from implementation a plan. The SEOs are set out under a range of topics and used as a tool to cross check and alter the policies of the plan in order to strive towards sustainable planning. SEOs have been used in this SEA in order to help identify areas in which significant adverse impacts are likely to occur, if unmitigated against.

SEOs have been generated from Regional, National and European Policy and Guidance documents, those considered are set out in Section 3 of this document. The primary source used was Table 4B of the DEHLG 'Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plan and Programmes on the Environment'. This list has been amended to take affect of objectives that are considered relevant to the proposed County Development Plan.

The use of SEOs, although not a statutory requirement, does fulfil obligations set out in Section F, Schedule 2B of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004. This section sets out the range of issues under which the environmental impact has to be assessed.

SEOs are distinct from the County Development Plan objectives and provide a standard against which the goals, policies and objectives of the County Development Plan can be measured in order to highlight those with the potential for environmental impact.

SEOs should be linked to an indicator and vice versa where possible this will help identify information gaps and facilitate efforts to address these gaps in future reviews.

### **7.1    Summary of Impacts**

'Map 7.1 Future Development and Constraints and Impact Zones' shows where the concentrations of environmental sensitivities coincide with areas where development concentrations are proposed by the Draft Development Plan.

In general the Map shows potential conflicts arising in six main areas or impact zones:

1. Between Slane and the Boyne Estuary where Urbanisation originating from Drogheda will increasingly impinge on a very dense cluster of environmental sensitivities – many of which enjoy formal protection due to designations
2. In the West of the county where largely unpolluted surface and ground-waters occur in an area where rural housing is likely to increase on account of the Plan

3. In the south-east of the county where increasingly polluted surface and groundwaters are highly vulnerable to development outside of fully serviced centres
4. In the environs of Kells where there are a number of environmental and historical sensitivities
5. In the environs of Trim where there are a number of environmental and historical sensitivities
6. In the environs of Navan where there are a number of environmental and historical sensitivities

These impacts can be summarised as follows;-

	Threatens Groundwater Quality (Vulnerable Aquifers)?	Threatens Surface Water Quality (Polluted River Catchments)?	Threatens Ancient Areas (Most Historic Landscapes)?	Threatens Most Valuable Landscapes?	Threatens Designated Ecology?	Threatens Non Designated High Biodiversity Habitats?	Threatens Minerals & Soils
Slane to Drogheda Urbanisation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
Dunshaughlin to Ashbourne Urbanisation	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Navan Environs	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Kells Environs	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
Trim Environs	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO
Rural housing in east of Oldcastle	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

**Table 7.1 Summary of Impacts**

A degree of uncertainty is involved with regard to the evaluation of impacts for development proposed by the County Development Plan as, due to the high strategic level at which the Plan is situated, the Plan often does not lay down the boundaries for development in certain areas, rather it guides, for example, the local area plan making process.

## **7.2 Ground Water Quality**

### **7.2.0 Evaluation**

The development proposed by the County Development Plan has been evaluated for its impact on groundwater quality by determining whether or not development concentrations proposed by the County Development Plan coincide with locations over 'Extremely Vulnerable Regionally Important Aquifers' or 'Highly Vulnerable Regionally Important Aquifers'.

If unmitigated against, such development could cause significant adverse impacts on groundwater through for example the use of incorrectly maintained one-off waste water treatment systems. It has been identified in the description of the current environmental baseline that waste water disposal is acting as significant constraint to development and that the quality of water bodies in County Meath is suffering damage from inadequacy in the capacity of both private and local authority systems and the assimilative capacity of receiving waters.

Where the evaluation has identified that there could be, if unmitigated against, significant adverse impacts on groundwater this is identified below.

### **7.2.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives**

The following SEOs were used in the evaluation process in order to highlight areas in which impacts may occur.

- W1 Maintain water abstraction, run-off and recharge within carrying capacity (including future capacity)
- W2 Reduce progressively discharges of polluting substances to waters
- W3 Mitigate the effects of floods and droughts including vulnerability to climate change. (extreme weather, sea level rise, coastal erosion)<sup>3</sup>
- W4 Promote sustainable water use based on a long term projection of available water resources.

### **7.2.2 Identified Impacts**

Due to the existence of a number of bands of 'Extremely Vulnerable Regionally Important Aquifers' or 'Highly Vulnerable Regionally Important Aquifers' in the Slane to Drogheda Urbanisation impact zone there exists potential significant negative impacts relating to groundwater quality. Such impacts on could, if unmitigated against, pollute drinking water supplies, harm human health and have a negative effect on ecosystems.

## **7.3 Surface Water Quality**

### **7.3.0 Evaluation**

The development proposed by the County Development Plan has been evaluated for its impact on the surface water by determining whether or not development concentrations proposed by the County Development Plan coincide with polluted river catchments, i.e. those which have exceeded their carrying capacity. If unmitigated against, such development could cause significant adverse impacts on surface water. Where the evaluation has identified that there could be, if unmitigated against, significant adverse impacts on surface water this is identified below.

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<sup>3</sup> Objective W3 was found to potentially conflict with other SEA Objectives, see compatibility table below table 4, due to the disruptive potential of flood relief and associated works.

### 7.3.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives

The SEOs for water as listed previously were used in the evaluation process in order to highlight areas in which impacts may occur. These objectives are:

- W1 Maintain water abstraction, run-off and recharge within carrying capacity (including future capacity)
- W2 Reduce progressively discharges of polluting substances to waters
- W3 Mitigate the effects of floods and droughts including vulnerability to climate change. (extreme weather, sea level rise, coastal erosion)<sup>4</sup>
- W4 Promote sustainable water use based on a long term projection of available water resources.

### 7.3.2 Identified Impacts

<b>Impact Zone</b>	<b>Threatens Surface Water Quality?</b>	<b>Polluted River Catchment Impacted</b>
<b>Slane to Drogheda Urbanisation</b>	YES	Lower Boyne Catchment, Nanny Catchment, Mosney Catchment, Broad Meadow Catchment
<b>Dunshaughlin to Ashbourne Urbanisation</b>	YES	Tolka Catchment
<b>Navan Environs</b>	YES	Boyne Catchment
<b>Kells Environs</b>	YES	Boyne Catchment
<b>Trim Environs</b>	NO	-
<b>Rural housing in east of Oldcastle</b>	YES	Boyne Catchment

***Table 7.2 Identified Impacts on Surface Water Quality***

The above identified impacts on could, if unmitigated against, pollute drinking water supplies, harm human health and have a negative effect on ecosystems

<sup>4</sup> Objective W3 was found to potentially conflict with other SEA Objectives, see compatibility table below table 4, due to the disruptive potential of flood relief and associated works.

## **7.4 Ancient Areas and Landscapes**

### **7.4.0 Evaluation**

The development proposed by the County Development Plan has been evaluated for its impact on ancient areas and valuable landscapes by determining whether or not development concentrations proposed by the County Development Plan coincide with 'Ancient Areas' and 'Landscapes of Exceptional Value' as identified in the County Meath Landscape Character Assessment. If unmitigated against, such development could cause significant adverse impacts on these landscapes. Where the evaluation has identified that there could be, if unmitigated against, significant adverse impacts on the relevant landscapes this is identified below. Such impacts on could decrease the value of these landscapes and negatively impact upon cultural heritage.

#### **7.4.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives**

The following SEO for Cultural Heritage [C1] and SEO for Landscapes [L1] were used in the evaluation process in order to highlight areas in which impacts may occur.

- C1 Promote the identification, protection and conservation of the cultural, including architectural and archaeological, heritage.
- L1 Conserve and enhance valued natural, historic and cultural landscapes and features within them



### 7.4.2 Identified Impacts

Impact Zone	Threatens Ancient Areas?	Ancient Area Threatened	Threatens Valuable Landscapes?	Landscape Threatened
Slane to Drogheda Urbanisation	YES	Lower Boyne Valley, River Nanny Valley	YES	Lower Boyne Valley
Dunshaughlin to Ashbourne Urbanisation	NO	-	YES	Tara Skryne Area
Navan Environs	YES	Boyne Valley	YES	Boyne Valley
Kells Environs	YES	River Dee Valley	NO	-
Trim Environs	YES	Boyne Valley	YES	Boyne Valley
Rural housing in east of Oldcastle	YES	Slieve na Calliagh Uplands	YES	Loughcrew Hills

***Table 7.3 Identified Impacts on Ancient Areas and Landscapes***

## 7.5 Biodiversity & Soil

### 7.5.0 Evaluation

The development proposed by the County Development Plan has been evaluated for its impact on designated habitat sites and habitats which are sourced from the CORINE database by determining whether or not development concentrations proposed by the County Development Plan coincide with SPAs, SACs, NHAs or high biodiversity habitats. If unmitigated against, such development could cause significant adverse impacts on biodiversity as a result of replacing semi natural fabric with artificial surfaces. Where the evaluation has identified that there could be, if unmitigated against, significant adverse impacts on the relevant landscapes this is identified below. Such impacts on could decrease the value of these ecosystems which have already been identified as being in decline across the county.

The replacement of semi natural fabric with artificial surfaces will result in a corresponding loss of soil, a non-renewable natural resource because it develops over very long timescales. This loss of soil will result with all Greenfield development therefore development concentrations proposed by the County Development Plan are not evaluated individually however it has been identified that the proposed development will have a cumulative significant adverse impact on soil due to of the development of artificial surfaces over this resource.

### **7.5.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives**

The following SEO for Biodiversity [B1 to B5] and SEO for Soil [S1 and S2] were used in the evaluation process in order to highlight areas in which impacts may occur.

- B1 Avoid damage by development to designated wildlife sites and protected species.
- B2 Conserve the diversity of habitats avoiding irreversible losses
- B3 Ensure that any development promotes sustainable management of key wildlife sites and the ecological processes upon which they depend
- B4 Protect aquatic ecosystems including the marine environment, and terrestrial ecosystems which are interdependent (promote integrated management strategies)
- B5 Provide opportunities for sustainable public access to wildlife and wild places
- S1 Maintain the quality of soil.
- S2 Maximise the sustainable re-use of brownfield lands, and maximise the use of the existing built environment rather than developing greenfield lands

## 7.5.2 Identified Impacts

Impact Zone	Threatens Designated Habitats?	Designated Habitats Threatened	Threatens High Biodiversity Habitats?	High Biodiversity Habitats Threatened
<b>Slane to Drogheda Urbanisation</b>	<b>YES</b>	Boyne River Islands SAC 001862; Boyne Coast & Estuary SAC 001957; Boyne Estuary SPA 004080;	<b>YES</b>	Forests and Scrub
<b>Dunshaughlin to Ashbourne Urbanisation</b>	<b>NO</b>	-	<b>NO</b>	-
<b>Navan Environs</b>	<b>YES</b>	River Boyne & River Blackwater SAC 002299	<b>YES</b>	Inland Waters
<b>Kells Environs</b>	<b>YES</b>	River Boyne & River Blackwater SAC 002299	<b>YES</b>	Forests
<b>Trim Environs</b>	<b>NO</b>	-	<b>NO</b>	-
<b>Rural housing in east of Oldcastle</b>	<b>YES</b>	Lough Sheelin SPA 004065; Lough Bane/Glass SAC 02120; Moneybeg & Clare Island Bogs SAC 002340	<b>YES</b>	Inland Waters, Inland Wetlands, Forests

***Table 7.3 Identified Impacts on Biodiversity***

## 7.6 Minerals

### 7.6.0 Evaluation

The development proposed by the County Development Plan has been evaluated for its impact on the mineral resources in County Meath. Minerals have been identified as an important natural resource in County Meath which are likely to be affected by the County Development Plan are mineral resources.

It has been identified that if unmitigated against, the development proposed by the County Development Plan could cause significant adverse impacts on the mineral resources in the impact zones of 'Slane to Drogheda Urbanisation', 'Kells Environs', 'Rural housing in east of Oldcastle'.

Greenfield development in these areas could restrict the future use of these resources by replacing the semi natural fabric which overlies the mineral resources with artificial surfaces.

A detailed crushed rock and aggregate potential mapping project was completed by the Geological Survey of Ireland on behalf of Meath County Council in January 2004. Rock Aggregate Potential & Rock Granular Potential has been taken from this data in order to compile Map 6.1.

### **7.6.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives**

The following SEO for Soil were used in the evaluation process in order to highlight areas in which impacts may occur.

- S1 Maintain the quality of soil.
- S2 Maximise the sustainable re-use of brownfield lands, and maximise the use of the existing built environment rather than developing greenfield lands
- S3 Minimise the consumption of non-renewable sand, gravel, rock and peat deposits
- S4 Minimise the amount of waste to landfill

## **7.7 Population and Human Health**

### **7.7.0 Evaluation**

The development proposed by the County Development Plan has been evaluated for its impact on population with reference to the projected population figures for the plan period. The population of County Meath in January 2006 stood at 155,134 and is predicted to rise over the period of the County Development Plan, to 178,611 by 2013. The County Development Plan will therefore significantly impact on population, and with the majority of population growth to be spread across the various existing settlement centres in County Meath.

### **7.7.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives**

The following SEOs were used in the evaluation process in order to highlight areas in which impacts may occur.

- P1 Improve people's quality of life based on high-quality residential, working and recreational environments, on sustainable travel patterns at all stages of life.
- P2 Minimise noise and vibration from traffic, industrial processes and extractive industry

## **7.8 Air/Climatic Factors**

### **7.8.0 Evaluation**

The development proposed by the County Development Plan has been evaluated for its impact on air and climatic factors. Many issues relating to air and climatic factors are dealt with at higher strategic levels however Section 9 of this report describes measures to mitigate against impacts on air/climatic factors.

#### **7.8.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives**

The following SEOs were used in the evaluation process in order to highlight areas in which impacts may occur.

- A1 Reduce all forms of air pollution
- A2 Reduce waste of energy, and maximise use of renewable energy sources
- A3 Reduce progressively discharges of polluting substances to air including greenhouse gases
- A4 Reduce the need to travel

## **7.9 Material Assets**

### **7.9.0 Evaluation**

Material assets including the provision of infrastructure and local services would be significantly positively impacted as a result of implementation of the County Development Plan as the Plan proposes growth in various centres where settlement, industry and associated services already exist thus consolidating these areas and reducing the unit cost of infrastructure, making it more economical for infrastructure to be provided as well as sustaining local services.

#### **7.9.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives**

The following SEO was used in the evaluation process in order to highlight areas in which impacts may occur.

- M1 Maintain the quality of and access to assets such as aquifers, aggregates, ports, motorways, and all physical and social infrastructure.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> A potential conflict was identified in objective M1 with B4 as the exploitation of material assets such as quarrying has the potential to disrupt natural heritage. See table 4 below

## **Section 8                      Measures envisaged to mitigate adverse Impacts**

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### **8.0      Introduction**

The SEA Directive requires information to be given on mitigation measures- the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme. Mitigation involves ameliorating significant negative effects and enhancing positive ones. Locations which are likely to need mitigation measures in order to more reduce the impacts of accommodating growth in County Meath were identified by the SEA process and are shown on Map 7.1, alongside environmental constraints.

### **8.1      Local Spatial Strategies**

It is proposed to prepare a Spatial Strategy for each of the five areas identified in the following map [marked in purple as Impact Zones 1- 6]. These Spatial Strategies will identify in detail the location, significance and sensitivity of the range of environmental assets and constraints that occur within these particularly sensitive areas that are likely to be subject to higher than average intensities of development.

### **8.2      Thematic Spatial Strategies**

In addition to these six specific areas the county will need to prepare and separately assess four Thematic Spatial Strategies, as follows;-

#### **8.2.0   Spatial Strategy for Rural Development & Agricultural Restructuring**

Meath has a very wide range of land use capability that will result in different parts of the County having very different futures under the onset of the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. It is likely that areas with marginal agriculture – particularly in the north-west are likely to experience increasing levels of afforestation, alternative enterprises and rural settlement as a result. If these occur in an integrated and coordinated manner then there are likely to be benefits for all in addition to increased protection for environmental assets such as groundwater and surface water quality, landscape and cultural heritage. A Thematic Spatial Strategy for Agricultural Restructuring will supply this address this need.

#### **8.2.1   A Spatial Strategy for Industry and Enterprise**

Meath is developing significant clusters of power, road, water and gas in parts of the south-east of the County. If properly co-ordinated these areas could be harnessed to become nationally significant zones to support and accommodate very large-scale, value adding employment centres. A Spatial Strategy for Industry and Enterprise would identify these and reserve them for these uses while avoiding potential for future environmental and planning conflicts.

### **8.2.2 A Spatial Strategy for Forestry**

A number of social, economic and agricultural forces may combine to see the beginning of a marked increase in lowland afforestation within Meath. If properly harnessed such forestry can positively facilitate many other land-uses – including often difficult land-use types such as aquifer and surface-water protection, tourism, rural housing, mineral extraction, industry, and the provision of infrastructure location.

### **8.2.3 A Spatial Strategy for infrastructure**

Meath's growing population and its location near Dublin will mean that major infrastructure projects – such as power, rail, water, waste and road – will continue to be sited within the County. To minimise the potential for conflict A Spatial Strategy for infrastructure should be drawn up to identify and protect corridors for major critical infrastructure in the County.

### **8.2.4 Other mitigation Measures**

This section deals with policies and objectives identified by the SEA process that have been identified as having potential for significant adverse environmental effects on implementation. It should be noted that as the plan develops in response to comments received during the course of consultation and review these will need to be continually updated and revised.

Options are provided in this section with regard to

- preventing,
- lessening,
- mitigating,
- monitoring, and
- offsetting

the potential for significant environmental effects identified in the preceding section.

## **8.3 Conflicts Identified to date**

### **8.3.0 Enterprise and Employment**

It is difficult to assess the significance of the environmental impact of implementing these policies. It is accepted that County Meath is developing in a dormitory nature with more and more of the resident population commuting outside of the County, primarily to Dublin, to find employment. The NSS and RPGs seek to redress this situation whereby more of the resident population are employed locally and the jobs-to-population ratio is increased. The genesis for the main thrust of the Enterprise and Employment policies (e.g. Strategic Policy 1, Enter 1, 2 & 5) come primarily from the RPG. It is the detailed objectives that will be developed from these policies that will have to be assessed in the SEA. On this basis, the objectives and policies of the Draft Development Plan and subsequent Local Area Plans, and in particular land use zoning objectives contained therein, should be assessed with regard to likely significant impacts.

**ENTER 3 & 4** conflicts with SEO S3 - development entails the continued use of sand and gravel.

**ENTER 10** conflicts with SEO L1 - a conflict has been identified between this objective relating to the extractive industry and landscape conservation

	<b>Sand and Gravel</b>	<b>Landscape</b>
Prevention	The use of sand and gravel is inevitable with development.	Policy/objective should require preventing the impact of extractive industries on designated quality landscapes.
Lessening	Policies should be put in place to ensure reuse of material where possible to reduce quantities of material required	Limits on scale and intensity of use with regard to landscape sensitivity required
Mitigation	Regard should be had to the prioritisation of deposits as carried out by GSI.	Policies regarding screening and reinstatement of worked out quarries, etc. required.
Monitoring measures	The activity of extractive industries can now be followed through licensing, planning and aerial photography.	
Offsetting	Stronger policy regarding encouraging the re-use of existing structures would help in offsetting the quantity of sand and gravel required.	A policy with regard to management plans encompassing proposed uses for worked out quarries and bogs could address offsetting conflicts in the medium to long term.

### **Recommendation:**

ENTER 3 and 4 should be amended or make reference to policy elsewhere in the Draft Development Plan where the sustainable use of natural resources is dealt with.

ENTER10 should be reworded to take cognisance of the elements of designated landscapes. A policy should be included to retain unique character of town and village centres.

As noted above a Spatial Strategy for Industry and Enterprise should be adopted for the county which should in turn include an assessment of likely environmental effects – this matter will also be relevant in the Local Spatial Strategies for a number of the major settlement centres.

#### **8.3.1 Retail/ Town Centre**

There are no direct conflicts between the policy direction for Retail/Town Centre and the Strategic Environmental Objectives.

The policies set out in this section rely heavily on the Retail Planning Guidelines and the Meath County Retail Strategy. The environmental consequences of these policies are dictated by higher level and parallel plans. Both of these documents predate the commencement of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004. It is not proposed to review the existing County Retail Strategy at present but to readopt the existing strategy into the County Development Plan.



### **Recommendation:**

The review of the Meath County Retail Strategy will be subject to SEA, until such a time as this review takes place the potential impacts of these policies cannot be assessed – except through the Local Spatial Strategies – where the majority of such development is likely to be addressed.

### **8.3.2 Residential Development**

**RES3** The wording of this policy is being taken to presume new residential zoning, there is no caveat with regard to carrying capacity of the environment and/or infrastructure. It was found to conflict with many of the environmental objectives including:

- B2 new residential development will impact upon diversity of habitats
- W1 this policy only makes reference to demand not to capacity
- W2 this policy does not contribute to a reduction in water pollution and is likely to increase water pollution.
- A1 this policy does not contribute to a reduction in air pollution
- A3 this policy does not contribute to a reduction in air pollution

	<b>Water</b>	<b>Air</b>
Prevention	Allow for residential zoning within environmental carrying capacity	Parallel policy required on pollution potential of residential development.
Lessening	Rate areas for potential increases in population with regard to least worst options	Enforce high environmental standards in construction and operation.
Mitigation	Ensure that waste water treatment is available commensurate with scale and timing of residential zoning	Enforce high environmental standards in construction and operation.
Monitoring measures	The ongoing monitoring of water-bodies by the environment section	Air monitoring by EPA
Offsetting	Accommodate increased residential demand at locations where capacity exists	Policies for increased Carbon and nitrogen sinks should be included where possible such as protection of all wetlands

### **Recommendation:**

The infrastructural and environmental carrying capacity should be taken into consideration in the re-drafting of these policies.

### 8.3.3 Transportation and Movement

A number of the policies included in Transportation and Movement, e.g. Trans 1,2,3 & 4, are provided for in higher level plans and programmes such as the NSS, RPG's, NDP and Department of Transport 'Transport 21'. These plans and programmes will be subject to SEA and/or EIS as appropriate.

**TRANS2** Whilst this policy seeks to influence relevant agencies and Government Departments in the provision of transport facilities to serve Co. Meath, which will themselves, be subject to SEA or EIA assessment, this was found to conflict with:

**S3** The minimisation of use; of non-renewable sand and gravel is not compatible with road building

#### **TRANS3 & TRANS4**

Whilst these policies seeks to develop and implement, in consultation with the National Roads Authority and DEHLG, a programme for the upgrading, improvement and maintenance of the National Road and Non National Road Networks within the County, which again may be subjected to SEA or EIA assessment, they were found to conflict with:

**S3** As above road building and conservation of non-renewable sand and gravel are incompatible

**L1** Road building, and upgrading, inevitably involve removal of hedgerows, stone walls, buildings, trees and other elements of rural landscapes

**Recommendation:** Policies relating to transport should make reference to the re-use of material where possible. Cognisance is needed within these policies, of the impact transport issues can have on landscape. A policy should be included for the optimisation of existing transport infrastructure.

### 8.3.4 Heritage and Conservation

No direct conflicts have been identified between the policy direction for heritage and conservation and the Strategic Environmental Objectives.

### 8.3.5 Social inclusion

No direct conflicts have been identified between the proposed Policy for social inclusion and the Strategic Environmental Objectives.

#### **Potential conflicts identified which will be determined at LAP stage**

Many of the objectives and policies set out in the Manager's Report and in Section 6 of this report are insufficiently detailed to assess in an absolute manner against the environmental protection objectives. The policy direction contained in the Manager's Report sets the framework for the drafting of more detailed policies and objectives, including land use zoning objectives in both the County Development Plan and the subsequent series of Local Area Plans.

The policy direction contained in the County Plan will be amended / augmented to provide for prevention, lessening, mitigation, monitoring and offsetting at Development Plan policy level where it is determined that potentially negative environmental effects could arise in the course its implementation through lower level policy. This will deal with potential impacts at local area plan stage therefore removing/reducing the potential for environmental impacts and with it the requirement to subject these plans to SEA.

#### **8.4.0 Enterprise and Employment**

The majority of these policies link development with anticipated demand and have little cognisance of the environmental carrying capacity or of potential constraints. On this basis, Development Plan and Local Area Plan objectives and/or zonings arising from these policies should be assessed with regard to environmental impact.

Implementation of Policies ENTER 3,4,5,9 and 10 will be through site-specific objectives including in certain instances land use zoning objectives. The majority of these objectives will be drafted in Local Area Plans for each of the individual towns and villages. SEA will be carried out for each of these LAP's where a significant environmental impact is anticipated. Specific policies for existing and proposed industrial / employment centres that may be outside of established urban centres will also be assessed.

#### **Recommendation:**

Objectives arising from the policies set out in this section should be assessed and amended where necessary with regard to potential environmental impact. A policy stating the importance of environmental quality in the promotion of enterprise and employment should be included.

As noted above a Spatial Strategy for Industry and Enterprise should be adopted for the county which should in turn include an assessment of likely environmental effects – this matter will also be relevant in the Local Spatial Strategies for a number of the major settlement centres.

#### **8.4.1 Retail/ Town Centre**

The environmental impact of both these policies and the objectives arising from those policies will in most cases be site specific and as such will be addressed at that level within Local Area Plans and Development Plans for Navan, Kells and Trim.

#### **Recommendation:**

A policy should be included in order to state the importance of retaining the unique character and diversity of town and village centres.

#### **8.4.2 Residential Development**

The environmental consequences of the majority of the housing policy will again be site specific and include RES1, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

**RES3** the environmental consequences of zoning sufficient land to accommodate the growing population with no regard for environmental carrying capacity, are significant.

**RES5** identifying opportunities for infill in existing towns has considerable potential environmental impact.

**Recommendation:**

Policies should be amended where necessary to take of account of the carrying capacity of the environment thus ensuring that objectives arising from these policies will also have regard to environmental considerations.

Consideration should be given in the drafting of residential policies to targeting the use of brownfield sites.

RES5<sup>6</sup> should be amended to include the wording, 'appropriate opportunities'; objectives arising from this will need to be carefully assessed against the appropriate environmental objectives and any design guidelines available.

### **8.4.3 Transportation and Movement**

The potential environmental impact of Transport and Movement Policy within LAP's will be minimal. However cumulatively, the potential impact is significant.

**Recommendation:**

The inclusion of a policy relating to the integration of the transport system throughout the LAP's could have a considerable positive effect.

### **8.4.4 Infrastructure**

There is no policy direction for infrastructure set out in the manager's report, which has a possible impact at LAP stage, other than INFRA 1 which seeks to secure the provision of water, wastewater treatment and waste management initiatives to accommodate the future sustainable economic and residential growth.

**Recommendation:**

The inclusion of a policy relating to the integrated provision of infrastructure within the LAP's, may help in lessening the potential environmental impact of infrastructural requirements to service lands within those LAP's, individually and cumulatively.

### **8.4.5 Rural Areas including rural Housing/Graig Policy**

Rural Housing and Graig Policy will not be directly affected by or subject to LAP policy. This is a matter exclusive to the County Development Plan. It appears that Rural Housing in the west of the County has a significant potential to adverse with

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<sup>6</sup> To identify opportunities for infill development and consolidation of existing towns and villages to reduce the need to zone additional greenfield lands.

water quality and occasionally scenery and heritage – particularly in the area east of Oldcastle

**Recommendation:**

See previous notes on the need for Spatial Strategy for Rural Development & Agricultural Restructuring

**HER3:** The preparation of a LAP for the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage site would be likely to have considerable positive impacts on the majority of environmental assets in the area. It is conceivable that such a heritage centred plan could have negative impacts on the resident population.

**HER4, HER5:**

Policy to protect the built heritage is implemented through objectives, protecting structures, groups of structures, views etc., some of which will be implemented through objectives at LAP level.

**HER11:** may become prohibitive with regard to extent of land use zonings and specific objectives.

#### **8.4.5 Social Inclusion, Cultural Diversity and Community Infrastructure**

The implementation of the majority of these policies, will be through the objectives of the Local Area Plans, where these have the potential for significant environmental effects they will be dealt with appropriately in the SEA of any such LAP.

#### **Potential Conflicts Identified Which Have Been or Will be Determined at a Higher Policy Level**

Development Plan Policy is drafted within a national and regional legislative and policy framework. Higher level domestic spatial policy plans, programmes and guidelines include the National Spatial Strategy, Regional Planning Guidelines, National Development Plan, 'Transport 21', A Platform for Change (DTO), Retail Planning Guidelines and the Residential Density Guidelines. The Policy Context extends to a range of national and international environmental policy, as set out in Section 2.1.3. All of these plans, programmes and guidelines influence the policy direction contained in the Draft County Development Plan.

Where policies of the County Development Plan or Local Area Plans are dictated by higher level plans, programmes or guidelines, and could potentially have significant environmental effects, the impacts and potential for significant environmental effects are noted. The Development Plan policies which fall into this category will not be dealt with the SEA process.

#### **8.5.0 Enterprise and Employment**

No direct potential conflicts have been identified in these policies which have been or will be determined by higher level policy. A number of the policies are however derived the Regional Planning Guidelines and the National Spatial Strategy.

### **8.5.1 Retail/ Town Centre**

Policy in relation to retailing is subject to and has been drafted in the context of the Retail Planning Guidelines. The Meath Retail Strategy was drafted in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines, the review of either document will be subject to SEA.

### **8.5.2 Residential Development**

The National Spatial Strategy, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area and the Residential Density Guidelines have dictated the settlement hierarchy to which the County Development Plan and in turn the Local Area Plans must have regard.

### **8.5.3 Transportation and Movement**

Major transport infrastructure has been and will be dictated by national and regional policy. The recently announced Department of Transport 'Transport 21' investment programme will determine the location and nature investment in the road, rail and public transport infrastructure for the next decade

### **8.5.4 Infrastructure**

Significant infrastructural development within the county is provided subject to the plans and programmes of the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government. These plans and programmes would all be subject to SEA. Where such policies and objectives are included in the county development plan they will not be subject to the County Development Plan SEA.

### **8.4.6 Rural Areas including rural Housing/Graig Policy**

Rural housing policy is drafted within the context of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. Where County Development policies/objectives arise directly from these policy documents they will not be assessed in the County Plan SEA.

### **8.5.6 Heritage and Conservation**

The 2005 Architectural Heritage Protection, Guidelines for Planning Authorities provide a framework for the drafting of the county plan, where the policy of these guidelines are included in the County Development Plan they will not be subject to this SEA process

### **8.5.7 Social Inclusion, Cultural Diversity and Community Infrastructure**

Where standards dictated by national policy such as the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities and open space standards in the Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities these will not be subject to this SEA.

## **Section 9                      Proposed Monitoring Measures & Indicators**

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The statutory Managers Progress Report to be prepared 2 years after the adoption of the County Plan under Section 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 'shall include information in relation to progress on, and the results of monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the development plan.'

It is anticipated that the environmental indicators set out below will be used to monitor the predicted environmental impacts of implementing the Plan and will be presented in the context of the 2 year plan review.

Where existing monitoring is being carried out i.e. in relation to water quality, air quality, etc., these data sets will be collated in the review.

It is likely that one monitoring arrangement will be established to cover the County Development Plan, the individual Development Plans of Navan, Kells and Trim, and of the various Local Area Plans throughout the County. Where gaps in the environmental information are identified during the preparation of the Environmental Report, monitoring measures over the period of the Plan can be geared towards these.

The purpose of monitoring is to cross check significant environmental effects, which arise during the implementation stage of the development plan, against those predicted during the plan preparation stage. Monitoring is often based on indicators, which measure changes in the environment, especially changes which are critical in terms of environmental quality. Indicators aim at simplifying complex interrelationships and providing information on environmental issues, which is relatively easy to understand.

SEOs should be linked to an indicator (both quantitative and qualitative) which should relate to the environmental baseline study, the starting point for the preparation of the Environmental Report.

The Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government SEA Guidelines state that indicators which can be measured during the implementation/monitoring phase should be used, this has been attempted.

"Environmental indicators are key statistics, which describe an environmental issue. Their purpose is to communicate information on environmental issues in a simplified manner and over time to create a benchmark against which future progress towards sustainable development can be measured. To be effective they should be representative of the issue and be based on scientifically valid information. In this manner they can support policy development and reflect the interrelationship between society, the economy and the environment."

('Rural Environmental Indicators-A Discussion Document on Key Indicators in Ireland', EPA)

'Making Ireland's Development Sustainable' suggests that indicators can be used where possible to encourage community involvement.

Several kinds of indicators may be used to fulfil particular functions and measure the quality/quantity of environmental resources:

1. State of the environment indicators reflect environmental quality, or quantity of physical and biological or chemical phenomenon;
2. Stress indicators reflect development effects;
3. Performance indicators may be used to evaluate long-term achievements in environmental management and protection; and
4. Sustainable development indicators introduce a new dimension to the provision of information, in that they seek to describe and measure key relationships between economic, social and environmental factors.

In all cases, indicators should both quantify and simplify information, thereby making it more accessible to policy-makers and the public.

The following list of indicators is indicative only and is for discussion purposes only. This list may be reduced or added to following on from the discussions with the Environmental Authorities, the availability of resources to devise a monitoring programme and the relevance of the indicators to monitor the environmental baseline.

### **Societal and Economic Developments**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Data source</b>	<b>SEO</b>
Population	CSO	-
Population Distribution Rural/urban	NIRSA / An Post Geodirectory	P1
Tourism data – no of visitors per annum	Meath Tourism	B5
Industrial Production	CSO / CDB / MCC	-
Vehicle Numbers	CSO	A5, A1
Transport Patterns	CSO / DTO / NRA / MCC	P1
Energy Demand and Economic Growth.	ESB & Bord Gás	-
Energy Consumption by Sector	ESB	A3,A2



## Pressure on the Environment

Indicator	Data source	SEO
Energy Efficiency	Meath Energy / DEHLG	P1, A1, A2
Housing Completions	DEHLG / MCC	P1
Greenhouse Gas Emission	EPA (IPPC Licences)	A1, A2
Chemical Emissions	IPPC licenses	A1
Waste <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recovery Rates</li> <li>• Household and Commercial Waste</li> <li>• Industrial Waste and Disposal</li> <li>• Construction &amp; Demolition waste</li> <li>• Remaining Landfill Capacity</li> </ul>	MCC / Regional Waste Management Plan; Waste Licenses; Number of Bring Centres/ Range of Material Accepted	S4, P2
Commercial Peat Extraction	Bord na Móna + permissions for extraction	B1, B2, B3, S3, A1, A3

## Environmental Quality

EPA indicators

Indicator	Data source	SEO
Fish Kills	Water Framework Directive	W2, W3
River Water Quality		W1, W2 W3 M2
Nitrates in Rivers		W2 W3 M2
Estuarine Water Quality		W2 W3 M2
Lake Water Quality		W1 W2 W3 M2
Bathing Water Quality		W1 W2 W3 M2
Ground Water Quality		W1 W2 W3 M2
Birds of Conservation Concern	Birdwatch Ireland, <a href="http://www.birdwatchireland.ie">http://www.birdwatchireland.ie</a> The Red Book.	B1, B2, B3, B4, W2
Forest Cover	Coillte / Corine. The Forestry Service	B2, L1, A2, A4
Species Planted in Forests	Coillte	B2, B3,
Journey Times	CSO, DTO, NIRSA	P1, A1, A2, A4
Noise and Odour	EPA	-

## Environmental Protection and Management

Indicator	Data source	SEO
Location of Non-Conforming IPPC	MCC	-
IPC and Waste Licenses	EPA and MCC	A1,P2
		-
Urban Waste Water Treatment	MCC/ National waste water study Meath county report	P1, W1, W2.
Rural Wastewater	MCC	P1, W1, W2.
Renewable Energy		P1, A1, A2
Record of Protected Structures: Total Number	MCC CDP	C1, L1
Record of Protected Structures: Total Number of Referrals to Conservation Officer and Prescribed Authorities	MCC	C1, L1
Tree Protection Orders	MCC CDP	B1, B2, A1, L1.
Number of Planning Application Grants Within Areas Of Visual/Landscape Quality	MCC	L1
Number of Demolitions Within ACA's	MCC	C1, L1

## **Section 10      Likely Interactions of Environmental Topics**

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Interactions have been considered by the integrated mapping. Further details of the interactions will be developed on the basis of the finalised Plan.

## **1. Introduction**

This is a Non-Technical Summary of the Environmental Report on the Draft Meath County Development Plan x-x. It accompanies the Environmental Report and the text of the County Development Plan.

The Environmental Report is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Variation that is prepared in order to comply with the provisions of the SEA Regulations S.I. No. 435 and 436 of 2004. SEA is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme.

The purpose of the Non-Technical Summary is to ensure that the key issues and findings of the Environmental Report will be readily understood by decision-makers and by the general public.

## **2. Draft Meath County Development Plan**

The Draft County Development Plan includes the following strategic policies:

1. To provide for the balanced and sustainable distribution of economic and social growth across the county focused on the development of the three prime corridors;
  - the primary corridor is focused around Navan, Trim and Kells whereby the future development of these centres is on the basis of balance between growth in residential and employment generation. The development of Trim and Kells must reflect their importance as 'Heritage Towns' with their intrinsic urban character;
  - the Dublin – Belfast Economic Corridor where development is encouraged at suitable locations where there is established carrying capacity in terms of sanitary services and where development would be well served by strategic transportation routes, including rail. The protection and conservation of the sensitive coastal habitat must not be jeopardised in the realisation of economic development;
  - the South East Fringe covering the area between and adjoining the N2 and N3 including Ashbourne, Ratoath, Dunboyne, Clonee and Dunshaughlin along with Kilcock Environs and Enfield. Future development must be on the basis of balanced development both in terms of employment generation and on the basis of the sustainable provision of piped services.
2. To allocate 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 Co. Meath.
3. To facilitate the sustainable development of small growth towns and villages by ensuring that a higher proportion of residents of the towns and villages are employed locally so that they function as the focal points for the development of their rural catchments.
4. To promote sustainable development with regard to the 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 areas

5. To protect, conserve, manage and enhance the county's outstanding natural and built heritage and cultural resources.

6. To provide a viable option for the retention of the rural community by the promotion of the controlled growth of smaller rural villages and towns balanced with the application of a rural housing policy specific to the circumstances pertaining to Co. Meath.

The current County Development Plan, as varied, in conjunction with the Navan Development Plan (2003), Kells Development Plan (2001) and Trim Development Plan (2002) provides detailed information of the scale, type and location of significant development envisaged across the County. It is the strategic objective of the Draft County Development Plan to provide for the balanced and sustainable distribution of economic and social growth across the county focused on the development of the three prime corridors: that around Navan, Trim and Kells; the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, and; the South East Fringe. The Development Plan attempts to ensure that future development is on the basis of balanced development both in terms of employment generation and on the basis of the sustainable provision of piped services and not just residential development.

It is likely that the development of key roads infrastructure such as the M3 Motorway, N2 Ashbourne Bypass and M4 Motorway will open up opportunities in and adjoining interchanges, particularly for employment generating uses.

The preparation of the County Housing Strategy within the County Development Plan determines the allocation of the forecast population growth across the County having regard to the settlement hierarchy contained in the RPGs and existing County Development Plan.

The existing County Retail Strategy provides an indication of the scale, location and type of retail development that is required to serve the anticipated resident population.

### **3. Alternatives**

The SEA Regulations require that different alternatives or scenarios to the Draft County Development Plan be examined. The alternatives available to the Development Plan are limited by the constraints of higher level strategic actions, such as the Regional Planning Guidelines, to which the Plan must comply.

The SEA of the Meath Draft County Development Plan compares Scenario 1 – the 'Current Situation'<sup>7</sup> - with three development alternative scenarios; Scenario 2 'Unplanned Growth'; Scenario 3A 'Sprawl', and; Scenario 3B 'Planned Growth'.

Scenario 3B – 'Planned Growth' summarises the general objectives that underlie the Preferred Option. This option incorporates relevant National & Regional Strategies while also providing a structured vision that will realistically accommodate continued urban and per-urban growth in the east as well as providing a viable future to

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<sup>7</sup> Broadly based on information compiled in NIRSA Mapping [Map 110 Rural Typologies for Co. Meath]

stabilise and revitalise rural areas in the west of the County. This Scenario – is generally believed to have the lowest environmental impacts – providing that the mitigation measures proposed are adopted.

## **5. The Environmental Baseline**

In order to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of implementing Variation relevant aspects of the environmental baseline, the current state of the environment, were identified and evaluated. Focus was given to the environmental certain environmental assets and constraints which were likely to be effected as a result of implementation of the County Development Plan. These constraints and assets were mapped alongside the development proposed by the Plan in order to evaluate the Plan's impacts. A brief summary is given on each of the characteristics below:

### **Ancient Areas**

Ancient areas are landscapes which have undergone most historic influence from humans, encompassing features such as archaeology, mythology, burial sites and other structures which are of important historic value. Ancient Areas which are identified and mapped include: parts of the River Dee Valley, parts of the Owenroe or Moynalty River Valley, parts of the River Blackwater Valley, parts of the River Boyne Valley-including the lower valley-, parts of the River Nanny Valley, parts of the Royal Canal Corridor, the Tara and Dunsany District and the Slieve na Calliagh Uplands.

### **Extremely and Highly Vulnerable Regionally Important Aquifers**

Rural housing developments, which individually would not necessarily have significant adverse effect on groundwater, have had cumulative adverse effects as ground water can be permanently polluted by a proliferation of inadequate waste water treatment systems. Groundwater is likely, therefore, to be significantly affected as a result of implementation of the County Development Plan. This SEA has identified the two most vulnerable aquifer classifications and used them in order to facilitate the evaluation as to whether the County Development Plan would, if implemented, have significant effects on groundwater quality.

### **Landscapes of Exceptional Value**

It has been identified in the description of the current environmental baseline that infrastructural as well as other developments, including rural housing developments, have had cumulative adverse effects on areas of high landscape sensitivity. Landscapes are likely, therefore, to be significantly affected as a result of implementation of the County Development Plan. This SEA has identified the most valuable landscapes, including Loughcrew Hills, Boyne Valley, Rathmoylan Farmland and the Tara Skryne Area, in order to facilitate the evaluation as to whether the County Development Plan would, if implemented, have significant effects on these landscapes.

### **Biodiversity**

It has been identified in the description of the current environmental baseline that biodiversity is in decline in County Meath as a result of certain developments. Greenfield developments have replaced semi natural and natural areas with artificial surfaces causing a gradual loss of habitats and biodiversity. Other developments such as the drainage of wetlands, the removal of the banks of rivers and stream to

increase capacity and golf courses have resulted in habitat and biodiversity loss. Rather than concentrating exclusively on the designated sites which are protected under Irish and European law and which represent a relatively small area of the County's habitats, this SEA has considered, alongside designated sites, the Coordination of Information on the Environment (CORINE) habitat database, including habitats such as Inland Waters, Maritime Wetlands, Inland Wetlands, Scrub and Forests, in order to facilitate the evaluation as to whether the County Development Plan would, if implemented, have significant effects on habitats across the County, protected or not.

### **Polluted River Catchments**

It has been identified in the description of the current environmental baseline that waste water disposal is acting as significant constraint to development and that the quality of water bodies in County Meath is suffering damage from inadequacy in the capacity of both private and local authority systems and the assimilative capacity of receiving waters. Development is deemed to have a significant effect where it affects the capacity for use of the environment by future generations therefore the identification of Polluted River Catchments, i.e. those which have exceeded their carrying capacity, helps to facilitate the evaluation of likely effects which the County Development Plan would have if implemented. These catchments include part of the Boyne Catchment, the Nanny Catchment, the Mosney Catchment, the Broad Meadow Catchment, and the Tolka Catchment.

### **Minerals**

Minerals have been identified as an important natural resource in County Meath which are likely to be affected by the County Development Plan are mineral resources. It has been identified that if unmitigated against, the development proposed by the County Development Plan could cause significant adverse impacts on the mineral resources in the impact zones of 'Slane to Drogheda Urbanisation', 'Kells Environs', 'Rural housing in east of Oldcastle'.

## **5. Impacts of the Draft County Development Plan**

The evaluation of the effects of the Draft County Development Plan identified potential conflicts arising between proposed development and the above environmental considerations in six main areas or impact zones:

1. Between Slane and the Boyne Estuary where Urbanisation originating from Drogheda will increasingly impinge on a very dense cluster of environmental sensitivities – many of which enjoy formal protection due to designations
2. In the West of the county where largely unpolluted surface and groundwaters occur in an area where rural housing is likely to increase on account of the Plan
3. In the south-east of the county where increasingly polluted surface and ground waters are highly vulnerable to development outside of fully serviced centres
4. In the environs of Kells where there are a number of environmental and historical sensitivities
5. In the environs of Trim where there are a number of environmental and historical sensitivities
6. In the environs of Navan where there are a number of environmental and historical sensitivities

These impacts can be summarised as follows;-

	Threatens Groundwater Quality (Vulnerable Aquifers)?	Threatens Surface Water Quality (Polluted River Catchments)?	Threatens Ancient Areas (Most Historic Landscapes)?	Threatens Most Valuable Landscapes?	Threatens Designated Ecology?	Threatens Non Designated High Biodiversity Habitats?	Threatens Minerals & Soils
Slane to Drogheda Urbanisation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
Dunshaughlin to Ashbourne Urbanisation	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Navan Environs	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Kells Environs	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
Trim Environs	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO
Rural housing in east of Oldcastle	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

***Table 1 Summary of Impacts***

## 7. Mitigation Measures

Mitigation involves ameliorating significant negative effects of accommodating growth and enhancing positive ones.

### Local Spatial Strategies

It is proposed to prepare a Spatial Strategy for each of the five areas identified in the following map [marked in purple as Impact Zones 1- 6]. These Spatial Strategies will identify in detail the location, significance and sensitivity of the range of environmental assets and constraints that occur within these particularly sensitive areas that are likely to be subject to higher than average intensities of development.

### Thematic Spatial Strategies

In addition to these six specific areas the county will need to prepare and separately assess the following four Thematic Spatial Strategies, as follows;- A Spatial Strategy for Rural Development & Agricultural Restructuring; A Spatial Strategy for Industry and Enterprise; A Spatial Strategy for Forestry, and; A Spatial Strategy for Infrastructure.

### Other Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures include recommendations to change the wording of a number of the County Development Plan policies in order to take account of environmental considerations- the environmental report should be referred to in order to ascertain detailed information on these measures.



## 8. Monitoring Measures

The statutory Managers Progress Report to be prepared 2 years after the adoption of the County Plan under Section 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 'shall include information in relation to progress on, and the results of monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the development plan.'

It is anticipated that the environmental indicators set out below will be used to monitor the predicted environmental impacts of implementing the Plan and will be presented in the context of the 2 year plan review.

Where existing monitoring is being carried out i.e. in relation to water quality, air quality, etc., these data sets will be collated in the review.

It is likely that one monitoring arrangement will be established to cover the County Development Plan, the individual Development Plans of Navan, Kells and Trim, and of the various Local Area Plans throughout the County. Where gaps in the environmental information are identified during the preparation of the Environmental Report, monitoring measures over the period of the Plan can be geared towards these.

The purpose of monitoring is to cross check significant environmental effects, which arise during the implementation stage of the development plan, against those predicted during the plan preparation stage. Monitoring is often based on indicators, which measure changes in the environment, especially changes which are critical in terms of environmental quality. Indicators aim at simplifying complex interrelationships and providing information on environmental issues, which is relatively easy to understand.

SEOs should be linked to an indicator (both quantitative and qualitative) which should relate to the environmental baseline study, the starting point for the preparation of the Environmental Report.

The Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government SEA Guidelines state that indicators which can be measured during the implementation/monitoring phase should be used, this has been attempted.

"Environmental indicators are key statistics, which describe an environmental issue. Their purpose is to communicate information on environmental issues in a simplified manner and over time to create a benchmark against which future progress towards sustainable development can be measured. To be effective they should be representative of the issue and be based on scientifically valid information. In this manner they can support policy development and reflect the interrelationship between society, the economy and the environment."

('Rural Environmental Indicators-A Discussion Document on Key Indicators in Ireland', EPA)

'Making Irelands Development Sustainable' suggests that indicators can be used where possible to encourage community involvement.

Several kinds of indicators may be used to fulfil particular functions and measure the quality/quantity of environmental resources:

5. State of the environment indicators reflect environmental quality, or quantity of physical and biological or chemical phenomenon;
6. Stress indicators reflect development effects;
7. Performance indicators may be used to evaluate long-term achievements in environmental management and protection; and
8. Sustainable development indicators introduce a new dimension to the provision of information, in that they seek to describe and measure key relationships between economic, social and environmental factors.

In all cases, indicators should both quantify and simplify information, thereby making it more accessible to policy-makers and the public.

The following list of indicators is indicative only and is for discussion purposes only. This list may be reduced or added to following on from the discussions with the Environmental Authorities, the availability of resources to devise a monitoring programme and the relevance of the indicators to monitor the environmental baseline.

### **Societal and Economic Developments**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Data source</b>	<b>SEO</b>
Population	CSO	-
Population Distribution Rural/urban	NIRSA / An Post Geodirectory	P1
Tourism data – no of visitors per annum	Meath Tourism	B5
Industrial Production	CSO / CDB / MCC	
Vehicle Numbers	CSO	A5, A1
Transport Patterns	CSO / DTO / NRA / MCC	P1
Energy Demand and Economic Growth.	ESB & Bord Gás	-
Energy Consumption by Sector	ESB	A3,A2

## Pressure on the Environment

Indicator	Data source	SEO
Energy Efficiency	Meath Energy / DEHLG	P1, A1, A2
Housing Completions	DEHLG / MCC	P1
Greenhouse Gas Emission	EPA (IPPC Licences)	A1, A2
Chemical Emissions	IPPC licenses	A1
Waste <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recovery Rates</li> <li>• Household and Commercial Waste</li> <li>• Industrial Waste and Disposal</li> <li>• Construction &amp; Demolition waste</li> <li>• Remaining Landfill Capacity</li> </ul>	MCC / Regional Waste Management Plan; Waste Licenses; Number of Bring Centres/ Range of Material Accepted	S4, P2
Commercial Peat Extraction	Bord na Móna + permissions for extraction	B1, B2, B3, S3, A1, A3

## Environmental Quality

EPA indicators

Indicator	Data source	SEO
Fish Kills	Water Framework Directive	W2, W3
River Water Quality		W1, W2 W3 M2
Nitrates in Rivers		W2 W3 M2
Estuarine Water Quality		W2 W3 M2
Lake Water Quality		W1 W2 W3 M2
Bathing Water Quality		W1 W2 W3 M2
Ground Water Quality		W1 W2 W3 M2
Birds of Conservation Concern	Birdwatch Ireland, <a href="http://www.birdwatchireland.ie">http://www.birdwatchireland.ie</a> The Red Book.	B1, B2, B3, B4, W2
Forest Cover	Coillte / Corine. The Forestry Service	B2, L1, A2, A4
Species Planted in Forests	Coillte	B2, B3,
Journey Times	CSO, DTO, NIRSA	P1, A1, A2, A4
Noise and Odour	EPA	-

## Environmental Protection and Management

Indicator	Data source	SEO
Location of Non-Conforming IPPC	MCC	-
IPC and Waste Licenses	EPA and MCC	A1,P2
		-
Urban Waste Water Treatment	MCC/ National waste water study Meath county report	P1, W1, W2.
Rural Wastewater	MCC	P1, W1, W2.
Renewable Energy		P1, A1, A2
Record of Protected Structures: Total Number	MCC CDP	C1, L1
Record of Protected Structures: Total Number of Referrals to Conservation Officer and Prescribed Authorities	MCC	C1, L1
Tree Protection Orders	MCC CDP	B1, B2, A1, L1.
Number of Planning Application Grants Within Areas Of Visual/Landscape Quality	MCC	L1
Number of Demolitions Within ACA's	MCC	C1, L1

## Appendix II      Protected Habitats

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### Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC's)

**Site Name: Boyne River Islands.**

**Site Code: 001862.**

The three Boyne River Islands are situated 2.5km west of Drogheda. The islands were formed by the build up of alluvial sediment in this part of the river where water movement is sluggish.

The islands are covered by dense thickets of wet Willow woodland with the following species occurring: Osier, Crack Willow, White, Purple and Grey Willow. In the past the islands were used as a source of cane for the construction of coracles and for the basket making industry. The site includes an area of wet grassland found along the river bank to the north of the islands. This grassland is dominated by Soft Rush, Hard Rush with creeping Buttercup, Red Fescue, Creeping Bent and Marsh Thistle occurring commonly. The site also includes areas of reedswamp and part of a canal.

This site is small but there are few examples of this type of alluvial wet woodland remaining in the Country. The Woodland is noted for its natural, unmodified condition, its diversity of Willow species and the fact that it conforms well to a type listed, with priority status, on Annex 1 of the EU Habitats Directive.

**Site Name : Killyconny Bog(Cloghbally).**

**Site Code : 000006.**

Situated halfway between Kells and Virginia some 8km from each on the Meath/Cavan border. It consists of two small basins which have coalesced over a low drumlin ridge. It is one of the best developed raised bogs in the area.

Much of the bog is very wet and there are many areas of pool and hummock formation. Among the species that can be found are algae, various mosses, Bog Cotton, Heathers, Bog Asphodel and White Beak-sedge. The dense tussocks of Bog Cotton provide shelter for hares, and bird species include Curlew, Meadow Pipit, and sometimes Kestrel and Long-eared Owl which hunt over the bog for frogs, beetles and Pygmy Shrews.

**Site Name : Rye Water Valley/Carton.**

**Site Code : 001398.**

This site is located between Leixlip and Maynooth and extends along the Rye water a tributary of the Liffey. The Rye water in Carton Estate is dammed at intervals creating a series of small lakes.

The woods on Carton Estate are mostly old demesne woods with both deciduous and coniferous species. Hairy St. Johns-wart a species legally protected under the Flora Protection Order 1987 occurs in Carton Estate. Another species listed in the Red Data Book Green Figwort occurs on the site in several locations by the Rye water. The rare Shining Sicklemoss a species listed on Annex 11(2) of the EU Habitats Directive occurs in a seepage area at Louisa Bridge. The Red Data Book species Blue Fleabane is found growing on a wall at Louisa Bridge. The Rye water is a spawning ground for Trout and Salmon and the rare White-clawed Crayfish (listed on Annex 11(2) of EU Habitats Directive). Semi-aquatic snails Vertigo Angustio and Vertigo Moulinsiana occur in marsh vegetation near Louisa Bridge; both are rare

in Ireland and Europe and are listed on Annex 11(2) of the EU Habitats Directive. The scarce dragonfly has been recorded at Louisa Bridge.

The main importance of the site lies in the presence of several rare and threatened plant and animal species, and of a rare habitat, thermal, mineral, petrifying spring. The woods found on Carton Estate and their bird life are of additional interest.

**Site Name : White Lough, Ben Loughs and Lough Doo.**  
**Site Code : 001810**

This proposed candidate Special Area of Conservation is comprised of four loughs in a small poorly drained panel 4km east of Castlepollard. The principal interest lies in the curious contrast between Lough Doo and the other loughs. They are connected by a ditch, Lough Doo has very limited aquatic and marginal flora and the rest are colonised by a dense fringe of Great Fen-sedge.

Areas of wet woodland dominated by Willow fringe some of the lakes and elsewhere wet grassland and freshwater marsh are included. In places peat formation and acidification are belied by the presence of heath species. The variety of habitats within this valley and contrasting vegetation types are important in a regional context.

**Site Name : Lough Bane/Glass**  
**Site Code : 02120**

This site is located on the Meath/Westmeath border, about 10 km south of Oldcastle. It comprises three lakes situated in a shallow valley. Lough Bane is by far the largest of the group, with the much smaller Lough Glass occurring immediately to the east and Lough Glass North to the north-west. The lakes occur at the headwaters of the River Deel, with the main outflow at the south-east end of Lough Bane. The outflow is not very substantial and partly overgrown with vegetation. The connection between Lough Glass and Lough Bane has now been severed and the flow from Glass is diverted to the south-west. The water level has dropped over the years and has exposed soft marl along parts of the shore.

Lough Bane is a good example of a hard water marl lake with well developed stonewort (*Chara* spp.) communities. This is an important habitat listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Sampling of the aquatic flora has shown the presence in Lough Bane of at least four species of Charophyte, i.e. *Chara rudis* (dominant in deep water), *C. curta* (shallow water at north shore), *C. globularis* and *C. contraria* (both mid-south shore).

Much of the shoreline of the lakes has a fringe of wetland vegetation, mostly Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Common Club-rush (*Scirpus lacustris*), but also some Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) and Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*). At the east and west ends of Lough Bane the swamp vegetation is particularly well developed and there is also fen vegetation. Species include Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*), Water-cress (*Nasturtium officinale*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Devils'-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), Meadow Thistle (*Cirsium dissectum*), Marsh Bedstraw (*Galium palustre*) and Grass-of-parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*).

Mixed woodland occurs along parts of the south and north shores. Species present include Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Oak (*Quercus* sp.), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and European Larch (*Larix decidua*). In some areas Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) becomes dominant, along with other shrubby species such as Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*).

Dry calcareous grassland (mostly unimproved) is found in a few areas, notably at Noggin Hill. Species present here include Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Fairy Flax (*Linum catharticum*),

Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) and the grasses *Briza media* and *Cynosurus cristatus*.

The lake has Brown Trout and is an important angling lake. An important population of White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), a species listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive, was known from these lakes, but it was wiped out by a fungal plague (*Aphanomyces astaci*) in the 1980s. Crayfish have successfully been re-introduced to other lakes in the area and National Parks and Wildlife intend to re-introduce them to Lough Bane. The lakes and fringing wetlands also support a varied avifauna including Little Grebe, Cormorant, Lapwing, Curlew and Snipe.

Despite being surrounded by mostly improved pasture, the quality of the water appears good and Lough Bane has been classified as a very oligotrophic system. However, as it is a small waterbody and situated in a valley, it is vulnerable to water pollution. A further threat comes from afforestation within the catchment - should there be an increase in the areas under commercial forestry, the quality of the water could be affected.

Overall, this is a fine example of a hard water marl lake system with good *Chara* communities. Such systems are becoming scarce in Europe.

**SITE NAME: Boyne Coast & Estuary**

**SITE CODE: 001957**

Boyne Coast and Estuary is a coastal site which includes most of the tidal sections of the River Boyne, intertidal sand and mud flats, salt marshes, marginal grassland, and the stretch of coast from Bettystown to Termonfeckin that includes the Mornington and Baltray sand dune systems.

The Boyne River channel, which is navigable and dredged, is defined by training walls, these being breached in places. Intertidal flats occur on the sides of the channelled river. The sediments vary from fine muds in the sheltered areas to sandy muds or sands towards the river mouth. The linear stretches of intertidal flats to the north and south of the river mouth are mainly composed of sand. One or more species of Eelgrass (*Zostera* spp.) occur in the estuary.

Parts of the intertidal areas are fringed by salt marshes, most of which are of the Atlantic type, and dominated by Sea-purslane (*Halimione portulacoides*). Other species present include Common Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia maritima*), Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*), Lax-flowered Sea-lavender (*Limonium humile*) and Glasswort (*Salicornia* spp.). Common Cord-grass (*Spartina anglica*) occurs frequently on the flats and salt marshes.

The two sand dune systems in the site, at Baltray and Mornington, are of conservation value, despite the restricted distribution of the intact areas and the high recreational pressure to which they are subjected. A gradient from embryonic dunes to Marram dunes and then fixed dunes is shown at both systems. The embryonic dunes are particularly well-developed at Baltray where there is active accretion. Species present include Sand Couch (*Elymus farctus*), Lyme-grass (*Leymus arenarius*), Marram, (*Ammophila arenaria*), Sea Sandwort (*Honkenya peploides*) and Prickly Saltwort (*Salsola kali*). The embryonic dunes grade into a narrow band of shifting Marram dunes. Marram is dominant, though there are also such species as Cat's-ear (*Hypochoeris radicata*), Mouse-ear Hawkweed (*Hieracium pilosella*) and Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*). The areas of fixed dunes on the site have a typical diversity of species, including Marram, Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Common Restharrow (*Ononis repens*), Wild Thyme (*Thymus praecox*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*) and Wild Pansy (*Viola tricolor*). Vegetation dominated by bryophytes and lichens is limited, though such species as *Brachythecium albicans*, *Hypnum cupressiforme*, *Peltigera canina* and *Cladonia* spp. occur. Some dune slacks may still occur at the site. A number of scarce plants such as Viper's-

bugloss (*Echium vulgare*), Adder's-tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*), Variegated Horsetail (*Equisetum variegatum*) and Wild Sage (*Salvia verbenaca*) have been recorded from the site in the past. The last-named species is of particular note as it is a Red Data Book species at its most northerly known Irish station.

The site supports a population of the rare snail, *Helix pisana*, in Ireland known only from the coast between counties Louth and Dublin.

The Boyne is the second most important estuary for wintering birds on the Louth-Meath coastline. From a recent wetland survey carried out over 4 seasons (1994/95-97/98), it is known that this site supports nationally important numbers of Shelduck (176 individuals), Golden Plover (5,338), Lapwing (4,755), Knot (1,559), Black-tailed Godwit (414), Redshank (539), Turnstone (104), Oystercatcher (922), Grey Plover (112) and Sanderling (93).

Other species of regional or local importance include Brent Goose (142), Wigeon (485), Teal (185), Mallard (160), Dunlin (627), Curlew (352) and Ringed Plover (c. 100). An area of shingle at Baltray Dunes is also an important breeding site for Little Tern, with 14 pairs recorded in 1995. Little Tern is the rarest Irish tern species, and is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Part of the estuary is a Wildfowl Sanctuary and has been designated a Special Protection Area under the E.U. Birds Directive.

In general the site has been somewhat modified by human activities. The river is regularly dredged to accommodate cargo ships, which can cause disturbance to the bird, fish and invertebrate communities in the estuary. Several factories operate upstream from the estuary and pollution and disturbance associated with them has had an impact on the ecology of the area. There is a proposal to create a deep water facility at the north end of Mornington Dunes on the mouth of the Boyne estuary.

The site is of considerable conservation as a coastal complex that supports good examples of eight habitats that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive (estuaries, tidal mudflats, Salicornia mud, Atlantic salt meadows, Mediterranean salt meadows, embryonic shifting dunes, Marram dunes and fixed dunes) and for the important bird populations that it supports.

**SITE NAME: River Boyne & River Blackwater**

**SITE CODE: 002299**

This site comprises the freshwater element of the River Boyne as far as the Boyne Aqueduct, the Blackwater as far as Lough Ramor and the Boyne tributaries including the Deel, Stoneyford and Tremblestown Rivers. These riverine stretches drain a considerable area of Meath and Westmeath and smaller areas of Cavan and Louth. The underlying geology is Carboniferous Limestone for the most part with areas of Upper, Lower and Middle well represented. In the vicinity of Kells Silurian Quartzite is present while close to Trim are Carboniferous Shales and Sandstones. There are many large towns adjacent to but not within the site. Towns both small and large, include Slane, Navan, Kells, Trim, Athboy and Ballivor.

The site is a candidate SAC selected for alkaline fen and alluvial woodlands, both habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also selected for the following species listed on Annex II of the same directive - Atlantic Salmon, Otter and River Lamprey.

The main areas of alkaline fen are concentrated in the vicinity of Lough Shesk, Freehan Lough and Newtown Lough. The hummocky nature of the local terrain produces frequent springs and seepages which are rich in lime. A series of base-rich marshes have developed in the poorly-drained hollows, generally linked with these three lakes. Open water is usually fringed by Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), Common Club-rush (*Scirpus lacustris*) or Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and this last species also extends shorewards where a dense stand of Great Fen Sedge or Saw Sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) frequently occurs. This in turn grades into



a sedge and grass community (*Carex* spp., *Molinia caerulea*) or one dominated by the Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*). An alternative direction for the aquatic/terrestrial transition to take is through a floating layer of vegetation. This is normally based on Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and Marsh cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*). Other species gradually become established on this cover, especially plants tolerant of low nutrient status e.g. bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.). Diversity of plant and animal life is high in the fen and the flora, includes many rarities. The plants of interest include Narrow-leaved Marsh Orchid (*Dactylorhiza traunsteineri*), Fen Bedstraw (*Galium uliginosum*), Cowbane (*Cicuta virosa*), Frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*) and Least Bur-reed (*Sparganium minimum*). These species tend to be restricted in their distribution in Ireland. Also notable is the abundance of aquatic Stoneworts (*Chara* spp.) which are characteristic of calcareous wetlands.

The rare plant, Round-leaved Wintergreen (*Pyrola rotundifolia*) occurs around Newtown Lough. This species is listed in the Red Data Book and is protected under the Flora Protection Order, 1999, and this site is its only occurrence in Co. Meath.

Wet woodland fringes many stretches of the Boyne. The Boyne River Islands are a small chain of three islands situated 2.5 km west of Drogheda. The islands were formed by the build up of alluvial sediment in this part of the river where water movement is sluggish. All of the islands are covered by dense thickets of wet, Willow (*Salix* spp.) woodland, with the following species occurring: Osier (*S. viminalis*), Crack Willow (*S. fragilis*), White Willow (*S. alba*), Purple Willow (*Salix purpurea*) and Grey Willow (*S. cinerea*). A small area of Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) woodland is found on soft ground at the edge of the canal in the north-western section of the islands. Along other stretches of the rivers of the site Grey Willow scrub and pockets of wet woodland dominated by Alder have become established, particularly at the river edge of mature deciduous woodland. Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Birch (*Betula pubescens*) are common in the latter and the ground flora is typical of wet woodland with Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Yellow Iris, Horsetail (*Equisetum* spp.) and occasional tussocks of Greater Tussock-sedge (*Carex paniculata*).

The dominant habitat along the edges of the river is freshwater marsh - the following plant species occur commonly here: Yellow Flag (*Iris pseudacorus*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Canary Reed-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Marsh Bedstraw (*Galium palustre*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*) and Water Forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*). In the wetter areas of the marsh Common Meadow-rue (*Thalictrum flavum*) is found. In the vicinity of Dowth, Fen Bedstraw (*Galium uliginosum*), a scarce species mainly confined to marshy areas in the midlands, is common in this vegetation. Swamp Meadow-grass (*Poa palustris*) is an introduced plant which has spread into the wild (naturalised) along the Boyne approximately 5 km south-west of Slane. It is a rare species which is listed in the Red Data Book and has been recorded among freshwater marsh vegetation on the banks of the Boyne in this site. The only other record for this species in the Republic is from a site in Co. Monaghan.

The secondary habitat associated with the marsh is wet grassland and species such as Tall Fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*), Silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*) are well represented. Strawberry Clover (*Trifolium fragiferum*), a plant generally restricted to coastal locations in Ireland, has been recorded from wet grassland vegetation at Trim. At Rossnaree river bank on the River Boyne, is Round-Fruited Rush (*Juncus compressus*) found in alluvial pasture, which is generally periodically flooded during the winter months. This rare plant is only found in three counties in Ireland.

Along much of the Boyne and along tributary stretches are areas of mature deciduous woodland on the steeper slopes above the floodplain marsh or wet woodland vegetation. Many of these are planted in origin. However the steeper areas of King Williams Glen and Townley Hall wood have been left unmanaged and now have a more natural character. East of Curley Hole the woodland has a natural appearance with few conifers. Broad-leaved species include Oak (*Quercus* spp.), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Willows, Hazel (*Corylus*

avellana), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Horse chestnut (*Aesculus* sp.) and the shrubs Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). South-west of Slane and in Dowth, the addition of some more exotic tree species such as Wych Elm (*Ulmus glabra*), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), and occasionally Lime (*Tilia cordata*), are seen. Coniferous trees, Larch (*Larix* sp.) and Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) also occur. The woodland ground flora includes Barren Strawberry (*Potentilla sterilis*), Enchanter's Nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*) and Ground-ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*), along with a range of ferns. Variation occurs in the composition of the canopy, for example, in wet patches alongside the river, White Willow and Alder form the canopy.

Other habitats present along the Boyne and Blackwater include lowland dry grassland, improved grassland, reedswamp, weedy wasteground areas, scrub, hedge, drainage ditches and canal. In the vicinity of Lough Shesk, the dry slopes of the morainic hummocks support grassland vegetation which, in some places, is partially colonised by Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) scrub. Those grasslands which remain unimproved for pasture are species-rich with Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) commonly present. Fringing the canal alongside the Boyne south-west of Slane, are Reed Sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*), Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) and Meadowsweet.

The Boyne and its tributaries is one of Ireland's premier game fisheries and it offers a wide range of angling from fishing for spring salmon and grilse to seatrout fishing and extensive brown trout fishing. Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*) use the tributaries and headwaters as spawning grounds. Although this species is still fished commercially in Ireland, it is considered to be endangered or locally threatened elsewhere in Europe and is listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive. Atlantic Salmon run the Boyne almost every month of the year. The Boyne is most important as it represents an eastern river which holds large three-sea-winter fish from 20 -30 lb. These fish generally arrive in February with smaller spring fish (10 lb) arriving in April/May. The grilse come in July, water permitting. The river gets a further run of fish in late August and this run would appear to last well after the fishing season. The salmon fishing season lasts from 1st March to 30th September.

The Blackwater is a medium sized limestone river which is still recovering from the effects of the arterial drainage scheme of the 70's. Salmon stocks have not recovered to the numbers pre drainage. The Deel, Riverstown, Stoneyford and Tremblestown Rivers are all spring fed with a continuous high volume of water. They are difficult to fish in that some are overgrown while others have been affected by drainage with the resulting high banks.

The site is also important for the populations of two other species listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive, namely River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) which is present in the lower reaches of the Boyne River while the Otter (*Lutra lutra*) can be found throughout the site. In addition, the site also supports many more of the mammal species occurring in Ireland. Those which are listed in the Irish Red Data Book include Pine Marten, Badger and Irish Hare. Common Frog, another Red Data Book species, also occurs within the site. All of these animals with the addition of the Stoat and Red Squirrel, which also occur within the site, are protected under the Wildlife Act.

Whooper Swans winter regularly at several locations along the Boyne and Blackwater Rivers. Parts of these areas are within the cSAC site. Known sites are at Newgrange (c. 20 in recent winters), near Slane (20+ in recent winters), Wilkinstown (several records of 100+) and River Blackwater from Kells to Navan (104 at Kells in winter 1996/97, 182 at Headfort in winter 1997/98, 200-300 in winter 1999/00). The available information indicates that there is a regular wintering population of Whooper Swans based along the Boyne and Blackwater River valleys. The birds use a range of feeding sites but roosting sites are not well known. The population is substantial, certainly of national, and at times international, importance. Numbers are probably in the low hundreds.

Intensive agriculture is the main landuse along the site. Much of the grassland is in very large fields and is improved. Silage harvesting is carried out. The spreading of slurry and fertiliser poses a threat to the water quality of this salmonid river and to the lakes. In the more extensive agricultural areas sheep grazing is carried out.

Fishing is a main tourist attraction on the Boyne and Blackwater and there are a number of Angler Associations, some with a number of beats. Fishing stands and styles have been erected in places. The Eastern Regional Fishery Board have erected fencing along selected stretches of the river as part of their salmonid enhancement programme. Parts of the river system have been arterially dredged. In 1969 an arterial dredging scheme commenced and disrupted angling for 18 years. The dredging altered the character of the river completely and resulted in many cases in leaving very high banks. The main channel from Drogheda upstream to Navan was left untouched, as were a few stretches on the Blackwater. Ongoing maintenance dredging is carried out along stretches of the river system where the gradient is low. This is extremely destructive to salmonid habitat in the area. Drainage of the adjacent river systems also impacts on the many small wetland areas throughout the site. The River Boyne is a designated Salmonid Water under the EU Freshwater Fish Directive.

The site supports populations of several species listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive, and habitats listed on Annex I of this directive, as well as examples of other important habitats. Although the wet woodland areas appear small there are few similar examples of this type of alluvial wet woodland remaining in the country, particularly in the north-east. The semi-natural habitats, particularly the strips of woodland which extend along the river banks and the marsh and wet grasslands, increase the overall habitat diversity and add to the ecological value of the site as does the presence of a range of Red Data Book plant and animal species and the presence of nationally rare plant species.

**SITE NAME: Moneybeg & Clare Island Bogs**

**SITE CODE: 002340**

This site is located on the border of Counties Meath and Westmeath 9 km east of the town of Granard. It is situated mainly in the townlands of Clareisland or Derrymacegan, Williamstown and Moneybeg in County Westmeath and Ross in County Meath.

The site is a candidate Special Area of Conservation selected for active raised bog, degraded raised bog and Rhynchosporion, habitats that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Active raised bog comprises areas of high bog that are wet and actively peat-forming, where the percentage cover of bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) is high, and where some or all of the following features occur: hummocks, pools, wet flats, *Sphagnum* lawns, flushes and soaks. Degraded raised bog corresponds to those areas of high bog whose hydrology has been adversely affected by peat cutting, drainage and other land use activities, but which are capable of regeneration. The Rhynchosporion habitat occurs in wet depressions, pool edges and erosion channels where the vegetation includes White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*) and/or Brown Beak-sedge (*R. fusca*), and at least some of the following associated species, Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), Sundews (*Drosera* spp.), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*).

The site consists of twolowland raised bogs at Moneybeg and Clareisland, situated on the south and south-west shores of Lough Sheelin. An important feature of these bogs is that in some areas the transition from high bog to open water is intact and not separated by cutover.

The raised bog habitat includes both areas of high bog and cutover. The high bog at Moneybeg consists of a single small dome with extensive cutover to the east and west. Overall the high bog is flat with slopes associated with the southern margin. There is a wet area with a characteristic microtopography of pools, hummocks and hollows. The local road from Mount Nugent to Finnea runs through the bog and an isolated northern section adjoins

the lake shore. There is also a large mound located to the west of the high bog. The raised bog is surrounded by agricultural land, which in the east, slopes steeply down to the cutover. There is forestry to the south and south-west. The raised bog at Clareisland consists of a small linear high bog extending along the shore of Lough Sheelin with only limited cutover to the east and west. There is an extensive wet area with frequent pools on the high bog and there is a slight slope towards the semi-natural lake margin. The local road described above runs by the southern margin of the high bog and there is forestry on cutover south of the road.

These high bogs have vegetation typical of Midland Raised Bog type consisting of Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), White Beak-sedge and bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) with Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*) and Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) also present. On Moneybeg Bog, the bog mosses *Sphagnum capillifolium*, *S. papillosum*, *S. tenellum* and *S. imbricatum* are plentiful in the extensive wet area, with many large pools lined by bog mosses including the rare *S. fuscum*. Great Sundew (*Drosera anglica*) is present in some pools along with the bog moss *S. cuspidatum*. A few of the pools are completely in-filled with bog mosses and Common Cottongrass (*E. angustifolium*).

Clareisland Bog has a semi-natural margin with Lough Sheelin and an extensive wet area with a high cover of bog mosses and pools. Most of the pools are in-filling with Bog Asphodel, White Beak-sedge and bog mosses. Great Sundew and the bog moss *S. cuspidatum* occur in the pools and other bog moss species occur at the pool edges, especially *S. capillifolium*, *S. papillosum*, *S. magellanicum* and the rare *S. fuscum*. The lichen *Cladonia portentosa* is common, along with Bog-rosemary and Cranberry growing through the bog mosses. The semi-natural margin is dominated by tall Ling Heather with lush carpets of the moss *Hypnum jutlandicum* and large hummocks of the bog moss *S. capillifolium*. There are many deep cracks in the peat due to subsidence at the lake margin. A thin margin of Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) scrub occurs at the lake edge.

At Moneybeg Bog there is extensive areas of cutover to the east and west, which have some active peat-cutting. Sections of old cutover are dominated by Ling Heather, Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) and Gorse scrub. These areas are bordered by Birch scrub and woodland. Across the road on the slope to the lake there is old cutover dominated by Purple Moor-grass grading into Birch scrub at the shoreline. The presence of a large wooded mound, which may be man-made in origin adds to the interest of this raised bog. At Clareisland Bog there are abandoned peat-cuttings in the north-west dominated by Ling Heather and to the east there is cutover dominated by Purple Moor-grass with encroaching Gorse scrub.

Landuse at Moneybeg Bog includes active peat-cutting to the east and west and forestry along the western margin. Current landuse at Clareisland Bog includes peat cutting to the west and north-west of the high bog and forestry along the southern margin. Damaging activities associated with these landuses include drainage and burning. Drainage has occurred on these high bogs in the past and at Moneybeg Bog there is evidence of recent and frequent burning of the high bog. These activities have resulted in habitat loss and damage to the hydrological status, and pose a continuing threat to the viability of these high bogs.

The Moneybeg and Clareisland Bogs site is of considerable conservation significance, comprising as it does two raised bogs with semi-natural lake margins at the north-eastern extreme of the range of raised bogs in Ireland. This is a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. The site supports a diversity of raised bog habitats including, hummock/hollows and pools. Active raised bog is listed as a priority habitat on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Priority status is given to habitats and species that are threatened throughout the E.U. Ireland has a high proportion of the total E.U. resource of this type (over 60%) and so has a special responsibility for its conservation at an international level.

**SITE NAME: Mont Hevey Bog**  
**SITE CODE: 002342**

Mount Hevey Bog is situated approximately 4 km north-east of Kinnegad, in the townlands of Cloncrave, White Island, Aghamore, Kilwarden and Kilnagalliagh. The Meath-Westmeath county boundary runs through the centre of the bog. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. The Dublin-Sligo railway runs through the northern part of the bog isolating two northern lobes. The northern lobes are adjacent to the Royal Canal.

The site is a candidate Special Area of Conservation selected for active raised bog, degraded raised bog and Rhynchosporion, habitats that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Active raised bog comprises areas of high bog that are wet and actively peat-forming, where the percentage cover of bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) is high, and where some or all of the following features occur: hummocks, pools, wet flats, *Sphagnum* lawns, flushes and soaks. Degraded raised bog corresponds to those areas of high bog whose hydrology has been adversely affected by peat cutting, drainage and other land use activities, but which are capable of regeneration. The Rhynchosporion habitat occurs in wet depressions, pool edges and erosion channels where the vegetation includes White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*) and/or Brown Beak-sedge (*R. fusca*), and at least some of the following associated species, Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), Sundews (*Drosera* spp.), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*).

The site consists of a long narrow bog separated into four sub-sections; the larger eastern section supports a wet quaking area with hummock/hollows and pool complex. Hummock/hollow complex also occurs in the south-west lobe and the north-west lobe of the site. An infilled lake is now a soak system. Forestry occurs on the most easterly section of the site. There is abandoned cutover all around this bog and particularly on the western section. There is some wet and actively regenerating areas of the cutover along the southern margins of the western lobe and along the railway.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of the Midlands Raised Bog type. The vegetation consists of Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium* and *E. vaginatum*), Bog Asphodel, White Beak-sedge and midland indicator species Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) and the bog moss *Sphagnum magellanicum*. The wet quaking area in the eastern section of the bog has pools that support the bog moss *Sphagnum cuspidatum* with White Beak-sedge, Cottongrass and Ling Heather at the edges. The hummock/hollow complex supports a range of hummock-forming bog mosses, including *Sphagnum imbricatum* and *S. fuscum*, as well as other species such as *S. capillifolium*, *S. magellanicum* and *S. papillosum*. Other plants found in the hummock/hollow complexes are Bog-rosemary, Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Bog Asphodel and Deergrass.

The infilled lake is wet and quaking and the vegetation is dominated by Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*) and Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) with bog mosses *Sphagnum palustre* and *S. papillosum*. The birch trees appear to be between 20 and 30 years old and the Bog Myrtle is over 150 cm high. The edge of the former lake is clearly marked by robust plants of Ling Heather. Some areas of old abandoned cutover bog on the site are very wet and regenerating well, with a good cover of bog mosses, including such species as *Sphagnum cuspidatum*, *S. papillosum*, *S. capillifolium*, *S. auriculatum* and *S. subnitens*.

Current landuse on the site consists of limited mechanised peat-cutting, mostly on the eastern end of the high bog. There are areas of old peat cuttings all around the site with some very old abandoned regenerating cutover along the edge of the railway. The area to the east of the site has been afforested. Areas of cutover have been reclaimed for agricultural purposes. Damaging activities associated with these landuses include drainage throughout the site (both old and recent) and burning of the high bog. These are all activities that have

resulted in loss of habitat and damage to the hydrological status of the site, and pose a continuing threat to its viability.

Mount Hevey Bog is a site of considerable conservation significance comprising as it does a raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. The site supports a good diversity of raised bog microhabitats, including hummock/hollow complexes, pools, flushes and regenerating cutover, as well as a number of scarce plant species. Active raised bog is listed as a priority habitat on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Priority status is given to habitats and species that are threatened throughout the E.U. Ireland has a high proportion of the total E.U. resource of this habitat type (over 60%) and so has a special responsibility for its conservation at an international level.

## **Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA's)**

**Name : Ballyhoe Lough.**

**Site Code : 001594.**

Located on Meath/Monaghan border, a fairly acid, peaty lough in sharp contrast to the other Meath loughs which are calcareous. It is a popular fishing lake and has a good stock of course fish. The lough is divided in two by a narrow strip of land covered by Willow trees, Common Reed and Alders. Other species to be found in the area is Club rush, and White Water-lily.

The ecological interest is supplemented by the discovery of bones(skulls and antlers) of the Irish giant deer which have been found in the vicinity of the lough.

**Site Name : Ballynabarney.**

**Site Code : 001573.**

This is a fen that is situated in a deep artificially created valley between the embankments of the Royal Canal and the railway, 3km North west of Longwood. In 1972 An Foras Forbartha described the core fen as rich in sedges with grass of Parnassus, a spike rush species and Variegated Horsetail(this species is relatively rare in Ireland. In June 1993 an ecologist confirmed the continued presence of the fen.

The Ballynabarney fen contains a good floral representation of a fen community. This habitat is relatively uncommon and the presence of the Variegated Horsetail acts as a bonus. The adjacent canal adds habitat diversity to the site.

**Site Name : Balrath Woods.**

**Site Code : 001579.**

Also known as Flemingstown Woods, this area forms narrow wooded roadside strips along the N2 and the L125 at their junction about 5km south west of Duleek. They are owned by coillte and form part of the Balrath woods Natural Heritage Area(NHA).

There are three blocks of woodland which contain many similar species, mainly Oak although the non-native Beech is widespread and sometimes dominant. Other native species that exist include Ash, Birch, Witch Elm, Blackthorn, Holly, Bramble and Hazel. Other non-native species include horse Chestnut, Spruce, Sycamore, Cherry Laurel, Snowberry and Dogwood.

The Common Wintergreen was recorded recently and is now known to be more rare than previously thought and will probably be listed in the Irish Red Data book in due course. Coillte record the plantings as dating back to 1825.

Balrath Woods is of extreme importance within a county where very mature woodlands are rare to find. Other areas of woodland contiguous to this site but which are outside the NHA

have suffered much physical damage, including clearance over the last 30 years. The occurrence of a nationally rare plant enhances the importance of this site.

**Site Name : Boyne Woods.**

**Site Code : 001592**

This site comprises a stretch of the River Boyne and adjacent habitats approximately 5km south west of Slane about halfway to Navan. The river at this point separates Beauparc Demense east of the river from Stackallen townland to the west.

Most of the site comprises broadleaved woodland which fringes the river on both sides and composes a mixture of native and exotic tree species. Ash is abundant, also Sessile Oak, Wych Elm, Beech, Sycamore and occasionally Lime. The coniferous varieties of Larch and Scots Pine also occur. The Woodland ground flora includes Barran Strawberry, Enchanters Nightshade and Ground-ivy along with a variety of ferns Harts-tongue, Male-fern and Soft Shield-fern. Swamp Meadow-grass is an introduced plant which has spread into the wild at some locations. It is a rare species which is listed in the Red Data Book. The only other record of this species is at a site in Co. Monaghan.

This site is of importance for its semi-natural habitats, in particular for its strips of woodland which extend along the riverbanks. The occurrence of the rare grass enhance the importance of this site.

**Site Name : Breakey Loughs**

**Site Code : 001558.**

This is an NHA situated 7km south west of Kingscourt. It comprises two small loughs separated by freshwater marsh, wet woodland, cutover bog and wet grassland. Its natural character and lack of disturbance make it attractive to waterfowl.

No rare plants are recorded here, however there is an excellent variety of species for such a small area and the site is of local importance as a refuge for species which are representative of these habitats.

**Site Name : Corstown Loughs.**

**Site Code : 000552.**

These lakes occupy a scenic valley surrounded by Drumlins 6km west of Ardee. This NHA is comprised of a variety of habitats including medium and small sized freshwater lakes, wet woodland, cutaway bog and marginal wet grassland.

The lakes are underlain by marl and have an interesting calcicole flora. Several plant species of note occur here including Lesser Reedmace (rare and occurs mainly in the north) , Tufted Sedge and marsh Fen(listed as rare). Extensive reed beds comprised of Reeds with some Bulrush occur on the fringes of the lakes. The raised bog adjacent to the site has been destroyed by Turbary but some of the cutaway areas on the margins are recolonising well with small seedlings of birch and a wide variety of Herbaceous plants cover over bare peat.

This site contains a wide diversity for its size and it supports several rare plant species of regional interest. Corstown Lough Greater is also one of the largest lakes in the area and provides a refuge for local wildlife species.

**Site Name : Cromwells Bush Fen.**

**Site Code : 001576.**

This small wetland NHA lies 6km south west of Duleek in a pastoral/arable setting over poorly drained glacial drift. A wide range of fen communities are represented on site, from open water to relatively dry course grassland. The northern end is fringed by Bullrush/reedmace, the Common Reed, Marsh Marigold and Greater Tussock-sedge. Drier areas are dominated by Cock,s-foot, Yorkshire fog, soft and Hard rushes.

The site supports a diversity of wetland waders and ducks(Teal, Woodcock, Snipe and Mallard). The rare floating plant Frogbit has been recorded on the site.

**Site Name : Doolystown Bog.****Site Code : 001577.**

It is a small remnant of raised bog located 5km west of Rathmolyon. One of the most attractive features is a pronounced hummock and hollow topography on its surface. This feature is indicative of active growth on the bog and is atypical for this region. The hummocks and hollow communities contain Bog Mosses, White Beaked Sedge, Cotton Grass, Bog Rosemary and Bog Asphodel.

Active raised bogs once characteristic of central Ireland are now rare and vulnerable and have been recognised by the EU as a habitat of international importance. It is of regional importance for its distinctive hummock and hollow topography.

**Site Name : Dowth Wetland****Site Code : 001861**

Located 4km east of Slane on the northern bank of the River Boyne. This site consists of an area of floodplain marsh with an associated area of deciduous woodland on steep slopes. The marsh occurs on wet alluvial soils, regularly flooded by the Boyne.

The main area of freshwater is dominated by Canary Reed-Grass with Marsh Bedstraw, Reed-Grass and Meadowsweet. Fen Bedstraw, a scarce species mainly confined to marshy areas in the midlands, is common in this vegetation. The Common reed is common as one moves north. Above the marsh there is a small area of mixed deciduous woodland Ash, Sycamore, Hazel and Lime. There is also beech, Cherry Laurel and Bird Cherry. A small herd of Red Deer graze within the site.

**Site Name : Duleek Commons****Site Code : 001578.**

This NHA is 1km northwest of Duleek, occupies a level drained marsh and is associated with the floodplain of a tributary running from Thomastown marsh to the river Nanny. It is fairly dry around the periphery where Hard and Soft Rush can be found. The centre is wetter with wetland species such as Water Mint, Water Forget-me-not, large stands of Yellow Flag, Jointed Rush and bulky sedges. The rare spike-rush was recorded here in one of its very few inland locations.

**Site Name : Girley Bog.****Site Code : 001580.**

This is a lowland raised bog 7km north of Athboy. It was designated an ASI in 1972 and there was no evidence of active peat growth at that time. As is normal for raised bogs Ling Heather dominates and Bog Asphodel and Deergrass are common. Bog Rosemary, the Sundrew and White Beak-sedge are also said to occur. Subsequent work has revealed that this site is in poor condition, and is one of the most easterly raised bogs in Ireland.

**Site Name : Jamestown Bog.****Site Code : 001324.**

A raised bog surrounded by commercial forestry 10km west of Navan. Large tracts of the bog have suffered due to turf harvesting. The vegetation comprises a uniform cover of deep heather especially where the bog has dried out. The central area is still intact and includes species as Bog Cotton and Bog mosses. Raised bogs are under threat and this site should be protected as one of the few remaining examples of this habitat in the area.

**Site Name : Lough Naneagh****Site Code : 001814.**

Located approximately 10km northeast of Castlepollard about 2km off the road to Oldcastle. The site consists of a series of small lakes (Lough Naneagh being the largest) and wetlands which lie in poorly drained hollows between drumlins and hummocks. This topography is a typical product of the ice age.



Broad bands of fen vegetation fringe the lakes and typical plants include Black Bog-Rush and Common Reed. The margins of open water are colonised by Bottle Sedge and Bulrush. In certain cases on this site the fens are developing further to form bogs.

This site is recommended as an NHA due to the presence of transitional fen and lake habitats. It was rated as being of local importance by An Foras Forbartha in 1972.

**Site Name : Lough Sheelin.**

**Site Code : 000987.**

Designated as an ASI in 1972 and now redesignated as a proposed NHA. In the early 80,s it was grossly polluted but is since regaining its former quality. On the south of the lake the shore is fringed by lowland raised bogs. Species include Bog Myrtle, Bog Pimpernel and Common Butterwort. In other parts of the lake species include Jointed Rush, Common Spike-rush, Yellow Sedges and Water Mint.

The offshore islands are often wooded with Willow species and often fringed by swamp communities of common Reed and Bottle Sedge. Its populations of wintering water birds also promote lough Sheelins interest. It holds nationally important species of Pochard and Tufted Duck.

**Site Name : Lough Shesk**

**Site Code : 000556.**

This site surrounds a small lake and is 4km from Clonmellon. For the most part the site lies in Co. Meath but the site does extend southwards into Co. Westmeath. The region has a distinctive topography, a typical product of the last glaciation. There are hummocks where glacial drift was deposited. A series of marshes have developed in the hollows.

In the area the physical and biotic features are so variable that an abnormally large number of niches are available for different species. The rare plant Round-leaved Wintergreen occurs around Newtown Lough. This species is listed in the Red Data Book and this site is the only occurrence in Co. Meath. This site is regarded as being of national importance by An Foras Forbartha. There is no other site in the county where the full sequence of stages in the open water/peat bog transition is so well illustrated within a compact area and is ideally suited for use as a teaching and research area.

**Site Name : Molerick Bog**

**Site Code : 001582.**

This NHA comprises remnants of a cutaway lowland raised bog 7km east of Kinnegad and immediately south of the Royal canal and the Dublin-Sligo rail line. It is also known as Blackshade or Anneville bog. The area of the raised bog covers about 20 hectares.

Colonisation by Birch especially on the southern and eastern edges of the area is noticeable. The cutaway area comprises Carr wooded areas and bare peat areas. Carr wooded areas include species such as Willow, Ash, Hawthorn and Elder shrub layer.

As an example of a cutaway bog this site provides a good diversity of habitats and is quite mature.

**Site Name : Mount Hevey Bog.**

**Site Code : 001584**

This is a medium sized lowland raised bog 4km northeast of Kinnegad. It possesses hump and hollow topography. A coniferous plantation has occurred in this NHA and the reason for its inclusion is that management in this area can greatly effect the hydrology in the rest of the bog area.

Active raised bogs once characteristic of central Ireland are now rare and vulnerable and have been recognised by the E.U. as a habitat of international importance. Ireland has a responsibility to conserve the best of its remaining bogs and mount Hevey can be included amongst this number.

**Site Name : Rossnaree Riverbank.**

**Site Code : 001589.**

This is a small site on the banks of the River Boyne about 10km south east of Slane. The site only consists of a single field and an adjacent river island and is of national scientific interest due to the presence here of Round-Fruited Rush. The rare plant is only found in three counties in Ireland. The small colony of rush was first discovered at this site in 1968 and is found in alluvial pasture which is periodically flooded during the winter months. Other species recorded at his site include : yellow Flag, Creeping Buttercup.

**Site Name : Royal Canal**

**Site Code : 002103.**

A man-made waterway linking the River Liffey to the River Shannon. The canal NHA comprises the central channel and the banks on either side of it. The Royal Canal was closed to navigation in 1961. Restoration began in 1988 and is still in progress.

A number of different habitats are found within the canal boundaries: hedgerow, tall herbs, calcareous grassland, reed fringe, open water, scrub and woodland. The vegetation on the towpath is dominated by grass species. The ecological value of the canal lies more in the diversity of species it supports along its linear habitats than in the presence of rare species.

**Site Name : Slane Riverbank**

**Site Code : 001591**

A small site on the banks of the River Boyne noted for the presence of Round-Fruited Rush. This is a rare species only found in two other counties in Ireland. The site is of national importance in terms if scientific interest. The Slane Tidy Towns Committee now owns the site and plan to develop it as an amenity area for the general public.

**Site Name : Thomastown Bog**

**Site Code : 001593.**

Situated 3km west of Duleek this is a raised bog surrounded by wet woodland and wet grassland. The bog during an earlier survey was described as having no bog pools and was considered to be drying out. Among the species recorded on the bog include: Heather, Cranberry, Bog Asphodel and Common Cottongrass.

Wet woodland is the commonest occurring habitat on this site. This area of woodland is often flooded during periods of high rainfall as the surrounding farmland drains onto this site. Species include Willow, Birch Hawthorn and Pedunculate Oak. Other habitats recorded at this site include reedbeds dominated by the Common Reed. The site is notable for an excellent diversity of habitats and rich flora. It has remained largely undisturbed due to difficulty of access.

**Site Name : Trim Wetland**

**Site Code : 001357.**

This wetland is located on the banks of the Boyne 5km east of Trim. The underlying geology of the area is one of Carboniferous limestone with extensive areas of limestone till and long esker chains. This area is periodically flooded during the winter months. The main habitat is that of freshwater marsh and species include Yellow Flag and Water Mint. The secondary habitat is that of wet grassland and among the species recorded are Tall fescue and Meadowsweet. Other more minor habitats that occur on this site are dry grassland, reedswamp, scrub, hedge, drainage ditches and river. This site is of interest due to the presence of Strawberry Clover here. This is one of the few inland locations in Ireland for this coastal plant species.

## Special Protection Areas (SPA's)

**SITE NAME: Boyne Estuary SPA**

**SITE CODE: 004080**

This moderately sized coastal site, which is situated below the town of Drogheda, comprises most of the estuary of the Boyne River, a substantial river which drains a large catchment. Apart from one section which is over 1 km wide, its width is mostly less than 500 m. The river channel, which is navigable and dredged, is defined by training walls, these being breached in places. Intertidal flats occur along the sides of the channelled river. The sediments vary from fine muds in the sheltered areas to sandy muds or sands towards the river mouth. The linear stretches of intertidal flats to the north and south of the river mouth are mainly composed of sand. One or more species of Eelgrass (*Zostera* spp.) occur in the estuary. Parts of the intertidal areas are fringed by salt marshes, most of which are of the Atlantic type, and dominated by Sea-purslane (*Halimione portulacoides*). Other species present include Common Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia maritima*), Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*), Lax-flowered Sea-lavender (*Limonium humile*) and Glasswort (*Salicornia* spp.). Common Cord-grass (*Spartina anglica*) occurs frequently on the flats and salt marshes.

The Boyne Estuary is the second most important estuary for wintering birds on the Louth-Meath coastline. It has a total of ten species with populations of national importance, i.e. Shelduck (218), Oystercatcher (1,099), Golden Plover (6,070), Grey Plover (98), Lapwing (4,657), Knot (1,771), Sanderling (69), Black-tailed Godwit (471), Redshank (583) and Turnstone (175) - all figures are average peaks for the 5 year period 1995/96-1999/00. Of particular note is that the site supports 7% of the national population of Knot and 4% of the total for Golden Plover. Other species which occur include Bar-tailed Godwit (76), Cormorant (97), Brent Goose (172), Wigeon (454), Teal (230), Dunlin (480), Curlew (395), Mallard (197), Red-breasted Merganser (14), Greenshank (6), Ringed Plover (80) and Mute Swan (13). The site provides both feeding and high-tide roost areas for the birds. The estuary also attracts large numbers of gulls in winter, including Black-headed Gull (593), Common Gull (145), Herring Gull (403) and Great Black-backed Gull (160).

Little Tern bred in the past but successful breeding has not occurred since 1996. In 1998 and 1999 part of the shingle bank where the birds nested was washed away by storms. Also, human pressure in the beach areas has increased in recent years.

In general, the site has been modified by human activities. The river is regularly dredged to accommodate cargo ships, which can cause disturbance to the bird, fish and invertebrate communities in the estuary. Several factories operate upstream from the estuary and pollution and disturbance associated with these has had an impact on the ecology of the area. Significant developments within the site could cause disturbance to the wintering birds. Nowadays there are no significant shooting pressures as the site is a Wildfowl Sanctuary

The site is of considerable ornithological importance for wintering waterfowl, with ten species having populations of national importance. Little Tern has bred in the recent past and could do so again in the future. Of particular significance is that two of the wintering species, Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Little Tern, which last bred successfully at the site in 1996, is also listed on Annex I of this directive.

**SITE NAME: Lough Sheelin SPA**

**SITE CODE: 004065**

Lough Sheelin is a medium- to large-sized lake, with a maximum length of 7 km. The lake lies near the top of the catchment of the Inny River, a main tributary of the River Shannon. It is a typical limestone lake and is fairly shallow (maximum depth 14 m). The trophic status of the

lake has varied greatly since the 1970s due to pollution from mainly agricultural sources. It was recently (1998-2000) classified as a highly eutrophic system.

The shoreline is varied and no one plant species predominates over large areas. Species present include Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*) and Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*) growing on stony beaches, with Yellow Sedges (*Carex* cf. *demissa*), Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*) and Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*) also represented. The shore of the lake is also wooded in places and there are some very small offshore islands that are wooded with willows (*Salix aurita* and *S. cinerea*). The islands are fringed by swamp communities of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), Common Clubrush (*Scirpus lacustris*) and Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*). A good range of Charophytes has been recorded from the lake, including *Chare denudata*, a Red Data Book species.

Despite very variable water quality in recent decades, Lough Sheelin remains a very important site for wintering waterfowl, especially diving duck. It supports nationally important populations of four species, i.e. Great Crested Grebe (140), Pochard (546), Tufted Duck (762) and Goldeneye (224) all figures are average peaks for the 5 seasons 1995/96-1999/00. A number of other species occur in relatively low numbers, including Mute Swan (28), Mallard (76), Coot (24), Little Grebe (19), Cormorant (42) and Black-headed Gull (202).

The variable water quality over the years, with periods of highly eutrophic conditions, undoubtedly has had some adverse impacts on the wintering waterfowl, especially the diving duck. This would appear to be borne out by the very variable numbers of birds recorded over the years. It is considered that there is urgent need to reduce the phosphorus inputs to the feeder streams entering the lake.

Lough Sheelin is a nationally important site for four species of wintering wildfowl and is one of the main Midlands lakes sites for wintering birds. An improvement in water quality would probably result in higher numbers of birds frequenting the site.

# REPORT ON SUBMISSIONS

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ON THE

## ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

OF THE

### DRAFT MEATH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2007 - 2013

### STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**For: Meath County Council**

County Hall  
Navan  
County Meath



**By: CAAS (Environmental Services) Limited**

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**NOVEMBER 2006**

## Observation Submitted by Irish Concrete Federation

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***Mr. Liam Smyth, Planning and Environmental Manager, Irish Concrete Federation, 8 Newlands Business Park, Naas Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.***

***Parts 1 to 17: County Development Plan***

***Parts 18 to 23: Environmental Report***

➤ **Observation Part 18:**

With regard to the overall trust of the Environmental Report developed by CAAS Ltd., we strongly welcome the statement in 5.1.6 Mineral Resources that “the appropriate utilisation of the County’s mineral resources is an important element of sustainable development of the County”. As at points 2 and 11(i), I would point to the strategic need within the wider region, particularly the Greater Dublin region, particularly the Greater Dublin region which will be, at least, partially served from Meath based operations. A statement acknowledging this is required for completeness of the report.

**Response:**

The inclusion of the above recognition would have no impact on the environmental assessment or the findings of the environmental report however it is correct that appropriate utilisation of the county’s mineral resources is an important element of the sustainable development of the Greater Dublin Region.

**Updating of the Environmental Report:**

To replace, in Section 5.1.6:

*The appropriate utilisation of the county’s mineral resources is an important element of the sustainable development of the County.*

With:

*The appropriate utilisation of the county’s mineral resources is an important element of the sustainable development of the County and indeed the Greater Dublin Region.*

➤ **Observation Part 19:**

With regard to Section 5.2.3 Quarries of the Environmental Report, the Federation has serious concerns about the legitimacy of many sites registered under Section 261. Sites, previously unheard of, were registered nationally in an attempt by landowners to gain back door entry to the extractive industry. There is no reason to believe that Meath County has been an exception to this phenomenon. The abundance of registered “would be” quarry lands should not militate against development applications, for develop green field sites or for extensions to existing quarries, by legitimate industry. It should be noted that the most innocuous looking registered site poses at least as great a threat to the environment as the busiest but properly managed authorised extraction site in the County.

**Response:**

The SEA Directive requires that information on the baseline environment be focused upon the relevant aspects of the environment while having regard to the level of the strategic action making hierarchy at which the relevant plan is situated. The noting of this issue is not relevant to

the Environmental Report of the County Development Plan and would be best dealt with at other strategic levels.

**Updating of the Environmental Report:**

None

➤ **Observation Part 20:**

We welcome the statement in 5.3.4 Natural Heritage that “development can also result in positive impacts on the natural environment”. Apart from ongoing biodiversity enhancement, quarry products are a necessary ingredient in infrastructure, such as the waste water treatment plants by way of example in the report, which, in turn, benefits the natural environment through better quality etc.

**Response:**

This is noted.

**Updating of the Environmental Report:**

None

➤ **Observation Part 21:**

With regard to Section 6.1 Environmental Assets, it is understood that the GSI mapping, while very welcome and useful it is not exhaustive. Therefore it is incorrect to say “all” environmental assets are shown in either Map 6.1 or Map 6.4. The Federation requests that a statement to that effect is included in this section, and also 7.6.0 Minerals Evaluation, as a strict legal interpretation of “all” may negatively impact considerations of proposals where other resources may be found and proven in the future elsewhere.

**Response:**

This is noted.

**Updating of the Environmental Report:**

To replace, in Section 6.1:

*Mineral resources are also an important natural resource. A detailed crushed rock and aggregate potential mapping project was completed by the Geological Survey of Ireland on behalf of Meath County Council in January 2004. Rock Aggregate Potential & Rock Granular Potential has been taken from this data in order to compile Map 6.1. All environmental assets are shown together on Map 6.4. Concentrations of environmental assets are shown by a darker green colour.*

With:

*Mineral resources are also an important natural resource. A detailed crushed rock and aggregate potential mapping project was completed by the Geological Survey of Ireland on behalf of Meath County Council in January 2004. Rock Aggregate Potential & Rock Granular Potential has been taken from this data in order to compile Map 6.1. It is noted that mineral resources may be identified in additional locations in the future. Environmental assets are shown together on Map 6.4. Concentrations of environmental assets are shown by a darker green colour.*

To replace, in Section 7.6.0:

*A detailed crushed rock and aggregate potential mapping project was completed by the Geological Survey of Ireland on behalf of Meath County Council in January 2004. Rock Aggregate Potential & Rock Granular Potential has been taken from this data in order to compile Map 6.1.*

With:

*A detailed crushed rock and aggregate potential mapping project was completed by the Geological Survey of Ireland on behalf of Meath County Council in January 2004. Rock Aggregate Potential & Rock Granular Potential has been taken from this data in order to compile Map 6.1. It is noted that mineral resources may be identified in additional locations in the future.*

➤ **Observation Part 22:**

In 7.6.1 SEO S3 states a need to “minimise the consumption of non-renewable sand, gravel, rock... deposits”. The local, regional and national need for aggregates has already been made. The Federation supports the locating of C&D waste recycling facilities at legitimate extractive industry sites where the incorporation of secondary resources into the production process can be accomplished most efficiently, both environmentally and economically and, therefore, most sustainably, and, thereby, can directly substitute recycled resource for virgin aggregates. Current volumes of C&D waste available outside of Greater Dublin and other major conurbations are too small to sustain a properly managed legitimate stand alone recycling facility.

**Response:**

This specific issue is not relevant to the Environmental Report of the County Development Plan and would be best dealt with at other strategic levels.

**Updating of the Environmental Report:**

None

➤ **Observation Part 23:**

With regard to Environmental Quality, the ICF has been involved in consultations with all River Basin Districts where specific issues are being dealt with which relate to quarries. This includes the Eastern River Basin District where the ICF has a place on the Advisory Council. The Federation will keep members informed of all developments and obligations under the Water Framework Directive as they are worked out in the Basin Management Plan and the programme of measures.

**Response:**

This is noted.

**Updating of the Environmental Report:**

None



## Observation Submitted by Eastern Regional Fisheries Board

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**Mr. Noel McGloin, Senior Fisheries Environmental Officer, Eastern Regional Fisheries Board, 15a Main Street, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.**

**Part A: County Development Plan**

**Part B: Environmental Report**

### ➤ **Observation Part B(i)**

We disagree with Section 5.1.5 regarding Waste Water Treatment and Discharge. It is stated that the assimilative capacity of Meath's watercourses "represent a significant asset to facilitate development in the County" although the "need to meet 'good water quality standards' as provided for under the Water Framework Directive" is included in the body of the Draft Development Plan. Later on in Section 5.3.6 on Waste water disposal it is shown that at least 17 municipal waste water treatment plants are having a notable negative impact on watercourses, which contradicts the above. It is also our experience that there is very limited assimilative capacity in Meath's watercourses unless there is a radical removal of nutrients from all present and planned treatment plants.

#### **Response:**

The unpolluted status and assimilative capacity of a number of watercourses in County Meath represent a significant asset to facilitate development within the County. It is noted that such development should not compromise Meath County Council's ability to achieve its obligations under the Water Framework Directive. The fact that certain waste water treatment plants are having a notable negative impact on water courses does not contradict the fact that a number of watercourses are unpolluted and have assimilative capacity. See Map 6.2 Unpolluted River Catchments and Map 6.9 Polluted River Catchments.

#### **Updating of the Environmental Report:**

To replace Section 5.1.5:

*Meath has a large number of watercourses to which effluent is discharged by Meath County Council from its municipal waste water treatment plants and privately by license issued by the Environment Section of Meath County Council. The assimilative capacities of these watercourses represent a significant asset to facilitate development within the county.*

With:

*Meath has a large number of watercourses to which effluent is discharged by Meath County Council from its municipal waste water treatment plants and privately by license issued by the Environment Section of Meath County Council. The unpolluted status and assimilative capacity of a number of these watercourses of these watercourses represent a significant asset to facilitate development within the county. Such development should not compromise Meath County Council's ability to achieve its obligations under the Water Framework Directive.*

### ➤ **Observation Part B(ii)**

It is also acknowledged in Section 5.3.4 on Natural Heritage that the development of green field sites has resulted in "overcharging watercourses with phosphates and nitrates" as well as the "culverting of streams". Furthermore in Section 6.2.4 on Polluted River Catchments it is

recognised "that waste water disposal is acting as significant constraint to development and that the quality of water bodies in County Meath is suffering damage from inadequacy in the capacity of both private and local authority systems and the assimilative capacity of receiving waters".

**Response:**

This is noted

**Updating of the Environmental Report:**

None

➤ **Observation Part B(iii)**

With regard to Summary of Impacts it is stated that there will not be a threat to surface water quality in the Kells environs. We disagree with this due to the present overloading of the Kells waste water treatment plant.

**Response:**

The Summary of Impacts correctly identifies that there will be no likely impacts on the surface water quality within polluted river catchments identified by the report (see Map 6.9).

**Updating of the Environmental Report:**

None

# OUTLINE OF SIGNIFICANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

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OF RELEVANT MEASURES IN THE  
**MANAGER'S REPORT TO MEMBERS ON SUBMISSIONS**  
RECEIVED IN RESPECT OF THE  
**DRAFT MEATH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
2007 - 2013**

**For: Meath County Council**

County Hall  
Navan  
County Meath



**By: CAAS (Environmental Services) Limited**

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**JANUARY 2007**

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## Measures Relating to Section 2 Settlement Strategy

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### 1.1.1 Context

Whilst Development Plans are the fundamental planning document for the county, the Planning and Development Acts 2000 - 2002 placed their formulation within a national and regional spatial framework. The *NSS* and the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area* are the two primary strategies, which the review of the County Development Plan must have regard to.

### 1.1.2 National Spatial Strategy 2002

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) sets out a 20 year planning framework designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development and population growth in Ireland.

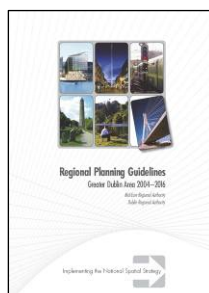
*The aim of the NSS is to improve the quality of life of all citizens, bringing jobs closer to where people live, improving our environment and building a strong sustainable economic future for ourselves and our children.*



The NSS provides guidance for future development by identifying a hierarchy of settlements to accommodate future growth, in order to achieve balanced regional development.

The *NSS* spatial policy for the Greater Dublin Area provides that the capital's vital national role is secured in terms of improved mobility, quality urban design, social mix, international and regional connections. Whilst Dublin will continue to grow in population and output terms, it is not desirable for the city to continue to spread physically into the surrounding counties. The Strategy requires the maintenance of the distinction between the city and town components within the Greater Dublin Area, primarily directing development to the Metropolitan Area and Primary Growth Centres in the Hinterland Area, and to a lesser extent in the smaller development centres. The *NSS* recognises that it will be necessary to accommodate local growth in those parts of the Hinterland Area outside of the proposed "*Development Centres*". However, development outside of the designated centres should be strictly limited to local need. The spread of development intended primarily to serve the Metropolitan Area and generating significant levels of commuting is neither environmentally sustainable nor economic and should be restricted using demand management techniques. The *NSS* broadly encompassed the strategy for the GDA as provided in the Strategic Planning Guidelines (1999).

### 1.1.3 Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2004 – 2016 (RPGs)



To give effect to the *NSS*, Regional Planning Guidelines have been published for the eight regions in the country. The Dublin Regional Authority (Dublin City Council, Dun Laoghaire – Rathdown County Council, Fingal County Council and South Dublin County Council) and the Mid-East Regional Authority (Meath County Council, Kildare County Council and Wicklow County Council) have jointly made the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2004 - 2016*, published on 8<sup>th</sup> July

2004. The *RPGs* build on the experience of the previous *Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area* (1999) and charts a course for the physical, economic and social development of the region up to 2016. The Guidelines define and inform planning policy to be pursued by Meath County Council in each subsequent statutory Development Plan that they prepare and will also inform Government Departments and State Bodies on the future allocation of public resources.

The key elements of the Guidelines include;

- The Dublin and Mid-East Regions will continue to be attractive, vibrant locations for industry, commerce, recreation and tourism and be a major focus for economic growth within the country;
- Development throughout the Greater Dublin Area will be increasingly related to a significantly enhanced public transport system;
- Development within the Metropolitan Area will be consolidated, allowing for the accommodation of a greater population than at present, with a much-enhanced public transport system. This will require some increase in overall development densities as well as measures to ensure priority for public transport. In time, this will lead to a more compact urban form, relative to the size of the population, and will reduce the growth in overall demand for travel;
- The growth of the Metropolitan Area will be balanced by the concentration of development into a number of designated major centres in the Hinterland Area located on strategic transportation corridors. These towns (or adjacent sets of towns) will each have a high level of employment activity, high order shopping and a full range of social facilities. These towns will, in time, become communities in which residential and employment functions will be balanced and which will be the principal service centres for the Hinterland area.
- In the short to medium term, commuting from the development centres in the Hinterland Area into the Metropolitan area will continue and the strategy is to accommodate as much of this commuting as possible on public transport. The longer-term objective will be to create towns, as self-sufficient as possible, with only limited commuting to the Metropolitan Area. The basis for the growth of the "development centres" is that they do not become primarily dormitory towns for the Metropolitan Area. It may be desirable to constantly monitor their development and seek to co-ordinate the release of residentially zoned land to broadly reflect the establishment of employment in the centres. Nevertheless, the towns will require to be well linked to Dublin by good road and rail infrastructure.
- The major centres in the Hinterland Area will be separated from each other and from the Metropolitan Area by extensive areas of "*Strategic Green Belt*" land devoted to agricultural and similar uses and within which development will be limited to meeting local needs but not needs arising from commuting.
- The form of development proposed, concentrated into urban centres, will reduce pressure on the countryside and provide a clearer distinction between urban and rural areas. It will also reduce the need to travel, and hence reduce overall growth in the demand for transport, by providing employment alternatives to the Metropolitan Area.
- The facilitation of transport modes alternative to the private car, including a greatly enhanced 'mesh' of public transport in the Metropolitan Area and good public transport links between the development centres in the Hinterland Area and the Metropolitan area thus reducing commuting by car and integrating those centres better into the overall economy of the Greater Dublin Area.

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

- Set a strategic population / housing unit horizon for the plan period 2007 – 2013 and beyond that is consistent with the NSS and RPG's for the GDA;

- Demonstrate how the overall outlook of Meath County Council in relation to its settlement and transportation strategy has been derived from the NSS and RPG's for the GDA;
- 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 RPG's for the GDA;
- Illustrate the overall strategic approach with maps and diagrams, for example by reproducing the key strategic maps from the RPG's for the GDA;

### **Taking the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area into account**

The preparation of this Draft Development Plan has had regard to the document *"Implementing Regional Planning Guidelines – Best Practice Guidance"*, produced by the Spatial Policy Unit of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in February 2005. The RPG's have been a primary input into the background research process and initial setting out of issues.

In setting out detailed objectives, Meath County Council has strived for maximum consistency between the objectives and policies of the RPG's and those of the new County Development Plan. This has involved a systematic examination of the 2001 County Development Plan in order to maximise alignment between the new plan and the RPG's in matters such as forecasts and targets for population and housing, settlement strategy, infrastructure priorities and inter regional planning policy.

This has included, inter alia, consideration of the following:

- The responsiveness of the settlement structure in the development plan to the strategic aims of the RPG's including land use and transportation issues;
- The degree to which the housing strategy fits with the RPG's and the nature of any modifications required;
- The extent to which the provision of development land is in line with the guidelines;
- 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 Co. 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
- The extent to which the strategic infrastructure priorities in the development plan reflect those of the RPG's with a particular emphasis on public transport.

### **1.1.4 Population Growth in Co. Meath**

The population of County Meath in 1996 was recorded at 109,732 persons. The population of the County increased by 24,273 persons in the next 6 years up to the 2002 Census of Population. This roughly equates to the current population of Navan moving into the County over a 6 year period or the current population of Kells moving into the County on a yearly basis. The population increase of 22.1% between 1996 - 2002 was the highest experienced by any County over the same period. The overall population increase in the State over the same period was 8.0%. The population of County Meath in 2002 was similar to that which lived in the county in 1851. The population growth was accounted for by natural increase 6,402 persons (26.4%) and estimated net migration 17,802 (73.6%).

Urban Centre	1996 Population	2002 Population	Change 1996 - 2002
Navan	12,810	19,417	6,607
Drogheda Environs	786	2,133	1,347
Ashbourne	4,999	6,362	1,363
Dunboyne / Clonee	3,080	5,536	2,456
Kells	3,542	4,421	879
Kilcock Environs	-	-	-
Trim	4,405	5,894	1,489
Athboy	1,172	1,538	366
Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington	3,678	5,597	1,919
Duleek	1,731	2,173	442
Dunshaughlin	2,139	3,063	924
Enfield	566	1,072	506
Oldcastle	826	937	111
Ratoath	1,061	3,794	2,733
Stamullen	427	779	352
<b>Total</b>			21,494

**Table 1 : Population Increase in Urban Centres 1996 – 2002**

Table 1 indicates that the population increase experienced by the urban centres in the three top tiers of the Settlement Hierarchy, namely Large Growth Towns, Moderate Growth Towns and Small Growth Towns, above accounted for 88.6% of the overall population increase experienced by County Meath between 1996 - 2002. The rate of increase and the scale of population growth relative to the population in 1996 was most dramatic in Ratoath (258%), Longwood (158%), Ballivor (107%), Enfield (89%), Stamullen (82%), Dunboyne (80%), Navan (52%) and Laytown – Bettystown (52%).

Since the preparation and subsequent placing of the Draft County Development Plan on public display on June 30<sup>th</sup>, the Preliminary Report for Census 2006 was published on July 19<sup>th</sup>. These preliminary figures are based on population summaries prepared by Census Enumerators. The definitive population results, based on the scanned Census Forms, will be released between April and December 2007. The Preliminary Results indicated a population of Co. Meath of 162,621 persons in April 2006.

The population of County Meath has increased by 28,616 persons in the four years since 2002. This represented a growth rate of 21.4% over the recorded 2002 population, second only to Final nationally where the growth rate was slightly higher at 22.1%. Meath has grown from a population of 109,732 persons in 1996 to 162,261 persons in 2006. This equates to an increase of 48% over a 10 year period. This is a staggering growth rate. To put the four year growth rate experienced by Meath into perspective, Cork grew by 33,080 persons and the province of Connacht grew by 38,787 persons in the same period.

The rate of positive natural increase (births minus deaths) in Co. Meath was recorded at 12.5 per 1,000 of average population. This is one of the highest national natural increase figures reflective of the young age profile of the County.<sup>1</sup> By deducting the natural increase in population at county level from the corresponding population change data, it is possible to derive county net migration figures. These figures represent the net movement of all persons into the county from elsewhere in Ireland and from abroad and out of the county to elsewhere in Ireland and to abroad. The estimated net migration to Meath between 2002 –

<sup>1</sup> The Counties which exceeded the natural increase rate in Meath were Fingal (15.7), South Dublin (14.2) and Kildare (14.0).



2006 was recorded at 35.7 per 1,000 of average population. This was the highest recorded rate of estimated net migration in the country.

No information has been published with regard to the level of growth that was experienced by individual development centres. The Preliminary Census Results only indicates the level of growth experienced by DED's over the inter censal period.

The ten highest rates of population growth experienced in DED's over the 2002 – 2006 period are as follows :

Rank	DED	Change in Population	Urban Centres
1.	Navan Rural (part)	5,176	Navan
2.	St. Mary's (part)	3,250	Drogheda, Donacarney & Mornington East.
3.	Ratoath	3,048	Ratoath
4.	Julianstown	2,475	Laytown, Bettystown & Julianstown
5.	Stamullin	1,493	Stamullen & Gormonston
6.	Duleek	1,419	Duleek
7.	Innfield	1,217	Enfield
8.	Donaghmore	1,158	Ashbourne (part of west Ashbourne in Kilbrew DED)
9.	Trim Rural (part)	1,069	Trim
10.	Ceannanus Mór Rural (part)	1,023	Kells

**Table 2 : Ten Highest Rates of Recorded Population Growth 2002 - 2006**

It is clear from Table 2 that the level of growth experienced in the small growth towns of Ratoath, Laytown, Bettystown, Stamullen, Duleek and Enfield over the past 4 years is not taking place in accordance with the existing and proposed Settlement Hierarchy. This growth is taking place at locations where there is marginal additional water services capacity, little or no high capacity in public transport and major pressure on social facilities such as schools.

### **1.1.5 Commentary on Conflict between the RPGs and the Rate of Growth of Co. Meath**

The projected household formations in County Meath of 15,237 additional households between 2003 – 2010, as recommended in the *RPGs*, equates to roughly 1,900 net additional units per annum. This would represent a considerable slowing down in the current rate of residential construction in the County to pre 2000 completion rates. The Planning Department estimate that for the period 2002 - 2005, an additional 14,047 households (average of 3,161 net additional households per annum) were constructed in the County. The preliminary Census of Population results indicate that the population has increased by 28,616 persons over the similar period.

It is clear that the departure between the pace of residential growth in Meath and that projected in the *RPGs* lies in the actual recorded population growth which exceeded the anticipated growth in population at State and Regional level. It was envisaged that the Greater Dublin Area would grow by 161,135 persons in the period 2002 to 2010, and that at the end of that period, the population of Meath would comprise 8.9% of the total, up from 8.7% in 2002.

In fact, in the period April 2002 to April 2006, the GDA grew by 126,000 persons or an annual rate of some 31,500 persons , which if it continues unchecked, would result in a population in

2010 of 1.787 million people in the GDA. The ERSI Mid Term review suggests that for the period 2007 – 2011, annual average household demand nationally will only be slightly down on the present level but that higher headship and vacancies (second homes) will become increasingly important as a driving force.

Measure	Dunshaughlin	Kells	Navan	Slane	Trim	Total
Planning Permissions Granted	1,985	339	961	390	351	4,026
Houses Under Construction	1,251	400	445	1,086	963	4,151
Gross to Net Adjustment	3,042	695	1,322	1,387	1,235	7,681
Assumed Incremental Density	2	2	2	2	2	
Population Resulting	6,084	1,390	2,644	2,744	2,470	15,332
Decline in Occupancy (3 yrs)	325	74	141	147	132	819
Total Population in Three Years	5,759	1,316	2,503	2,597	2,338	14,513

**Table 3 : Planning Commitments (as at June 2006) including houses under construction**

A further indication that the rate of population growth suggested by the *RPGs* is not tenable, is provided by an examination of existing planning commitments. These are set out in Table 3. This table indicates that even on the most conservative assumptions (which excludes one off rural housing), the population cannot fail to reach a total of nearly 177,000, probably within three years. This trend is unstoppable. This result is predicated upon an overall household size in 2009 of some 2.59 which is very low, even in the light of the decline experienced over the 2002 to 2005 period, where it fell in the Mid East region from 3.2 to 2.96<sup>2</sup>.

### Conclusions

- The *Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area* set out a population projection for the County of 151,029 by 2010. This has already been exceeded by some 11,592 persons.
- The *Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area* suggest a net increase in the number of households between 2002 and 2010 of 13,152, resulting in a total of 54,827 households. The Planning Department estimate the number of households in the County has already exceeded this figure.
- The level of planning commitments, in the form of extant planning permissions, is such that there can be no major fall in the level of house completions in County Meath over the next three years. There were 4,151 households under construction in urban centres and extant planning permission for a further 4,026 households in June 2006. This excludes data on one off housing outside of zoned lands.
- There will be a significant alteration of the relationship between housing completions on the one hand, and net household formation and household size on the other. This is

<sup>2</sup> Derived as follows (household data for 2005 based on adjusted housing completions since 2002 Census of Population

Year	Households	Population	Size
2002	128,724	412,625	3.205502
2005	152,802	452,400	2.960692

predicted at national level and is likely to be reflected in the County. It is safer, therefore, to project housing rather than population targets in the first instance.

- The population and household projections contained in the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area* and indeed the *National Spatial Strategy* require to be updated in line with the 2006 Census of Population figures once published.
- Channelling the regionally derived growth of house completions to the locations identified in the Settlement Strategy can only be accomplished gradually. It will be the second half of the plan period (2010 – 2013) before demand management measures become evident.

It is clear that it is not possible to stay within the household formation and population constraints of the RPGs. It is not the intention of the NSS or RPGs to stifle inherent dynamism in the county. However, the manner of growth in County Meath needs a greater balance whereby the continued residential development is matched by employment generation and improvements in the provision of social infrastructure and the quality of life being enjoyed by its residents. Furthermore, the Development Plan through the Housing Strategy, must ensure that the greatest share of this projected population is directed to the urban centres in the upper tiers of the Settlement Hierarchy with restrictions being placed on further development in the smaller rural towns and villages in the Hinterland. The rate of population growth and household formation in Co. Meath will exceed the rate of growth projected in the RPGs.

### 1.1.6 Population & Household Projections

To recap, the RPGs provides household projections and allocations for each of the constituent Local Authorities within the GDA for the 8 year period (2003 – 2010). A total of 15,237 additional households are allocated to County Meath for this period. The allocation of this total is not broken down on a sub-county basis. This is the function of the County Development Plan and in particular, the Housing Strategy contained therein. The RPGs and Draft Development Plan Guidelines indicate that Local Authorities will need to zone land for housing in excess of that strictly needed to cater for their allocated number of housing units. This 'headroom' is required to ensure that an adequate supply of land becomes available for housing and that the market provides a locational choice to both consumers and the house building sector. The accepted standard with regard to headroom is 50%, which indicates that a Development Plan must ensure a 9 year supply of residentially zoned land.

As evident from the preceding section, the population of Co. Meath was recorded at 162,621 persons on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006 which represents an overrun of 11,592 persons on the RPG's 2010 population allocation. This over run has also been reflected at the regional level with the population of the Mid East region recorded at 475,026 persons compared to the RPG's 2010 population projection of 460,927 persons. It is clear from the preliminary 2006 Census Results that the population projections for the Mid East Region have been surpassed 4 years earlier than was predicted.

The DoEHLG are currently reviewing the population projections contained in the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines in light of the 2006 Preliminary Census Results. The NSS contained two national population projections to 2020, one based on current trends and the other based on a strong economic growth scenario. The current trends projected a population for the State of 4.35 million by 2020 with 1.9 million people in the GDA whilst the strong economic growth scenario projected a population for the State of 5.03 million by 2020 with 2.2 million people in the GDA. The RPGs were in turn based on the more conservative of the projections, namely the current trends scenario, which appeared as the more likely of being realised at that time.

Having regard to the 2006 Preliminary Census Results and the regional population projections which the CSO published in 2005, it is now apparent that the NSS "current trends" projection of 4.35 million by 2020 no longer looks realistic. It is now clear that strong economic growth is continuing to drive record high rates of in-migration. Whilst the growth of some regions has been impressive, the spatial distribution of the increase in population in the period 2002 –

2006 would appear to be more consistent with a spill-over effect from Dublin rather than a realisation of the NSS strategy.

The Planning Department have prepared a population and household projection for the period of the Development Plan to 2013. The Planning Department have worked with the DoEHLG in clarifying the likely population horizon for not only the County but the Greater Dublin Region & Mid East region.

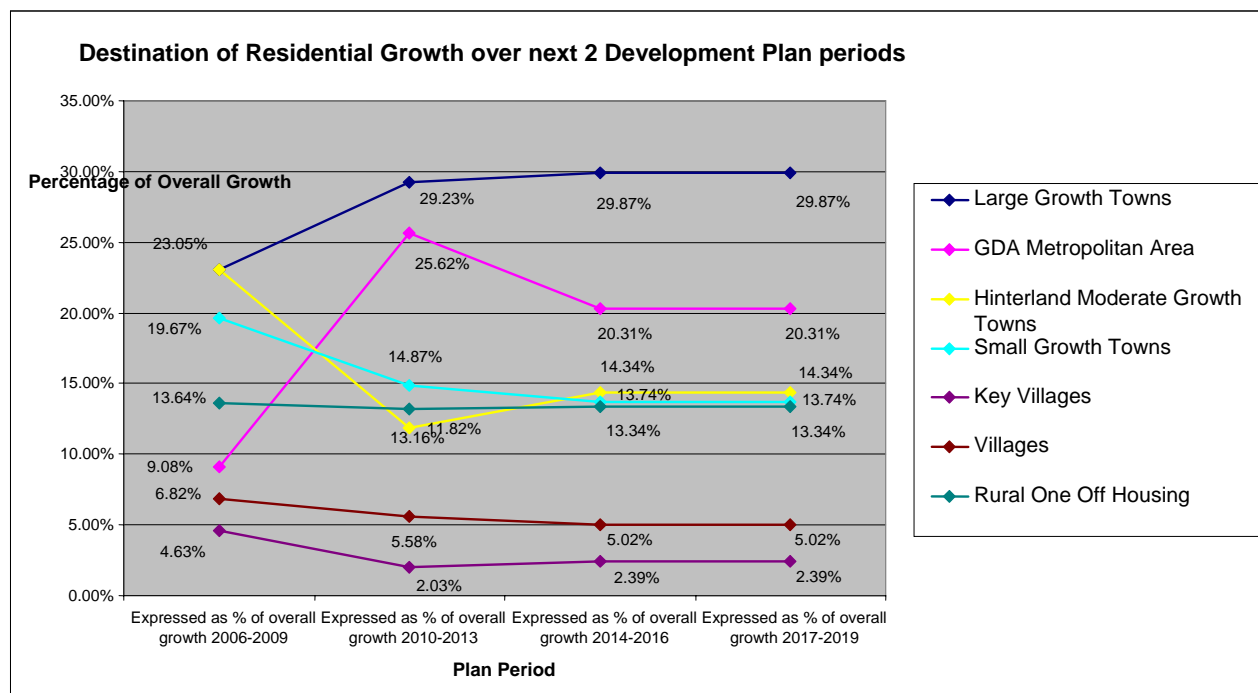
For the purposes of this projection, it is assumed that the population of the GDA would continue to exhibit strong growth but in a more spatially consolidated manner. Within the GDA, improving housing supply and the impact of Transport 21 and market preferences for Transport 21 served locations would mean that the recent decline in the share of the Dublin region's population as a percentage of the GDA population would slow over the period to 2020. Conversely, the rate of increase in the Mid East's proportionate share of the GDA population would slow initially and then hold constant as housing supply within Dublin picks up and transportation and water services infrastructure issues focus major new development into the key RPG development centres identified in the Mid East region. The resultant development scenario for Co. Meath integrates the existing development trends which are unfolding across the County which are primarily developer driven with the emergence of a plan led approach espoused through the RPG's and Transport 21 context which emerges in the second half of the Development Plan period and beyond.

Recognising the existing momentum of development and commitments by the Planning Authority with the need to channel and structure growth in the future primarily at Transport 21 served locations, the realistic population horizon is of the order of 200,000 – 207,000 people by 2013.

For the purposes of the Development Plan, the population target for Co. Meath is 200,000 persons and the household target for the period up to and including 2013 is 29,540 additional household units (25,074 net additional households formed).

The NSS emphasises that regional and local authorities need to be agile in monitoring and taking account of the latest trends in terms of population, housing and other indicators and that a “plan – monitor – adjust” approach is important. Local planning needs to take account of and respond to current trends in estimating the quantum of development to be planned for, while remaining fixed on delivering the overall spatial policy structure set out in the NSS and RPG's. The Draft Development Plan ensures that such an approach is enshrined in the adopted policy content contained therein.

For the purposes of a longer term projection beyond the next Development Plan period which would indicate the strategic direction of growth in the County in the longer term and would assist in physical infrastructure planning, the Planning Department have projected to 2019, which corresponds with the next two Development Plans periods. The Planning Department estimate, that subject to continued economic growth in the economy, continued levels of immigration into the Country and continued buoyancy in the housing market, that the population could be in the region of 225,000 - 230,000 persons depending on the average occupancy that is applied by 2019. The Planning Authority estimates that subject to infrastructural constraints being overcome, that an additional 33,480 additional household units (27,475 net additional households formed) would be formed in the 2013 – 2019 period. This strategic projection is subject to constant monitoring and review. Figure 1 indicates the destination of this residential growth over the next two development plan periods.



**Figure 1 : Indicative Destination of Residential Growth over next 2 Development Plan Periods**

### 1.1.7 County Meath Broad Settlement Structure

The 2001 Meath County Development Plan contains a broad settlement structure in Section 2.6.6 of Volume I. This settlement structure took account of the sustainable development objectives for the County coupled with the recommendations of the Strategic Planning Guidelines and the service availability scenarios prevalent at the time. The settlement structure also contained target populations for certain urban areas. This settlement structure formed the basis for the individual town and village plans contained in Volume II.

Since the adoption of the 2001 County Development Plan, the *NSS* and *RPG*'s have proposed a settlement hierarchy for the Greater Dublin Area. Building on the existing County Development Plan, the *NSS* and the *RPG*'s for the GDA, the following is put forward as the proposed County Meath Settlement Structure in this Draft Development Plan. This is shown on Map 2.1.

The Settlement Strategy aims to locate population growth and channel development in line with the principles of the *NSS* and *RPG*'s. This includes the promotion and channelling of development in the first instance to Navan, Drogheda and the Dunboyne / Pace Rail Corridor which are the three major designated areas of growth in the county. These centres are identified to accept the County's share of regional growth going forward and will continue to accommodate a significant level of immigrants, primarily from the Dublin region. The continued development of Ashbourne on a sustainable basis will also be pursued along with the development of the environs of both Kilcock and Maynooth which are located in a Primary Dynamic Cluster in the Metropolitan Area of the GDA. The continued development of Kells and Trim will be balanced with the protection of the inherent qualities of these Heritage Towns which may limit the quantum and scale of development which these centres can assimilate. The development of smaller rural towns and villages in a manner which is appropriately scaled and reinforces the character of these settlements. In respecting these principles a projected county wide population has been calculated and illustrated in Table 5, up to the end of the Plan period.

<b>METROPOLITAN AREA</b>	
<b>Moderate Growth Towns</b>	Dunboyne / Clonee, Kilcock & Maynooth Environs
<b>HINTERLAND AREA</b>	
<b>Large Growth Towns</b>	Navan, Drogheda (Environs)
<b>Moderate Growth Towns</b>	Ashbourne, Trim, Kells
<b>Small Growth Towns</b>	Duleek, Ratoath, Dunshaughlin, Athboy, Stamullen, Laytown - Bettystown - Mornington East, Oldcastle & Enfield
<b>Key Villages</b>	Slane, Ballivor, Longwood, Summerhill, Nobber
<b>Villages</b>	Donacarney, Mornington, Gormonston, Julianstown, Kentstown, Kildalkey, Clonard, Kilmessan, Rathcairn, Baile Ghib, Rathmolyon, Carlanstown, Crossakiel, Drumconrath, Kilmainhamwood, Moynalty, Kilbride (Dunshaughlin Electoral Area), Donore
<b>Graigs (Rural Clusters)</b>	See Appendix II.

**Table 4: County Meath Settlement Strategy**

The Planning Department have prepared Household and Population Projections for the period 2006 – 2013 to correspond with the period of the Development Plan. Table 5 presents the population and household projections for the plan period for the County as a whole and broken down into its constituent years. This projection provides for a population of 200,259 at the end of 2013, an increase of 37,638 persons on the recorded 2006 population of the County and a net increase in the number of households of 29,540 (absolute increase of 25,074 households).

<i>Calendar year</i>	Population on 1st January	Households on 1st January	Average household size (1st January)	Houses completed in the year	Net additional households formed in the year	Population added in the year	Population on 31st December	Households on the 31st December	Average household size (31st December)
2006	160,799	55,030	2.922	3,345	3,011	3,978	164,777	58,041	2.839
2007	164,777	58,041	2.839	3,730	3,320	6,479	171,256	61,360	2.791
2008	169,268	61,396	2.791	3,575	3,110	5,522	176,778	64,470	2.742
2009	173,144	64,727	2.742	3,665	3,152	5,397	182,175	67,622	2.694
2010	177,073	68,315	2.694	3,705	3,112	4,918	187,093	70,735	2.645
2011	182,100	72,005	2.645	3,840	3,187	4,882	191,975	73,922	2.597
2012	186,716	75,685	2.597	3,790	3,070	4,200	196,175	76,992	2.548
2013	191,000	79,451	2.548	3,890	3,112	4,084	200,259	80,104	2.500

**Table 5: Population & Household Projection for the Plan Period**

Table 5 assumes that

- the gross completions are realistic providing the existing wastewater constraints affecting the urban centres identified for significant population growth are rectified during the course of the Development Plan and given priority in the next Water Services Investment Programme;
- the average occupancy rate will fall to 2.548 by 2013 whereas the RPG rate of decrease is slightly less at 2.632 by 2013;
- the ratio of net to gross additional households fall from 0.9 to 0.8 between 2006 – 2013;
- the proportion of the Mid East Region population located in Meath is expected to increase from 34.23% in 2006 to 35% by 2011 and to 36% by 2016 having regard to the level of house construction and extant planning permissions in the County.

It is the policy of this Council to primarily facilitate the accommodation of regional residential growth in the three designated centres of Navan, Drogheda and the Dunboyne / Pace Rail Corridor. The development of the small growth towns and key villages in the County will be slowed dramatically and will be more closely linked to local growth rather than to regional growth as has occurred over the past decade driven by immigration, primarily from the Dublin region. All development in small growth towns, key villages, villages and graigs will be linked to local growth only with a sliding scale applied with regard to the proportion of new housing in multi house developments being reserved for locals only.

This is unenforceable.

In the case of Kells, Trim and the Small Growth Towns, Key Villages and Villages located throughout the County, the Planning Authority will revisit the residentially zoned landbank to ensure that only the quantum and scale of projected residential development contained in Table 5 (Population & Household Projection for the Plan Period) and Table 6 (Location of Household Growth 2006 - 2013) will take place. The Planning Department have revised the figures contained in both of these tables in conjunction with the preparation of the DoEHLG Housing Land Availability Return as of 30/06/2006. This is to ensure that the Development Plan accords with the policy framework contained in both the NSS and RPG's.

#### Criteria Determining the Release of Residential Land

In the case of the Heritage Towns of Kells and Trim, Small Growth Towns, Key Villages and Villages, the release and development of residential lands shall be linked to:

- the provision of necessary physical infrastructure, primarily the availability, in advance of development occurring, of capacity in water and wastewater infrastructure. The environment must be capable of absorbing the scale and quantum of development that is envisaged.

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

However any programme for providing waste water treatment plants, sewerage treatment systems, water supply, road extensions, powerlines etc would have the potential to significantly, adversely impact upon the environment and SEOs.

- spare capacity in existing (and planned) social infrastructure, primarily national and second level educational facilities. The future planning of the Department of Education and Science of national and second level educational facilities shall also be taken into account. The development of additional residential lands shall leverage the necessary recreational and amenity infrastructure commensurate with the needs of the resident population. The proposed scale and quantum of development must



reinforce the integrity and vitality of the local community and services that can be provided.

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

- a more sustainable economic base whereby a greater percentage of local persons are employed locally. This will require closer liaison between the County Enterprise Board, County Development Board, Economic Development & Promotion Officer and the Planning Department;

No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment

the Local Authority social and affordable house building programme;

No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment

- the efficient use of land by consolidating existing settlements, focusing in particular on development capacity within central urban areas through the re-use of under utilised lands and buildings as a priority, rather than extending green field development. This should also ensure that development is concentrated in location where it is possible to integrate employment, community services, retailing and public transport. The order of priority for the release of residentially zoned land shall attempt to ensure that there is a sequential approach which de-prioritises outer suburban greenfield sites.

Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [C1 - archaeological and other cultural heritage impacts], especially in Heritage Towns

Table 6 provides details on the number of households permissible in each urban centre over the period to 2013. As indicated in Figure 1, the Planning Authority have also projected the number of additional households that could be accommodated in each urban centre up to and including 2019, primarily for infrastructural planning needs.

The last two columns in Table 6 indicate the extent of remaining residentially zoned lands in each urban centre and the potential yield of this landbank, if serviced, and released for development at a density of 35 units per hectare. The Planning Authority accepts that this is not to infer that all of this land will be serviced and released for development over the course of the Development Plan or that 35 units per hectare will be applied in all development centres. To the contrary, the Planning Authority accepts that 32.5% of existing residentially zoned land will not be serviced within the life of this Development Plan. Nonetheless, it is clear from assessment of Table 6 that there are more than adequate lands, if released and serviced, to cater for the projected growth in households and population in the County for the plan period. However, additional lands may be required to be identified in Drogheda Environs, Dunboyne / Clonee, Ashbourne, Enfield and possibly Ballivor to provide the adequate headroom of 50%. In addition, the extent of existing residentially zoned lands will be revised in the context of the individual Local Area Plan or Development Plan review for each centre and does not preclude additional zoning in specific locations where the Planning Authority is satisfied that a clearly established need for such zoning is evident. Such an established need can only be justified where the development of such lands for residential purposes would deliver an identified piece of critical and necessary social and / or physical infrastructure in conjunction with such development and may require such lands to be prioritised for development over existing residentially zoned lands or that that a corresponding amount of land has been de-zoned.

The Draft Development Plan Guidelines indicate that *"the County Development Plan should include strategic or county wide objectives specifying the quantum and location of land"* and that *"Planning Authorities may need to adopt a more manageable method of handling their*



*land use zoning objective requirements by addressing the overall zoning objectives in the County Development Plan, while determining the detailed and specific zoning required to meet those objectives in Local Area Plans".* This is the approach which has been taken by Meath County Council. However, the Draft Guidelines further state that *"the development plan must include objectives in relation to the quantum of land to be zoned through the Local Area Plan process and indicating clearly that all county wide objectives of the Development Plan (including in particular those under-pinning the housing strategy) will apply in areas to be zoned in Local Area Plans".* It is therefore considered necessary for the Development Plan to contain an explicit objective which links the preparation of the individual Local Area Plans to the quantum and scale of development envisaged for each centre within the Development Plan, and in particular the Housing Strategy contained therein.

In order for the County Development Plan to comply with the requirements of the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area and the Draft Development Plan Guidelines, policies which will manage the release of residentially zoned lands (demand management techniques) must be put in place to ensure that the quantum and scale of residential development that will take place in urban centres interlocks with that indicated in Table 5 and Table 6. The Planning Authority shall, within 6 months of the County Development Plan coming into effect, revisit all residentially zoned lands in the County with the exception of Navan, Dunboyne / Clonee & Ashbourne. This exercise shall not apply to Navan, Dunboyne / Clonee & Ashbourne having regard to the preparation of Local Area Plans / Framework Plans which adequately provides for the phasing of the residential landbank and by virtue of the limited remaining uncommitted residential landbank in Ashbourne.

In all other centres, the Planning Authority shall identify and adopt an order of priority for the release of residentially zoned lands (i.e. phasing) that shall conform to the scale and quantum of development with that indicated in Table 5 and Table 6. The release of these residentially zoned lands shall adhere to the "Criteria Determining the Release of Residential Land" outlined on the previous page and the framework outlined for each of the Small Growth Towns and Moderate Growth Towns presented on the previous page. In the undertaking of this project, no additional residential lands shall be identified for development, it shall be restricted to a prioritisation of existing residential zoned lands only.

The *Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area* state that it will be necessary to accommodate local growth within the Strategic Green Belt, outside of the designated Development Centres and that such growth shall be limited to local as opposed to regional growth which will be directed to the larger settlements. Such development must not generate significant additional levels of commuting. In terms of this Development Plan, 50% of all new multi-house developments in small growth towns and all new multi house developments in key villages and villages, being developments in excess of 4 houses, shall be reserved for persons for first time owners in the area who are native to the area (being persons who can prove they have lived within 10km of the area for at least 5 consecutive years of their lives) or those who by virtue of their employment require to live in the urban centre. **This is to ensure that** such multiple house developments shall be provided for local growth only. Sporadic and dispersed residential development across the County as has taken place over the past Development Plan is considered unsustainable and shall be the subject of strict control measures.

The household and population distribution shown on Table 6 will have to be reviewed in context firstly of the detailed results of the 2006 Census of Population (the definitive population results, based on the scanned Census Forms, will be released between April and December 2007) and thereafter on regular assessments (at not less than 12 month intervals) on housing development activity across the County as carried out by the Planning Department. The distribution may change in light of such review and the availability of services required to facilitate the scale and quantum of residential development indicated in Table 6. The pace of

development is also dependent on the provision of concurrent physical and social infrastructure. The targets have taken cognisance of the existing commitments in the form of extant planning permission. The subsequent amendment of the household and population distribution shown on Table 6 once adopted will require a Variation to the County Development Plan.

<i>Urban Centre</i>	<i>Planning Permission Granted – No Construction Started</i>	<i>Houses Under Construction</i>	<i>Committed No. of Units</i>	<i>Projected Number of H'holds 2006 - 2009</i>	<i>Projected Number of H'holds 2010 - 2013</i>	<i>Total 2006 - 2013</i>	<i>No. of Units to Meet H'hold Targets</i>	<i>Remaining Undev. Resid. Zoned Land (Ha)</i>	<i>Yield of Remaining Undev. Resid. Zoned Land (35 per ha)</i>
<b>Large Growth Towns</b>									
Navan	961	432	1,393	2,000	2,750	4,750	3,357	390	13,650
Drogheda Environs	197	227	424	1,300	1,700	3,000	2,376	88	3,081
<b>Metropolitan Area – Moderate Growth Towns</b>									
Dunboyne / Clonee	235	190	425	1,150	2,400	3,550	3,125	81	2,849
Kilcock	0	0	0	150	1,000	1,150	1,150	59	2,070
Maynooth	0	0	0	0	500	500	500	0	0
<b>Hinterland Area – Moderate Growth Towns</b>									
Ashbourne	1,625	545	2,170	1,700	900	2,600	430	13	464
Kells	191	224	415	600	400	1,000	585	61	2,127
Trim	112	459	571	1,000	500	1,500	929	121	4,234
<b>Small Growth Towns</b>									
Athboy	14	61	75	210	140	350	275	28	982
Bettystown / Laytown / Mornington East	89	626	715	700	300	1,000	285	165	5,781
Duleek	60	126	186	240	200	440	254	30	1,041
D'shaughlin	73	268	341	600	400	1,000	659	86	3,003
Enfield	8	147	155	300	200	500	345	2	71
Oldcastle	86	0	86	105	200	305	219	23	812
Ratoath	52	248	300	450	200	650	350	35	1,230
Stamullen	4	29	33	170	200	370	337	18	625
<b>Key Villages</b>									
Ballivor	32	92	124	200	75	275	151	6	199
Longwood	19	97	116	180	65	245	129	15	535
Nobber	0	36	36	70	60	130	94	13	452
Slane	40	75	115	155	60	215	100	11	375
Summerhill	69	0	69	70	80	150	81	9	307
<b>Villages</b>									
Carlanstown	10	49	59	115	40	155	96	11	370
Clonard	99	0	99	125	100	225	126	12	429
Crossakiel	18	22	40	40	40	80	40	7	253
Donore	0	3	3	35	40	75	72	12	427
Drumc'drath	18	8	26	40	40	80	54	17	589
Gibbstown	0	0	0	15	20	35	35	9	314
Gormonston	0	0	0	50	100	150	150	53	1,855
Julianstown	0	0	0	15	20	35	35	7	235
Kentstown	0	13	13	45	40	85	72	3	113
Kilbride	0	0	0	20	95	115	115	0	0
Kildalkey	4	41	45	80	40	120	75	14	492
Kilmainwood	0	0	0	15	20	35	35	4	151

Villages (Continued)									
Kilmessan	8	51	59	135	100	235	176	5	190
Mornington / Donacarney	0	0	0	90	120	210	210	75	2,632
Moynalty	2	0	2	30	20	50	48	3	110
Rathcairn	0	0	0	15	20	35	35	11	388
Rathmoylon	0	76	76	100	40	140	64	15	524
Rural Houses				2,000	2,000	4,000			
Total	4,026	4,145	8,171	14,315	15,225	29,540		1,513	52,961

Table 6

**Notes:**

Unlike the remainder of the urban centres contained in Table 6 above, there are no Written Statements and Detailed Objectives for Maynooth Environs or Kilbride as they were not included in the Settlement Hierarchy of the 2001 County Development Plan. It is an objective of the Draft Development Plan to prepare a Local Area Plan for Kilbride and to explore the joint preparation of a Local Area Plan, in conjunction with Kildare County Council for Kilcock & Maynooth, to include the area north of Maynooth and the area north east of Kilcock which are located in Co. Meath. The latter shall subsume the existing Local Area Plan for Kilcock. It shall be an objective to seek to advance the preparation of the Joint Local Area Plans within 2 years of the adoption of the Development Plan. The preparation of such a Local Area Plan for Kilbride would include land use zoning objectives having regard to infrastructural capacities, the need to protect the rural character of the village and the positioning of the centre in the County Settlement Hierarchy.

*Committed No. of Units* - The number of committed units has been estimated by the Planning Authority based on a planning register search of each centre and is correct as of 30/06/2006. The total number of units includes those which are under construction but not yet occupied.

**High Level Development Objectives for Towns & Villages****1. Strategic Development Centres****Navan, Drogheda Environs and Clonsilla – Dunboyne – Pace rail corridor**

The allocation of future household and population growth will be channelled first and foremost to Navan, Drogheda and Clonsilla / Dunboyne / Pace<sup>3</sup> rail corridor. The majority of the projected additional population and households will be allocated to these identified strategic centres. This will necessitate the prioritisation of the preparation of the Local Area Plans for these centres by the Planning Authority to ensure that there are no restrictions in place which is adversely affecting the release and development of these strategic residential landbanks. The preparation of these LAPs must ensure that employment generating uses and the requisite social and physical infrastructure are included and developed contemporaneously with residential development. The Planning Authority will prioritise the provision of key physical and social infrastructure in these centres to ensure that all necessary infrastructure is in place contemporaneously with the needs of the resultant residential communities.

These centres are most likely to attract a concentration of major employment generating investment and should have the greatest accessibility / connectivity. In respect of Navan, it

<sup>3</sup> Pace concept should undergo SEA

shall form part of the Primary Dynamic Cluster in association with Kells & Trim. The Large Growth Towns (namely Drogheda and Navan) and Dunboyne / Pace Interchange will have excellent transport linkages including a high quality rail linkage and Motorways. The basis for such growth is that they do not become dormitory towns for the Metropolitan Area. In these instances, residential development would only be permitted if sufficient progress is made in providing employment, retail, social and community facilities within the settlement. These centres will become, in the longer term, self sustaining, with a population, including its catchment, capable of supporting facilities such as a high quality second level education service, a hospital of sufficient size to provide non specialised medical care, retail warehousing and a comparison retail centre. The medium term population horizon of the Large Growth Town of Navan is 40,000 – 45,000 people, for Drogheda inclusive of the south environs located in Co. Meath is 65,000 people and for Dunboyne / Clonee / Pace Interchange is 25,000 people. These centres must grow in a manner which is self sustaining and does not threaten the role of other settlements and regions.

There is already a substantial strategic reserve (142 hectares) identified in the Drogheda Environs Urban Detail Map contained in the existing County Development Plan. This strategic reserve has not the benefit of a land use zoning objective. The preparation of the Drogheda Environs Local Area Plan shall have regard to and be influenced by the recently adopted Greater Drogheda Area Planning Strategy in the identification of additional significant lands for residential development. The strategic reserve at Bryanstown (referred to above) in addition to the lands between the Mill Road and the rail line have been identified for future residential development. The availability of adequate capacity in piped water services and roads infrastructure will be taken into account in the order of priority afforded to the release of residential lands. Meath County Council will take cognisance of the proposed Drogheda Traffic Management Study, the Draft Planning Strategy for the Greater Drogheda Area, the Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan 2005 – 2011 in the preparation of the Drogheda South Environs Local Area Plan.

The decision by the Planning Authority to include Dunboyne / Clonee as a single entity in the Draft Development Plan was based on their geographical proximity to each other and that the Planning Authority had decided to prepare a single Local Area Plan for the existing settlements of Dunboyne and Clonee inclusive of the proposed park and ride station at Pace Interchange. Such an approach would ensure that a wider spatial perspective would be applied rather than an examination of Clonee in isolation. However, this is not to infer that significant residential growth in particular is being earmarked for Clonee.

#### Thematic Spatial Strategies

The Draft County Development Plan contained as Strategic Objective SS OBJ 5

*"To prepare a Spatial Strategy for each of the following centres or areas to assist in the preparation of future development plans or local area plans. These strategies will identify the location, significance and sensitivity of the range of environmental assets and constraints that occur within these particularly sensitive areas that are likely to comprise higher than average intensities of development. .*

1. Navan
2. Trim
3. Kells
4. Dynamic Clusters 2 & 3 – Area including Dunboyne / Clonee, Dunshaughlin, Ashbourne & Ratoath
5. Boyne Valley – Area including Slane, Duleek, Donore, Drogheda and the East Meath urban centres
6. Oldcastle / Loughcrew / Sliabh na Calliagh"

The Draft County Development Plan also included a Strategic Objective ECON DEVT SO 1

*"To prepare a Thematic Spatial Strategy for industrial development and enterprise which would identify and support the development of areas where significant clusters of power, roads, water and gas could be harnessed to become nationally important areas to accommodate very large scale value added employment while avoiding potential for future environmental and planning conflicts. In the first instance, the south east of the County will be examined."*

It is considered that having regard to the Development Strategy contained in the County Development Plan that the Planning Authority should prioritise the development of the spatial strategies for Navan, Kells, Trim, Drogheda and Dunboyne / Clonee and the preparation of the Thematic Spatial Strategy for industrial development and enterprise for these centres.

## **2. Moderate Growth Towns**

These centres are envisaged as having an interacting and supporting role to their adjacent Large Town. These interactions most notably include the Primary Dynamic Cluster of Trim and Kells with Navan, the Primary Dynamic Cluster of Ashbourne, with Dunboyne / Pace / Clonee whilst the portions of both Kilcock & Maynooth located in Co. Meath are included in the Metropolitan Primary Dynamic Cluster along with Leixlip and Celbridge in Co. Kildare. Kilcock & Maynooth are considered to be more closely associated with the M4 Economic Development Corridor which also includes Enfield for the purposes of this Development Plan. In the absence of the provision of public transport links to the Metropolitan Area and other development centres being provided and upgraded in line with the recommendations of the DTO's Platform for Change, expansion targets should be modest.

It is critical that Moderate Growth Towns would develop in a self sufficient sustainable manner in the longer term and that continued basis for their growth is that they do not become dormitory towns for the Metropolitan Area. In these instances, residential development would only be permitted if sufficient progress is made in providing employment, retail, social and community facilities within the settlement.

### **Moderate Growth Towns in the Metropolitan Area**

#### **Maynooth and Kilcock Environs**

The environs of Maynooth<sup>4</sup> and Kilcock, both located in Co. Meath, are located within a Primary Dynamic Cluster in the Metropolitan Area.<sup>5</sup> A Local Area Plan was prepared and adopted by this Planning Authority for Kilcock Environs subsequent to the adoption of the 2001 County Development Plan. Kildare County Council have not facilitated the development of these residential lands to date due to their lack of water services capacity. These deficiencies are expected to be rectified by 2008 – 2009 and the Council is grateful to the assistance of Kildare County Council in their progress on these schemes. The application of the sequential approach to development, and in particular residential development, would appear to be ignored by Kildare County Council in the case of Kilcock as lands adjoining the Square, located in Co. Meath, remain undeveloped. It is an objective of the Development Plan to seek to advance the preparation of joint Local Area Plans for both Kilcock and Maynooth, inclusive of the areas located in Co. Meath rather than to prepare Local Area plans only for the Environs Areas. Meath County Council will reserve the right to approach the DoEHLG to facilitate the joint preparation of Local Area Plans for both settlements in accordance with Section 18 (2). The development of the environs of both towns must be on a balanced and

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<sup>4</sup> Note that Maynooth is a heritage town and there could be potential impacts upon cultural heritage

<sup>5</sup> The Metropolitan Area Dynamic Centre comprises the towns of Leixlip, Maynooth, Kilcock and Celbridge located primarily within Co. Kildare. The northern environs of both towns are within Co. Meath.

sustainable basis whereby residential development is matched by the delivery of key physical and social infrastructure and a strong economic base.

### **Moderate Growth Towns in the Hinterland**

The development of the other Moderate Growth centres of Trim, Kells and Ashbourne must be closer aligned to significant growth in local employment opportunities and to the development of Navan in the case of Trim & Kells.

#### **Ashbourne**

Ashbourne is considered to constitute a strategic location for additional growth as referred to in the DoEHLG submission on the basis of its proximity to Dublin (10 miles from O'Connell Street), its economic and employment base and its location on the N2 Finglas to Ashbourne Dual carriageway. However, there remain significant water service constraints which require regional solutions and are dependent on adjoining Local Authorities to resolve. Having regard to the extent of committed residential development in Ashbourne, which the Planning Authority estimate to be 2,170 units, to desist zoning additional residential lands in the review of the Local Area Plan which can be released prior to the development and occupation of the majority (80%) of existing industrial and employment generating land uses and the completion of the Ashbourne Town Centre Redevelopment. It is considered that the completion of the Finglas to Ashbourne N2 Dual Carriageway offers significant employment generating potential for uses dependent on good access to the national primary road network and the Dublin market.

### **Kells and Trim – Heritage Towns**

Kells and Trim, together with Navan, continue to perform as the primary development corridor in the County. However, the protection of the former centres heritage and their promotion as a basis for tourism is a major force in the development options to be considered due to the valuable built (and natural) heritage extant in these towns. The marketing of the County as the Heritage Capital of Ireland has been successful and is dependent on maintaining the intrinsic character of our important built settlements such as Kells, Trim, Slane, Summerhill and Moynalty. It is imperative that the market town character of Kells and Trim is respected and maintained. Residential development in these towns should be aimed at the quality end of the market. These towns are not suitable for high density apartment developments which is considered out of character with the built form of the settlements. The topography of Kells and the dominance of the medieval structures of Trim present difficulties in the assimilation of tall and bulky buildings into the landscape.

#### Trim

Having regard to the extent of committed residential development in Trim, which the Planning Authority estimate to be 932 units, to desist zoning additional residential lands in the review of the Trim Development Plan. Furthermore, the Planning Authority will propose detailed phasing and prioritisation of the release of the remaining residential zoned landbank and examine the need for the extent of the residential land bank, the subject of a Local Area Plan, on the Navan Road. The Planning Authority will include policies for the release of subsequent phases of residential lands in Trim to agreed targets in relation to the development and occupation of the significant industrial and employment generating land banks identified in the Development Plan. Priority will be given to the development of identified brownfield town and edge of town centre sites and the area identified for town centre expansion to the rear of Emmet Street and Bridge Street. A sequential approach to the release of residential lands, in harmony with the availability of key social infrastructure (school places) must be borne in mind in the preparation of the Trim Development Plan.

#### Kells

The residential development of Kells has not occurred at the same rate as that experienced by either Ashbourne or Trim. The Planning Authority estimate that they are committed to a



further 373 units in the form of extant planning permission. Nonetheless, having regard to the extent of existing residentially zoned lands, the Planning Authority shall desist from zoning additional residential lands in the review of the Kells Development Plan. Whilst the development of the Lloyd Business Park has been a considerable success, this contrasts to the poor retail provision and lack of office development in the town. The development of the Backlands in Kells, which the Planning Authority have committed considerable resources over the past couple of years, must be given priority in terms of available water service infrastructure over other outer suburban greenfield sites. It is imperative for the future development of Kells that these lands are developed based on a sequential approach to residential development and the development of sustainable communities. Furthermore, Kells has a considerable built heritage which is under threat for continued survival due to obsolescence. There are also extensive areas of streetscape which border on dereliction. These must become a priority which the Development Plan tackles over the coming years in conjunction with the development of the backlands.

### **3. Small Growth Towns**

The *RPG's* indicate that Planning Authorities in the preparation of Development Plans should designate such towns it considers appropriate, having regard to their strategic function, and consideration in respect of the population forecasts for the Greater Dublin Area. The urban centres in this tier act as sub regional centres providing primarily residential roles with a strong commercial and industrial presence. The development of each Small Growth Town is supported by the growth of an adjacent Moderate or Large Growth Town, in terms of large scale employment uses.

Relatively small and locally financed businesses are expected to locate in Small Growth Towns. However, other economic investment could be permitted. Retail is likely to be mainly in the convenience category, with a small supermarket and possibly local centres serving only the town and its local catchment area. Small Growth Towns would likely contain facilities such as a primary and / or secondary school, as well as a Health Clinic.

It is envisaged that major employment-generated investment companies will seek to locate in Large Growth or possibly Moderate Growth Towns, and not necessarily in these locations.

Having regard to Dunshaughlin's strategic location, determination of a programme for delivery of future strategic infrastructural improvements and significant increases in local employment generating activities, Meath County Council shall make the argument to [the review of](#) the Regional Planning Authorities to designate Dunshaughlin as a Moderate Growth Town in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. Subject to such designation, the Settlement Strategy in the County Development Plan shall be varied allowing for the designation of Dunshaughlin as a Moderate Growth Town, and associated necessary review of the Dunshaughlin Local Area Plan shall occur.

The further residential development of centres in the East Meath area and of centres such as Ratoath and Dunshaughlin (pending the redesignation of the settlement in the review of the Regional Planning Guidelines) must be managed and an effective policy mechanism put in place accordingly. The Planning Authority shall desist from zoning additional significant areas of residential land in these centres unless under exceptional circumstances and where a reciprocal rebalancing of existing zoned lands has taken place elsewhere.

#### Dunshaughlin

The Planning Authority are of the firm view due to

- Dunshaughlin's strategic location;
- the determination of a programme for delivery of future strategic infrastructural improvements to serve the town, including the M3 Motorway and bypass and the provision of the proposed Park & Ride facility at Pace Interchange, and;

- the significant increases in local employment generating activities,

that an argument can be made to designate Dunshaughlin as a Moderate Growth Town in the review of the RPG's. The Planning Authority accept the current designation of the town and are cognisant of the extent of existing residential lands which can be readily serviced and developed for their intended purpose in the coming years. The Planning Authority will ensure that the first development priority is the development of the new Town Centre to the west of the Main Street and the delivery of the new civic space to the east of Main Street in the line with the approved urban design framework for the town. The release of the remaining significant tract of residential land between the N3 Dublin Road and the Lagore Road will be phased pending the significant development of the Town Centre Backlands, the provision of the M3 Motorway and Bypass of Dunshaughlin and the capacity / future provision of key social and physical infrastructure both within and outside of the lands in question. The Planning Authority will also monitor the development of significant employment generating uses to serve the resident population and this too will be factored to the release of additional zoned lands.

#### Ratoath

The manner in which Ratoath has and continues to develop is unparalleled in any other centre in the County. Ratoath DED had the third highest 2002 – 2006 inter censal growth rate after Navan DED and St. Mary's DED which encompasses Drogheda South Environs, the DEDs which contain the two designated Large Growth Towns in the County. Ratoath has developed almost as a suburb with no corresponding growth in employment generating uses other than small scale retail provision. With the exception of the possible delivery of the identified bypass (northern option), no additional residential land shall be identified for residential purposes during the life of this Development Plan. The land required to release this piece of critical local infrastructure shall be prioritised over existing residentially zoned lands. The remainder of the residential land bank shall be phased and released on the basis of agreed employment generating targets locally and the delivery of identified critical social infrastructure. The Bloodstock Industry plays a vital role in the economic and recreational development in the County, and in Ratoath in particular. Development of the industry, through the provision of zoned lands at and adjacent to such centres such as Fairyhouse racecourse and Tattersalls, to build on and take advantage of the unique opportunity afforded by the bloodstock industry shall be provided for in the Ratoath Local Area Plan.

#### Oldcastle

Oldcastle has developed on a more sustainable basis than any other town in the County predicated on a robust traditional manufacturing basis (furniture and engineering) but also with a strong service sector employment. As such from a commercial perspective, Oldcastle is uniquely vibrant in the County. By virtue of its location removed from the Dublin Metropolitan Area and the continued water services infrastructural deficiencies, the town has not mushroomed by comparison to the towns of the east and south east of the County. The existing residentially zoned landbank is significant having regard to the recorded growth rate over the past inter censal period. The potential of the considerable backlands in the town should be afforded a priority over green field sites removed from the town centre and the main educational and recreational facilities of the town. It is not considered necessary to link the release of residential land to employment creation in Oldcastle such is the strength of the local industrial / manufacturing economy and service sector. However, the resolution of the water and waste water infrastructure deficiencies will continue to act as a constrain on development in the short term.

#### Athboy

The development of residential land in Athboy has not occurred at the same pace as the other Small Growth Centres in the County due mainly to the relevant distance of the town to the Dublin Metropolitan Area and the quality of the road infrastructure which links the town to the main arteries to the Capital. There has been little take up of industrial land in Athboy



and the development of the remaining significant residential land bank shall be linked to the significant development (75%) of this industrial land bank and the development of the significant Town Centre Backland sites identified in the 2001 Athboy Detailed Urban Plan. The development of the identified backlands is dependent on the objective seeking the construction of a new road linking Connaught Street to Main Street at McCann and Byrnes. The Local Authority shall also seek to progress the by passing of Athboy on the N51 National Secondary Road.

#### Enfield

Enfield offers significant development opportunities by virtue of its juxtaposition on the M4 Motorway inclusive of the bypass of the town and that it is served by a rail line, albeit with limited commuter services to Dublin. Furthermore, there are existing water services available in Enfield to serve additional development. However, there is no spare capacity in the car parking facilities at the train station in Enfield which serves a much wider catchment than the town itself, inclusive of Longwood, Kinnegad, Ballivor, Clonard and perhaps centres in Westmeath. The development of Enfield must not be on the basis of an exacerbation of long distance commuting to Dublin, regardless of whether this is by public transport or not. The development of additional residential lands must also be linked with the development of significant employment creation locally which benefit from the strategic position of Enfield. Furthermore, the development and release of further residential lands must facilitate the provision of adequate recreational and amenity provision required in a growing town.

#### Duleek

Duleek is served by the East Meath, South Louth and Drogheda Water Scheme. It is also served by a wastewater treatment plant which discharges to the Nanny and has limited spare capacity. The town is also located on a busy regional route which links the N2 National Primary Road to Drogheda. The social structure of Duleek has benefited from the rebalancing that has taken place over the past number of years with the extent of private residential development and the urban fabric of the town has also improved. There remains a significant amount of undeveloped and uncommitted residentially zoned landbank in the town which is considered adequate to meet the residential needs of the town for the life of the next County Development Plan. The Duleek Business Park is relatively successful and the town has strategic strengths by virtue of the proximity of the town to the M1 and R132 (former N1). The development of the M1 – N1 link would further exacerbate such advantages. The release of the remaining residential land bank must be linked to the resolution of the deficit in water services infrastructure provision, the development and occupation of the existing Business Park and the adequacy of the social infrastructure, in particular educational, amenity and recreational uses, to cater for the increased levels of population.

#### **East Meath**

The continued development of the urban centres contained in the East Meath Local Area Plans is dependent on the allocation of capacity from critical water and waste water infrastructure which also serves Drogheda (and Ashbourne for water supply). The Planning Authority must take account of key infrastructure investment frameworks such as Transport 21 and the DoEHLG's water services capital programmes into account in determining appropriate locations for future development. The East Meath urban centres do not feature in the RPG's and are not considered strategic centres within the region. The existence of large greenfield sites within these smaller urban centres and the lack of any policy measures which prioritises capacity in water infrastructure for Drogheda makes such centres attractive for developers. However, whilst Drogheda has an established and expanding employment base, no such argument can be made for any urban centre along the East Coast which are developing solely on the basis of dormitory towns and are facilitating commuting primarily to Dublin.

#### Laytown – Bettystown – Mornington East

The Planning Authority must revisit the residential land use zoning contained in the East Meath Local Area Plan as a matter of priority so that the release of this land can be phased

having regard to the need to protect water services capacity first and foremost for Drogheda and to assist in the delivery of identified physical and social infrastructure that has a wider strategic importance. It is not anticipated that significant amounts of the existing residentially zoned lands in Bettystown will be developed within the life of this Development Plan i.e. prior to 2013. The Planning Authority will re-examine the phasing in place whereby a developer can deliver a significant employment generating use (as determined by the Planning Authority) either within the site or within the urban centre contemporaneously with the development of the initial phase of a residential development. Priority will also be afforded to continue develop the Bettystown Town Centre which will meet the retail and service needs of the wider communities

The development of the significant residential land bank at Laytown, to the west of the rail line will only proceed on the basis of a unique "eco-residential" concept where the Planning Authority is satisfied that the development is sustainable in terms of public transport provision and capacity, being self dependent in terms of water services and providing significant local employment opportunities contemporaneously with the residential development. The Planning Authority will also monitor the delivery of the adjoining industrially zoned lands adjoining the site on the Minnistown Road and the availability of critical social infrastructure in Laytown / Bettystown to serve the development in deciding the appropriate amount of land to be released in each phase of the development.

#### Stamullen

The development of additional residential lands in Stamullen will be dependent on the significant development and occupation (75%) of appropriate employment generating uses at the identified Business Park off the M1 Motorway, the provision of identified social infrastructure (national school extension and adequate recreational facilities being provided in advance of residential development) and the availability of the necessary waste water services within the carrying capacity of the adjoining River Delvin.

#### Donacarney

The Planning Authority will revisit the extent of residential lands zoned in Donacarney and ensure that the release of such lands is linked to local only rather than to regional growth. The development of residentially zoned lands is currently facilitating commuting from this small settlement primarily to Dublin. The village does not have the existing or planned physical or social infrastructure to cater for the quantum and scale of development which the current East Meath Local Area Plan could ultimately provide for. The development of Donacarney is dependent on the resolution of water services at a sub regional level whereby existing capacity will be prioritised to the more strategic urban settlements served by these facilities.

#### Gormonston

The development of Gormonston is dependent on the provision of a sub regional solution to both water supply and wastewater. There is no definitive timeframe in place for the resolution of the wastewater collection, treatment and disposal. The Local Authority are currently in discussions with the Water Services and Spatial Policy Units of the DoEHLG exploring the provision of a regional wastewater facility at Gormonston that will solve the regional waste water deficiency. In any event, the development of Gormonston is dependent on the development of the former military airfield on the Department of Defence lands. There are no existing social or recreational facilities in Gormonston other than those available for public use at Gormonston College. The Planning Authority will revisit the extent of residential lands zoned in Gormonston and ensure that the release of such lands is linked to local only rather than regional growth.

### **4. Key Villages (Villages 1,000 Population)**

*Slane, Ballivor, Longwood, Summerhill, Nobber.*

It is envisaged that the future development strategy of Key Villages is to concentrate population, services and jobs in strategic village locations, which have relatively good access from nearby towns. The concentration of population will strengthen the viability of services, such as public transport, secondary and / or national schools, retails and the facilitation and expansion of small rural enterprise. [The future development of Key Villages will be predicated on local rather than regional growth which has taken place over the past decade.](#)

## 5. Villages

*Donacarney, Mornington East, Mornington, Gormonston, Julianstown, Kentstown, Kildalkey, Clonard, Kilmessan, Rathcairn, Baile Ghib, Rathmolyon, Carlanstown, Crossakiel, Drumconrath, Kilmainhamwood, Moynalty, Kilbride (Dunshaughlin Electoral Area) and Donore.*

All of the above settlements are intended to act as nodes for distinctive quality driven residential development and essential local commercial and community services. It is envisaged that the future growth of these villages should be curtailed or safeguarded so that they do not act as catalysts to facilitate continuing expansion of the outer suburbs of Dublin City in particular, or other Large or Moderate Towns. The villages located close to the Metropolitan Area or other Large or Moderate Growth Towns and close to significant public roads are particularly under pressure in this regard. Such villages are largely a reflection of their existing status and the nature of their development to date, witnessing the emergence as dormitory villages. [The future development of Key Villages will be predicated on local rather than regional growth which has taken place over the past decade.](#)

## 6. Graigs

The County Development Plan contains a further settlement tier not readily identifiable in the RPG's. Graigs or rural clusters are intended to relieve rural development pressures whilst strengthening the rural development cluster with its social and community infrastructure. The scale and fabric of these centres must however be respected in new development proposals.

### Strategic Settlement Policy

Settlement Strategy SP1	<a href="#">The Council will implement the Settlement Strategy of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area by concentrating residential development first and foremost into the designated centres of Navan, Drogheda and the Dunboyne / Pace Rail Corridor. These centres shall accommodate the majority of Meath's share of the Mid Eastern regional residential growth over the life of this Development Plan and beyond.</a>
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[Likely to conflict with the status of the environment \[W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1\]](#)

Settlement Strategy SP2	To ensure that all of the Large Growth Towns and Moderate Growth Towns will in so far as practical be self sufficient incorporating employment activities, sufficient retail services and social and community facilities. Residential development will only be permitted if sufficient progress is made in providing employment, retail, social and community facilities within the settlement. The Planning Authority shall agree a series of monitoring measures in this regard within 6 months of the adoption of this Development Plan. The Council will give consideration to the capacity of existing appropriately zoned, serviceable and undeveloped land to deliver sustainable mixed use communities in advance of zoning previously unzoned greenfield land for new development.
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Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, C1 (especially in heritage towns), S1, S2, A4, M1]

Settlement Strategy SP3	In all small growth towns, 50% of all new multi-house developments, being developments in excess of 4 houses, shall be reserved for persons who are first time owners in the area who are native to the area (being persons who can prove they have lived within 10km of the area for at least 5 consecutive years of their lives) or those who by virtue of their employment require to live in the urban centre. This will ensure that the development of Small Growth Towns is more closely linked to local rather than to regional residential growth. The Small Growth Towns are Athboy, Enfield, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, Duleek, Stamullen & Laytown – Bettystown – Mornington East. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.
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No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment

Settlement Strategy SP4	In all key villages and villages, all new multi-house developments, being developments in excess of 4 houses, shall be subject to compliance with a set percentage being reserved for persons who are first time owners in the area who are native to the area (being persons who can prove they have lived within 10km of the area for at least 5 consecutive years of their lives) or those who by virtue of their employment require to live in the urban centre. This will ensure that all multiple house developments shall be provided for local growth only in accordance with the recommendations of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. The Rural Strategy (Section 7) specifies the percentage ranging from 50 – 100 % which must be reserved for local persons depending on the Rural Area Type in which the centre is located. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.
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No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment

Settlement Strategy SP5	Having regard to the amount of existing residentially zoned land, the annual construction of over 3,500 housing units and the inadequacies of basic infrastructure such as water, sewerage, roads, transport, communications, etc., only limited and strategic additional residential land use zoning shall be agreed for the life of this development plan. The location of these strategic additional residential lands shall comply with the Settlement Strategy contained in this Development Plan and to the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. " <i>Limited</i> " shall be defined as areas, either individually or cumulatively, less than 10 hectares for any one centre. " <i>Strategic</i> " shall be defined as the Large Growth Towns of Navan and Drogheda and the Metropolitan Area Moderate Growth Town of Dunboyne and Maynooth, the Hinterland Area Moderate Growth Town of Ashbourne and the Small Growth Town of Enfield.
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Neutral Interaction with SEOs; Neutral Interaction with the status of the environment

Settlement Strategy SP6	<p>The household and population distribution shown on Table 6 will have to be reviewed firstly in the context of the detailed results of the 2006 Census of Population (the definitive population results, based on the scanned Census Forms, will be released between April and December 2007) and thereafter on regular assessments on housing development activity across the County as carried out by the Planning Department. The distribution may change in light of such review and the availability and / or planned provision of concurrent necessary physical and social services required to facilitate the scale and quantum of residential development indicated in Table 6. The amendment of the household and population distribution shown on Table 5 and / or Table 6 will require a Variation to the County Development Plan.</p>
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No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment

Settlement Strategy SP7	<p>Having regard to Dunshaughlin's strategic location, determination of a programme for delivery of future strategic infrastructural improvements and significant increases in local employment generating activities, Meath County Council shall make the argument to the Regional Planning Authorities to designate Dunshaughlin as a Moderate Growth Town in the subsequent review of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. Subject to such designation, the completion of the M3 Motorway and the development of the Clonsilla – Pace rail line inclusive of the park and ride facility at Pace Interchange, the Settlement Strategy and the household and population distribution shown on Table 6 in the County Development Plan shall be varied allowing for the designation of Dunshaughlin as a Moderate Growth Town, and associated necessary review of the Dunshaughlin Local Area Plan shall occur.</p>
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## Strategic Settlement Objectives

Settlement Strategy SO 1	The Planning Authority shall, within 6 months of the County Development Plan coming into effect, revisit all existing residentially zoned lands in the County as contained in Volume II of the Draft Development Plan 2007 – 2013. The Planning Authority shall identify and adopt an order of priority for the release of existing residentially zoned lands (i.e. phasing) that shall conform to the scale and quantum of development indicated in Table 5 and Table 6. The release of these existing residentially zoned lands shall be on the basis of the Criteria Determining the Release of Residential Lands outlined in Section **. This shall also apply to the preparation of the new Kells & Trim Development Plans. This exercise shall not apply to Navan, Dunboyne / Clonee & Ashbourne having regard to the preparation of Local Area Plans / Framework Plans which provides for the phasing of the residential landbank and by virtue of the limited remaining uncommitted residential landbank in Ashbourne.
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Uncertain Interaction with SEOs; Uncertain Interaction with the status of the environment

Strategic Settlement SO 2	<p>To prepare an Integrated Development Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation <b>and associated Environmental Assessment</b> for the Clonsilla to Pace Interchange corridor in conjunction with relevant public transportation bodies, the DoEHLG and Fingal County Council. The Integrated Framework Plan shall provide inter alia, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) The appropriate location for additional public transport nodes along the rail corridor;</li> <li>ii) The development potential and appropriate land uses around these public transport nodes; Large trip generators such as major employers or town / district centres should be located near the intersection of transportation corridors.</li> <li>iii) The location, significance and sensitivity of the range of environmental assets and constraints that occur within this corridor.</li> <li>iv) In relation to industrial and enterprise development, to identify and support the development of areas where significant clusters of power, roads, water and gas could be harnessed to become nationally important areas to accommodate very large scale value added employment while avoiding potential for future environmental and planning conflicts within the corridor.</li> </ul>
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	The preparation of the Dunboyne / Clonee Local Area Plan shall be influenced by the Integrated Development Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation and shall be prepared in advance of the latter. Pending the preparation of this Strategic Study, the quantum and scale of residential development allocated to Dunboyne / Clonee shall be revisited and Table 6 shall be varied accordingly.
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Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]

<b>Strategic Settlement SO 3</b>	<p>To prepare a Spatial Strategy for each of the following centres or areas to assist in the preparation of future development plans or local area plans. These strategies will identify the location, significance and sensitivity of the range of environmental assets and constraints that occur within these particularly sensitive areas that are likely to comprise higher than average intensities of development. .</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Navan</li> <li>2. Trim</li> <li>3. Kells</li> <li>4. Dynamic Clusters 2 &amp; 3 – Area including Dunboyne / Clonee, Dunshaughlin, Ashbourne &amp; Ratoath</li> <li>5. Boyne Valley – Area including Slane, Duleek, Drogheda and the East</li> <li>6. Oldcastle / Loughcrew / Sliabh na Calliagh</li> </ol> <p>Donore, Meath urban centres</p>
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### 1.1.8 Preparation of Local Area Plans for Individual Towns and Villages

Section 1.1.3 'Review Format' outlined the main differences between the existing County Development Plan (2001) and this Draft County Development Plan 2007 – 2013. The principle difference is that there are no individual written statements and detailed objectives for the towns and villages contained in this Draft Development Plan. The existing Written Statement and Detailed Objectives for Towns and Villages inclusive of the accompanying book of maps contained in the 2001 County Development Plan shall remain in force until individual Local Area Plans have been prepared and adopted for each. All such LAPs will be prepared and adopted within the immediate two years preceding the adoption of the new County Development Plan.

In respect of East Meath Local Area Plans –North and South, it is proposed that these too would remain in effect as adopted in November 2005, unless otherwise amended.

However, in order for the County Development Plan to comply with the requirements of the *National Spatial Strategy* and the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area*, policies which introduce demand management techniques must be put in place to ensure that the quantum and scale of residential development that will take place in urban centres interlocks with that indicated in Table 5 and Table 6. The Planning Authority is not proposing significant rezoning unless it can be clearly demonstrated that land banking is occurring. The Planning Authority is proposing the introduction of demand management techniques which



ensures that the regional share of residential growth is accommodated primarily in Navan, Drogheda and the Dunboyne / Pace Rail Corridor and to a lesser extent by Ashbourne, Kilcock & Maynooth Environs. As outlined earlier in this Chapter, the preparation of the individual Local Area Plans within 2 years of the adoption of the County Development Plan shall adhere to and demonstrate consistency with the scale and quantum of development envisaged in Table 5 & 6 (as revised from the original Draft).

### Goal

To provide a comprehensive suite of Local Area Plans for the urban settlements of County Meath in order to give effect to the policies contained in this County Development Plan and to work with local communities in the preparation of such plans.

### Policy

SS POL 1	To facilitate and permit the development of the county's towns and villages in accordance with the individual Written Statements and Detailed Objectives for Towns and Villages contained in the 2001 County Development Plan pending the preparation and subsequent adoption of individual Local Area Plans for these centres or groups of centres.
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SS POL 2	The preparation of the subsequent individual or grouped Local Area Plans shall ensure that they are consistent with the objectives of this Development Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Planning & Development Acts 2002 – 2002. In particular, the population growth and household formation provided for in each Local Area Plan shall demonstrate compliance with the Household & Population Projection contained in this Development Plan, and in particular Table 6 . This compliance shall be explicitly demonstrated on the basis of the amount of residential land being released for development in a particular centre being quantified by applying reasonable density and average occupancy rates to the scale and quantum of development provided for in Table 6. In all instances, the release of land must have regard to the existing and future availability of, or the capacity to provide physical and social infrastructure. The preparation of individual or grouped Local Area Plans shall be consistent with the order of priority identified in the forthcoming review of all existing residentially zoned lands in towns and village pursuant to Settlement Strategy SP 2.
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Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]

SS POL 3	To review and prepare Local Area Plans for groups of related settlements which have economic, geographical or settlement hierarchical relationships in conjunction with local communities.
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SS POL 4	The preparation of the Drogheda Environs Local Area Plan shall have regard to and be influenced by the recently adopted Greater Drogheda Area Planning Strategy in the identification of additional significant lands for residential development. The strategic reserve at Bryanstown in addition to the lands between the Mill Road and the rail line have been identified for future residential development. The availability of adequate capacity in piped water services and roads infrastructure will be taken into account in the order of priority afforded to the release of residential lands. The preparation of the Local Area Plan shall take cognisance of the proposed Drogheda Traffic Management Study, and the Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan 2005 – 2011.
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Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2]

SS POL 5	To facilitate and permit the development of the East Meath towns and villages in accordance the East Meath Local Area Plans - North and South 2005 for the period of this County Development Plan, unless otherwise amended.
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SS POL 6	The preparation of the Drogheda Environs Local Area Plan shall have regard to and be influenced by the recently adopted Greater Drogheda Area Planning Strategy in the identification of additional significant lands for residential development. The availability of adequate capacity in piped water services and roads infrastructure will be taken into account in the order of priority afforded to the release of residential lands. The Planning Authority shall also take cognisance of the proposed Drogheda Traffic Management Study, the Draft Planning Strategy for the Greater Drogheda Area, the Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan 2005 – 2011 in the preparation of this Local Area Plan.
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SS POL 7	To designate Kilbride (Dunshaughlin Area) as a village in the Settlement Hierarchy of the County Development Plan having regard to its strategic location, close to the Dublin border and its ability to accommodate significant employment generating uses.
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SS POL 8	Having regard to the extent of zoned land in Donore (12.21 hectares), the position of the village in the Settlement Strategy and the juxtaposition of the village in the buffer area of the World Heritage Site, to desist from zoning additional zoned land in the preparation of the forthcoming Local Area Plan.
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Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

Objectives

SS OBJ 1	To prepare Local Area Plans for the urban centres contained in Table 7 on next page within 2 years of the adoption of this County Development Plan in accordance with the provisions of Sections 18 – 20 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2002. These Local Area Plans will replace the individual Written Statements and Detailed Objectives for Towns and Villages contained in the 2001 County Development Plan.
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<b>Large Growth Towns<sup>6</sup></b>	Drogheda (Environs)
<b>Moderate Growth Towns<sup>7</sup></b>	Dunboyne / Clonee, Kilcock & Ashbourne,
<b>Small Growth Towns</b>	Duleek, Ratoath, Dunshaughlin, Athboy, Oldcastle & Enfield
<b>Key Villages</b>	Slane, Ballivor, Longwood, Summerhill, Nobber
<b>Villages</b>	Kentstown, Kildalkey, Clonard, Kilmessan, Rathcairn, Baile Ghib, Rathmolyon, Carlanstown, Crossakiel, Drumconrath, Kilmainhamwood, Moynalty, Donore

**Table 7 : Towns and Villages for which Local Area Plans will be prepared for**

SS OBJ 2	To explore the joint preparation of Local Area Plans, in conjunction with Kildare County Council, for Kilcock & Maynooth, to include the area north of Maynooth and the area north east of Kilcock which are located in Co. Meath. The latter shall subsume the existing Local Area Plan for Kilcock. It shall be an objective to seek to advance the preparation of the Joint Local Area Plans within 2 years of the adoption of the Development Plan.
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SS OBJ 3	To revisit employment generating uses, namely E1 and E2 land use zoning objectives, in the preparation of individual Local Area Plans and lower level Development Plans having regard to changing nature and requirements of industry and enterprise. The location of employment and enterprise will be informed by the preparation of the Thematic Spatial Strategy for industrial development and enterprise required pursuant to Strategic Objective ECON DEVT SO 1, the examination of land uses at existing and proposed Motorway Interchanges pursuant to Infrastructure Objective INF OBJ 16 and the Economic Strategy.
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<sup>6</sup> Please note that there is a Development Plan for Navan (2003 – 2009) which includes the Town Council Area and Environs.

<sup>7</sup> Please note that there is a Development Plan for Kells (2001 – 2007) and Trim (2002 – 2008) which includes the respective Town Council Areas and Environs.

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

SS OBJ 4	To explore the joint preparation of a Local Area Plan, in conjunction with Westmeath County Council for the area east of Kinnegad located in Co. Meath. As the preparation of this Local Area Plan requires the co-operation of an adjoining Local Authority, the preparation of these Local Area Plans shall not be restricted to the time limits identified in the Planning & Development Act 2000, Section 19(1)(C).
SS OBJ 5	To prepare a Local Area Plan within 2 years of the adoption of the County Development Plan for Kilbride (Dunshaughlin Area). The preparation of such a Local Area Plan would include land use zoning objectives including employment generating uses and would seek to address issues such as protection of the rural character of the village, local need / affordability and infrastructural deficits.
SS OBJ 6	To prepare a Graig Design Statement for Bellewstown, which has been reclassified from a village to a graig in this Draft County Development Plan. Pending the preparation of the Graig Design Statement, regard will be had to the Written Statement and Detail Objectives for Bellewstown including the land use zoning objectives as contained in Volume II of the 2001 County Development Plan in the assessment of individual development proposals.

### 1.1.9 Land Use Zoning Objectives

As outlined in the preceding section, the individual Written Statements and Detailed Objectives for Towns and Villages contained in the 2001 County Development Plan have been adopted without amendment for the period as the statutory town or village plan for the period 2007 -2009 pending the preparation and subsequent adoption of individual Local Area Plans for these centres. This section of the Draft Development Plan provides explanatory information with regard to the land use zoning objectives which are contained in the individual Written Statements and accompanying maps for each centre. These land use zoning objectives are defined in Table 8 and the extent of such zones is indicated on the urban detail maps where a colour coded key aids identification.

In the preparation of individual or groups of Local Area Plans, as provided for in Objective SS OBJ 1, the Local Area Plan shall include detailed land use zoning objectives which shall render the Land Use Zoning Objectives and associated land use zoning matrix obsolete within two years of the adoption of this County Development Plan.

It should be noted that the text of the land use zoning objectives contained in Table 8 is consistent with that contained in the 2001 County Development Plan with one notable exception relating to the Residential Land Use Zoning Objectives A2 – A5. In Land Use Zoning Objective A2, A3, A4 and A5, it is now the policy of the Planning Authority to prepare Framework Plans for these areas rather than Action Area Plans as indicated in the 2001 County Development Plan.

Use Zone Objective	Use Zone Objective
A1	To protect and enhance the amenity of developed residential communities.
A2	To provide for new residential communities and community facilities and protect the amenities of existing residential areas in accordance with an approved framework plan.
A3	To conserve and protect the character and setting of institutional complexes and heritage buildings in residential redevelopment and infill proposals in accordance with an approved framework plan.
A4	To provide for new residential communities with ancillary mixed uses to include community facilities, neighbourhood facilities and employment uses utilising higher densities in accordance with approved framework plan.
A5	To provide for low density residential development in accordance with approved framework plans and individual dwelling design.
B1	To protect and enhance the special physical and social character of existing town and village centres and to provide for new and improved town centre facilities and uses.
B2	To provide for major new town centre activities in accordance with approved action area plans and subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure.
B3	To protect, provide for and improve local and neighbourhood shopping facilities.
B4	To provide for the development of a retail warehouse park in accordance with an approved framework plan and subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure.
C1	To provide for and facilitate mixed residential and business uses in existing mixed use central business areas.
D1	To provide for visitor and tourist facilities and associated uses.
E1	To provide for industrial and related uses subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure.
E2	To provide for light industrial and industrial office type employment in a high quality campus environment subject to the requirements of approved action plans and the provision of necessary physical infrastructure.
E3	To provide for transport and related uses including the provision of park and ride facilities in association with proposed road or rail based rapid transit corridors.
F1	To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive

	recreational amenities
<b>G1</b>	To provide for necessary community, recreational and educational facilities.
<b>H1</b>	To protect the setting, character and environmental quality of areas of high natural beauty.

## 8 : Land Use Zoning Objectives

### Explanatory Notes

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

The **A2 and A4** zones are intended to be the main areas for new residential development. In the case of A4 zones, the layout of such schemes would be determined by the preparation of framework plans which will dispense with the field by field planning approach which has become common place throughout this county. It is envisaged however that before development should proceed in A4 zones which envisage higher residential densities, framework plans will be required to be carried out by the applicant under the Planning Authority's direction, to set an overall context for a given proposal. The requirements of a Framework Plan are outlined at the end of this Section. It is envisaged that in the interest of sustainability that the larger tracts of A2 and A4 zoned lands could accommodate ancillary uses such as employment generating uses, community facilities, local shopping facilities, etc. provided they are appropriate in scale and do not unduly interfere with the predominant residential land use.

In **A3 zones**, the Planning Authority will be particularly concerned with the conservation of heritage buildings whose setting and architectural qualities are such as to demand much sensitivity in reuse or adaptation to new purposes. Again it will be important that applications for proposals in such zones are determined in a framework plan context developed along the lines outlined in Chapter 10.

In **A5** zones where lower densities are envisaged, it will be encouraged that given development proposals will be set in a framework plan context, developed by the applicant under the direction of the Planning Authority with special cognisance being afforded to the setting and visual qualities of the subject lands.

In **B1, B2 and B3 zones**, it is intended to accommodate the majority of new commercial and retail uses in towns and villages. In particular, B2 zones have been identified to accommodate new retailing functions such as shopping centres and malls. B3 zones apply in some cases to new development areas where it is intended to secure the provision of local shopping facilities but not major centres.

The objective of **B4 zones** is to provide for the development of retail warehouse parks. These zones will also allow the displacement of motor car sales outlets from non compatible town centre and edge of town centre locations, subject to their suitable integration within an overall development proposal in the form of a Framework Plan. The preparation of the individual Local Area Plans shall ensure that suitable sites with good access to strategic transportation routes are identified commensurate with the needs of the settlement.

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

**D1 zones** have been identified to provide for tourism type uses such as accommodation, entertainment, and temporary accommodation in the vicinity of tourism areas such as the Royal Canal.

**E1 zones** provides for industrial and related uses subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure. They allow the full range of industrial processes to take place within a well designed and attractive setting that provide employment opportunities. Non industrial uses are limited to prevent land use conflicts.

**E2 zones** provides for light industrial and industrial office type development in a high quality campus environment subject to the requirements of approved framework plans addressing issues such as built form and general overall layout, transportation, integration with surrounding uses and the range of uses to be accommodated and the provision of necessary physical infrastructure.

The main difference between the two land use objectives relates to the nature of the manufacturing process whereby light industrial is defined in the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, as amended, as

*“the processes carried on or the plant or machinery installed are such as could be carried on or stalled in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.”*

The areas identified for E2 land use in the 2001 County Development Plan Written Statement and detailed Objectives for Towns and Villages were primarily new areas that had not been previously developed whereas the areas identified for E1 land use tended to be existing industrial estates or extensions to same.

It shall be the policy of Meath County Council to apply a more flexible approach to large scale office type development in excess of 200 sq. m. of gross floor area in significant areas (i.e. in excess of 3 hectares of land that is currently undeveloped) of E1 land use zoning objective under the following conditions:

- The preparation of a Framework Plan to ensure the provision of the necessary physical infrastructure, the appropriate density and design of layout and the interface between proposed uses and existing development;
- That all processes being operated in the vicinity of the site, similarly zoned E1, are classified as light industrial in nature, as defined in the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, as amended;
- That the site is located adjacent to a public transport corridor and is served by an adequate road network;
- That the application is accommodated by a viable mobility management plan which is to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority and provides for the achievement of acceptable modal shares for both public and private transport within an appropriate timeframe;

No office shall be permitted on E1 zoned lands where the primary use of the office (or service) are provided principally to visiting members of the public e.g. solicitors, health clinic, accountants, etc.

**E3 zones** have been identified for “park and ride” type facilities near existing and or future public transport corridors.

**F1, G1 and H1** zones are self-explanatory and relate to community and amenity uses or designations.

### **Framework Plans**

The preparation of Framework Plans will assist in achieving quality developments in terms of, inter alia, urban design, structure, delivery of community/amenity facilities and permeability. The Local Area Plans will identify large or key sites that will require the preparation of approved Framework Plans and subsequent planning applications will be required to adhere to the approved Plans. Having regard to the preparation and approval of future Framework Plans the Planning Authority considers that for proposals with a resultant population less than 2,000 persons the approval of the Executive of the Planning Authority will be required. Framework Plans with a resultant population greater than 2,000 persons will be subject to a public consultation process and the approval of the Elected Members of the Planning Authority. The use of Framework Plans has not been confined to residentially zoned lands; Framework Plans have also been sought for lands intended for other land uses. The Planning Authority considers Framework Plans as an effective means of guiding new development and providing essential social and infrastructure in a phased and sustainable manner.

Each Framework Plan shall consist of a written statement and a plan or series of plans indicating the objectives in such detail, as may determined by the Planning Authority for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which it applies to include, inter alia, the following details:

- Proposals in relation to the overall design of the proposed development including maximum heights, external finishes of structures and the general appearance and design, including that of the public realm.
- The types and extent of any proposed development indicating how these uses integrate with surrounding development and land uses.
- Proposals in relation to transportation including public transportation and non motorised modes, vehicular roads layout and access arrangements, loading / unloading provision, the provision of parking spaces and traffic management.
- Proposals in relation to the provision of services in the area including the provision of waste and sewerage facilities and water, electricity and telecommunications services, oil and gas pipelines, including storage facilities for oil and gas.
- The element of residential development shall include proposals relating to the provision of amenities, facilities and services for the community including crèches and other childcare services, community and resource centres.
- The facilitation of public access to the proposed amenity areas located within the Plan boundaries and beyond.
- To make provision for sport and recreational infrastructure commensurate with the needs of the development as an integral element of their proposals.

### **1.1.10 Zoning Matrix**

Uses other than the primary use for which an area is zoned may be permitted provided they are not in conflict with the primary use zoning objective. The Zoning Matrix illustrates the acceptability or unacceptability in principle of various uses for each of the zoning objectives. The land use zoning matrix is intended to provide guidance to potential developers. It is not intended to supplant the normal planning process. An indication that a proposal would be 'permitted in principle' from the matrix should in no way be taken to imply a granting of permission, or indeed that a planning application may be necessarily successful. Individual applications are a matter for the Planning Authority to decide and the final decision rests with them, taking into consideration the merits of individual cases and circumstances that may be relevant at a specific time or at a specific location. The matrix relates to land use only and important factors such as density, building height, design standards, traffic generation, etc., are also relevant in establishing whether or not a development proposal would be acceptable in a particular location.



**A = Will Normally be Acceptable**

A use which will normally be acceptable is one which the Planning Authority accepts in principle in the relevant zone. However, it is still subject to the normal planning process including policies and objectives outlined in the Plan.

**O = Are Open for Consideration**

A use which is open for consideration means that the use is generally acceptable except where indicated otherwise and where specific considerations associated with a given proposal (i.e. scale) would be unacceptable, or where the development would be contrary to the objective for a given area.

**X = Will Not Normally be Acceptable**

Development which is classified as not normally being acceptable in a particular zone is one which will not be entertained by the Planning Authority except in exceptional circumstances. This may be due to its perceived effect on existing and permitted uses, its incompatibility with the policies and objectives contained in this Plan or the fact that it may be inconsistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The expansion of established and approved uses not conforming to use zone objectives will be considered on their merits.

**Table 9: Zoning Matrix**

Use Classes	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	D1	E1	E2	E3	F1	G1	H1
A.T.M. (In Commercial Premises)	A	A	X	A	X	A	A	A	A	A	A	X	X	O	X	X	X
Abattoir	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X
Adverts	O	O	X	O	X	A	A	O	A	O	O	A	O	A	X	X	X
Outdoor Advertising Structures	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	X	A	O	X	O	X	X
Agri - Business	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	A	X	X	X	X	X
Amusement Arcade	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
B & B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	X	X	A	A	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bank / Financial Institution	X	O	X	O	X	A	A	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Betting Office	X	O	X	O	X	A	A	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bring Banks	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	O	A	O	A	O	O	X
Car Park (Commercial)	X	X	X	X	X	O	A	X	X	O	O	O	O	A	X	X	X
Caravan Park	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	A	X	X	X	O	X	X
Car Dismantler / Scrap Yard	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X
Cash & Carry	X	X	X	X	X	O	A	X	X	O	X	A	X	X	X	X	X
Casual Trading	X	X	X	X	X	A	A	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cemetery	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	A	X
Church	X	O	X	O	O	A	A	A	X	A	A	X	X	X	O	A	X
Cinema	X	X	X	X	X	A	A	X	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	A	X
Community Facility / Centre	O	A	O	A	O	A	A	A	X	A	A	X	X	X	O	A	O
Conference Centre	X	O	O	O	X	O	A	X	X	O	A	X	X	O	X	X	X
C & D Waste Recycling Centre	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X
Crèche / Childcare Facility	O	A	O	A	A	A	A	A	O	A	O	O	O	O	X	A	X
Cultural Facility / Use	O	O	O	O	O	A	A	O	X	A	A	X	X	X	O	A	X
Dance Hall / Night Club	X	X	O	X	X	A	A	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Doctors / Dentists	O	O	O	O	O	A	A	A	X	A	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Drive Through Restaurants	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Education	O	O	A	O	O	A	A	A	X	A	X	X	X	X	X	A	X
Energy Installation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	A	O	X	X	X	X
Enterprise Centre	X	O	X	O	X	O	O	X	X	O	X	A	A	X	X	X	X
Fuel Depot - Domestic	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	A	X	X	X	X	X
Fuel Depot - Petroleum	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	A	X	X	X	X	X

# Outline of Significance of Environmental Impacts

Use Classes	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	D1	E1	E2	E3	F1	G1	H1
Products																	
Funeral Home	X	O	X	O	X	A	A	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	A	X
Garden Centre	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	O	X	A	X	X	X	X	X
Guest House	O	A	A	A	O	A	A	X	X	A	A	X	X	X	X	X	X
Halting Site/Group Housing	O	A	O	A	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Health Centre	O	O	O	O	O	A	A	A	X	A	X	X	X	X	X	A	X
Heavy Goods Vehicle Car Park	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	A	X	O	X	X	X
Home Based Economic Activities	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hospital	X	O	O	O	O	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	X	X	X	A	X
Hostel	X	O	O	O	O	A	A	X	X	A	A	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hotel / Motel	X	O	A	O	X	A	A	X	X	A	A	X	X	X	X	X	X
Industry – General	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	A	O	O	X	X	X
Industry – Light	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	A	A	O	X	X	X
Leisure / Recreation	X	O	O	A	O	A	A	O	O	O	A	X	X	X	O	A	O
Library	X	A	O	A	O	A	A	A	X	A	A	X	X	X	X	A	X
Motor Sales / Repair	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	A	X	X	X	X	X
Offices <100m2	X	O	O	O	X	A	A	A	X	A	O	X	X	X	X	O	X
Offices 100 to 1000 m2	X	X	O	O	X	A	A	O	X	A	X	X	A	O	X	X	X
Offices >1000m2	X	X	X	O	X	A	A	O	X	A	X	O	A	O	X	X	X
Open Space	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	X	A	A	O	X	X	A	A	A
Park and Ride	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	A	A	A	X	X	X
Petrol Station	O	O	X	O	X	O	O	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Plant & Tool Hire	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	A	X	X	X	X	X
Public House	X	O	X	O	X	A	A	O	X	A	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public Services	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	X	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	X
Civic & Amenity Recycling Facility	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	A	O	X	X	A	X
Refuse Transfer Station	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	A	X	X	X	X	X
Residential	A	A	A	A	A	O	O	O	X	A	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Residential Institution	O	O	A	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Restaurant / Café	X	X	O	O	X	A	A	A	O	A	O	O	O	O	X	O	X
Retail Warehouse	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	A	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X
Retirement Home	O	A	O	A	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	A	X
Science & Technology Based Enterprise	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	O	X	O	A	O	X	X	X
Shop - Local **	O	A	O	A	X	A	A	A	X	A	O	O	O	O	X	X	X
Shop - Major	X	X	X	O	X	A	A	A	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shopping Centre	X	X	X	X	X	A	A	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sports Facilities	O	O	O	A	O	O	O	X	O	O	A	X	X	X	A	A	X
Take-Away	X	X	X	O	X	A	A	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Telecommunication Structures	X	X	X	X	X	A	A	O	A	O	O	A	A	A	O	O	X
Third Level Educational Institution	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	A	X
Tourism Complex	X	X	O	O	X	A	A	X	X	A	A	X	X	X	A	A	X
Transport Depot	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	A	X	O	X	X	X
Veterinary Surgery	O*	O*	X	O*	O*	A	A	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Warehouse	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	A	O	X	X	X	X
Water Services ***	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	O	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	O
Wholesale Warehousing	X	X	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	A	X	X	X	X	X

\* : Where this use would be ancillary to the use of the overall dwelling as a normal place of residence by the user of the office.

\*\* A local shop is defined as a convenience retail unit of not more than 200 square metres in gross floor area.

\*\*\* Refers to public utility installations.

## Measures Relating to Section 3 – Economic Development

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### Recommendation

Insert new Policy ED POL 10

'To facilitate economic development and growth of employment in the County through support for the implementation of objectives outlined in the Meath County Development Board Strategy 'Le Cheile' in co-operation with the relevant agencies.'

Neutral Interaction with SEOs; Neutral Interaction with the status of the environment

### Rural Enterprise

To amend Strategic Objective ECON DEVT SO 1 to;

'To prepare a Thematic Spatial Strategy for industrial development and enterprise which would identify and support the development of areas where significant clusters of power, roads, water and gas could be harnessed to become nationally important areas to accommodate very large scale value added employment while avoiding potential for future environmental and planning conflicts. This process will include the assessment of existing industrial/employment centres outside of established rural areas. In the first instance, the south east of the County will be examined.'

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

### Integrated Transport and Land Use Planning

To insert the following Policy into Section 3.1.6 Future Employment, Enterprise & Economic Strategy;

*'The preparation of Local Area Plans and Development Plans for centres located in Dynamic Clusters shall endeavour to match the different mobility needs of businesses with the accessibility of different locations by zoning appropriate lands for people intensive and product intensive uses. In identifying such locations, regard will be had to Table 12 'Matrix Assessing Economic Development Uses Against Location Criteria'.'*

Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [SEOs W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]

To insert the following Strategic Settlement Objective 'Settlement Strategy SO 2' into Section 2.1.7 County Meath Broad Settlement Structure;

*'To prepare an Integrated Development Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation for the Clonsilla to Pace Interchange corridor in conjunction with relevant public transportation bodies, the DoEHLG and Fingal County Council. The Integrated Framework Plan shall provide inter alia, the following:*

- i. The appropriate location for additional public transport nodes along the rail corridor;*
- ii. The development potential and appropriate land uses around these public transport nodes; Large trip generators such as major employers*

Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [SEOs W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]

### Development at Motorway Interchanges

#### Recommendation

To amend Section 3.1.8 Development at Motorway Interchanges in Chapter 3 Economic Development to include the revised objective INF OBJ 16 together with the assessment

criteria for the selection of possible Motorway Interchanges for development from Chapter 4 Infrastructure.

To amend Policy INF POL 25;

'To facilitate the provision of Motorway Service Stations at appropriate Interchange locations in the County, with the exception of the Blundelstown Interchange having regard to the exceptional value and sensitivity of the Landscape surrounding the Hill of Tara.'

Likely to significantly conflict with the status of the environment [SEOs B2, S2]

To revise Objective INF OBJ 16 to;

INF OBJ 16 To carry out an examination of land uses at existing and proposed Motorway Interchanges throughout the County with a view to guiding and managing their future development. In selecting possible Motorway Interchanges that have the capacity to accommodate appropriate levels of development, consideration will be given to;

- Proximity of the Interchange to existing development growth centres and the primacy of the development growth centre. It is not the intention of the Planning Authority to examine the development potential of Motorway Interchanges removed from development centres e.g. Blundelstown Interchange on the proposed M3. It is considered that such a pepper potting approach would be prejudicial to the proper planning and sustainable development of the County and adversely impact upon the viability, vitality and attractiveness of such centres;
- Economic Development Strategy
- Proper planning and sustainable development of the area
- Comments of the NRA

In this regard, the following Interchanges will be examined:

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 1. M1 Motorway | Gormonston / Stamullen<br>Drogheda (Donore & Duleek Rd.)      |
| 2. M3 Motorway | Pace Interchange (Dunboyne) &<br>Navan (Athboy Rd. & Kilcarn) |
| 3. M4 Motorway | Enfield, Kilcock, Kinnegad                                    |

Insert into Table 15

<i>Dynamic Cluster No. 3:</i>		<i>Ashbourne – Dunshaughlin - Ratoath</i>
<b>Objective:</b> To plan and provide a Strategy which would enable Ashbourne-Dunshaughlin-Ratoath enhance up its position as one of the county's key dynamic cluster.		
<b>Action</b>		<b><i>Mechanism for Delivery</i></b>
To carry out an examination of land uses at the existing Interchanges of Rath and Nine-Mile Stone with a view to guiding and managing their future development.		Local Area Plan process for the individual towns

## Retail

### Recommendation

It is recommended to amend the Meath County Retail Hierarchy to the following;

Meath County Retail Hierarchy		
	METROPOLITAN AREA	HINTERLAND AREA
LEVEL 2	Major Town Centre	County Town Centres
		Navan
LEVEL 3	Town and/or District Centres (1)	Sub-County Town Centre
		Ashbourne, Dunboyne, Kells and Trim (noting Drogheda and Kilcock Environs)*
LEVEL 4	Neighbourhood Centres	Local Centres – Small Towns and Villages
		<i>Tier 1 Small Town Centres:</i> Athboy, Bettystown, Duleek, Dunshaughlin, Enfield, Oldcastle and Ratoath
		<i>Tier 2 Village Centres</i> Ballivor, Clonee, Nobber, Laytown, Longwood, Slane, Stamullin and Summerhill
LEVEL 5	Corner Shops	Smaller Village Centres / Crossroads
		Smaller villages/crossroads – rural shops (post offices, creameries, public houses, petrol filling stations etc.)
*Drogheda is a Level 1 Tier 3 centre in the national retail hierarchy and Kilcock is a Level 3 centre in the GDA hierarchy. These designations are specific to the town centres and their roles but their environs will also be areas for retail development. Both are noted within the County Retail Hierarchy as parts of their environs are within the County's boundaries.		

Insert the following policy under the heading 'Improving Town Centres' (Page 76)

Through the Local Area Plan process it is the policy of the Council to promote the optimal development and future use of potential sites in town and village centres, especially redevelopment of brownfield sites or development comprising infill or backland development in an integrated and planned manner.

Neutral Interaction with SEOs; Neutral Interaction with the status of the environment, except with regard to SEO C1 (especially archaeology) which the policy has the potential to significantly adversely impact upon especially in heritage towns

To include the following policy in Section 3.2.5.1 Retail Parks & Retail warehouses:

*"Retail warehouse parks should be primarily, but not exclusively, for bulky goods retailing. In all instances, the sale of goods in a retail warehouse park shall be strictly limited to comparison goods and at least 85% of the retail offer shall consist of non durable bulky goods. Where an individual planning application for a retail warehouse park includes unit(s) other than non durable goods to a maximum of 15% of total gross floor area, it shall be accompanied by an assessment on the impact of the development on the vitality and viability of the town centre, in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines."*

### Major Accidents Directive

#### Recommendation

The Manager recommends a number of amendments to the text contained within Section 3.4 of the Plan to address the comments of the HSA and also the inclusion of additional Policy;

'To have regard to the advice of the Health and Safety Authority when proposals for new SEVESO sites are being considered.'

## Measures Relating to Section 4– Infrastructure

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### Sustainable Modes of Transport

#### Recommendation:

To include 2 additional Public Transport Policies as follows

*“To support the improvement of the existing Dublin – Drogheda rail service which serves the urban settlements of Laytown and Gormanston and to seek to have the proposed electrification of this rail line extends to Drogheda.”*

*“The Planning Authority shall ensure that the preparation of the revised Development Contribution Scheme adequately provides the needs of public transport. In particular, regard will be had to the provision of bus corridors and lanes, bus interchange facilities (including car parks for those facilities), infrastructure to facilitate public transport, cycle and pedestrian facilities and traffic calming measures commensurate with the needs of the County.”*

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

To revise the wording of Strategic Policy INFRA SP 9 as follows:

*“To support and facilitate the development and expansion of public transportation infrastructure in the county in consultation with Iarnrod Eireann, Bus Eireann and other public transport stakeholders. This shall have regard to the needs of the rural community to have improved access to public transportation facilities inclusive of public safety in accessing same.”*

To revise the wording of Public Transport Policy INF POL 9 to read as follows:

*“To co-operate with the Dublin Transportation Office, the Quality Bus Network Office, Bus Eireann, private operators and other appropriate transport bodies in the implementation of an agreed QBN programme and to provide an improved service delivery in the Meath area delivering more sustainable travel patterns at local and regional level.”*

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

### Roads Infrastructure

#### National Roads Authority

#### Recommendation

All references to the M2 Motorway within the Draft Development Plan shall be replaced with N2 as required. In particular:

Section 4.5, Pg 115

1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, delete reference to the “M2/N2” in Section 4.5 on line 2 and replace with “N2”.

3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph-2<sup>nd</sup> bullet point, delete reference to the “M2 Motorway (Ashbourne Bypass to M50 Junction - Ashbourne Bypass” and replace with “N2 Ashbourne Bypass to M50 Junction”

Section 4.5.1, Pg 118

Delete “M2 Motorway Ashbourne (Rath)” from the list of interchanges to be examined in terms of potential development.

Section 4.5.1, Pg 119

Update two estimated costs within the table included as part of INF OBJ 19-

Delete “€181 Million” for N2 Ashbourne-Finglas scheme and insert “€213.26 Million” and delete “€4 Million” for N51-Navan Inner Relief Road-Phase 2(b) and insert “€10.03 Million”.

Section 4.5.1, Pg 119

Insert footnote at bottom of table included under INF OBJ 19 which states *“The costs included in the table above are indeed estimates, and for those schemes currently in the planning stage the costs quoted should be taken as order of magnitude estimates only”*.

To revise INF OBJ 19 to read as follows

*“To facilitate and secure the provision of the following proposed national road schemes in Co. Meath.”*

To include a new objective immediately after INF OBJ 19 as follows :

*“To support major road improvements and proposed national road schemes by reserving the corridors of any such proposed routes free of developments, which would interfere with the provision of such proposals”.*

The list of schemes in the table following INF OBJ 19 on Page 119 shall be divided between the proposed INF OBJ 19 & INF OBJ 20.

It is recommended that an additional statement be included at the end of INF POL 28 as follows:

*“A Traffic Impact Assessment will be required as part of any development proposal which impacts on an existing junction of a National Route. Any additional works required as a result of the Transport Assessment shall be funded by the developer.”*

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

The following shall be provided immediately under the text of this policy :

*Transport Assessment shall be carried out to assess the predicted impacts of a development in accordance with the guidelines given in the joint DoEHLG / Dept. of Transport / DTO publication “Traffic Management Guidelines”, Section 1.11.*

With regard to safety audits, it is recommended that a new policy be included in Section 4.5 as follows:

*“Safety audits shall be carried out on “all road schemes on national roads” in accordance with the NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges : HD 19 Road Safety Audits & HA 42 Road Safety Audit Guidelines”.*

To amend INF POL 23 as follows

*“To safeguard the capacity and safety of National roads by restricting further access onto National Primary roads and National Secondary roads outside of restricted speed limits which correspond with identified development boundaries in line with National Roads Authority policy”.*

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that an addition be placed at the end of the first sentence in proposed SS POL 6 as follows *"and the identification of strategic infrastructure proposals"*.

Section 6.7.9, Pg 230

National Primary and National Secondary Routes

Delete

"National policy in relation to development involving access to National roads and development along such roads is set out in Development Management advice and Guidelines and Policy and Planning framework for Roads issued respectively in 1982 and 1985 by the department of the Environment. The policy is given practical expression in the Department's 1982 document which stipulates that"

and Insert

*"National policy in relation to development involving access to national roads and development along such roads is set out in the NRA document "Policy Statement on Development Management and Access to National Roads" published in May 2006 which states that"*

Development Assessment Criteria, Section 6.7.9, Pg 231

Under Part 2 National Planning Policies and Guidelines, all of the section under Development Assessment Criteria should now take cognizance of Part 2 of NRA document *"Policy Statement on Development Management and Access to National Roads"*.

Non National Roads, Section 6.7.9, Pg 230

This section should be titled "Strategic Corridors" and be identified on map (this should be intrinsically linked to Map 6.3) and move away from the actual classification of the road

Alterations to Map 6.3

- Full R154 to be included from Athboy to Oldcastle.
- The R160 finishes at Longwood and reverts to the CR550 thereafter.
- N52 shall continue to County boundary from Kells.

Rural Development, Technical Requirements, Section 6.7.10, Pg 232

Sight distances and Stopping Sight Distances

Delete

"In assessing individual planning applications for individual houses in the countryside, it is the policy of the Planning Authority to ensure that sight distances as set out below shall be provided at vehicular entrances at a point three metres in from the near edge of the carriageway as follows;

County Roads	90 metres
Regional Roads	180 metres
National Roads	230 metres

The above requirements relate to average conditions along a straight road. More stringent sight distances may be required in particular conditions. The 90 metres standard for County roads may be reduced to 60 metres on more minor County Roads at the discretion of the Planning Authority in areas of low traffic volumes and having regard to safety considerations".

and Insert



*"In assessing individual planning applications for individual houses in the countryside, it is the policy of the Planning Authority to ensure that the required standards for sight distances and stopping sight distances are in compliance with current road geometry standards as outlined in the NRA document Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) specifically Sections TD 41/95 and TD 9/00.*

#### **Car Parking Standards**

**Recommendation:**

Section 10.6, Pg 352,

To include an addendum within Section 10.6 of the Draft County Development Plan 2007-2013 stating that *"The above car parking standards shall be applied at the discretion of the Planning Authority in the County's rural towns and villages having regard to the availability and adequacy of on street parking, existing or proposed off street parking to serve the development and the status of the town/village within the settlement structure of Meath".*

Section 10.6, Pg 352,

That the non-residential standards are set down as "maxima" standards.

#### **Interim Water Services Arrangements**

**Recommendation:**

Pg-160-Section 4.10.7-last line-That the word "salmonoid" be omitted and replaced with the word "salmonid".

To amend Interim Arrangements in Section 4.6 Water Services – Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage to reflect the following;

The Planning Authority shall only consider such provision where capital funding to provide a permanent solution has been included in the Water Services Investment Programme or where the development is located in a settlement earmarked for significant population growth in the Settlement Strategy of this Development Plan subject to environmental considerations being respected.

This shall be reflected in the introduction to the section dealing with Interim Arrangements and the wordings of INF POL 38 and INF POL 41 shall be amended accordingly.

Uncertain Interaction with SEOs; Uncertain Interaction with the status of the environment

#### **Water Services**

**Recommendation:**

Section 4.6.5, Pg 138

To amend INF POL 44 as follows

*"To co-operate with adjoining Planning Authorities of Drogheda Borough Council, Louth County Council and Kildare County Council to increase the capacity of the Drogheda Wastewater Treatment and Kilcock Wastewater Treatment Plants to service the settlements in North-East Meath and in Kilcock in the immediate future, and, to jointly investigate proposals for the further upgrade/extension of the treatments plants to provide for a long-term solution for wastewater treatment in the north east region".*

It is necessary to revisit the proposed Water Services Strategy for the East & South East Region to reflect the proposed amendments contained in the Settlement Strategy. This may necessitate an amendment to the manner in which it is proposed to serve the centres of Ashbourne, Ratoath & Kilbride in the short to medium term.

It is necessary to update the context of Section 4.6.5 to reflect the points made in the Manager's Report.

## **Flood Protection**

### Recommendation

It is recommended to insert the following policy in relation to "Flood Protection"

*"Development should not itself be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding nor should it cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations. Development that is sensitive to the effects of flooding will generally not be permitted in flood prone or marginal areas."*

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

It is considered that the Development Assessment Criteria (Section 4.8.4) can be amended to include the recommendations of the OPW.

## Measures Relating to Section 5– Housing Strategy

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### Specific Housing Needs

#### Recommendation

To amend HS OBJ 1 as follows

*“To undertake an annual review of social housing waiting lists and engage in consultation with the Health Services Executive, local disability groups and organisations to ensure increased co-operation on the specific issue of housing provision and in supporting the needs of people with disabilities in line with the Sectoral Plan of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government as part of the National Disability Strategy.”*

It is also recommended that the Housing Strategy be amended to reflect the changes to the Settlement Strategy with regard to the household and populations projections. It is considered that such changes have no material impact on the affordability conclusions as contained in the Draft Development Plan.

## Measures Relating to Section 6 – Rural Development

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### Proposed Graigs & Preparation of Graig Design Statements

#### **Recommendation:**

The Manager proposes to amend the timeframe in which the Draft Development Plan commits the preparation of the Graig Design Statements after the coming into effect of the Plan from 'one' to 'two' years.

### Cushinstown / Kilmoon / Primatestown

#### **Recommendation**

That Cushinstown be excluded from the list of graigs identified in Appendix II.

### Dromone

#### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the status of Dromone as a 'Wet Graig' be retained.

### Extractive Industry & Building Materials Production

#### **Recommendation:**

That Map 6.1 & 6.4 in the Environmental Report pertaining to aggregate reserves be modified to take account of the reserves outlined above.

### Bloodstock Industry

#### **Recommendation**

To amend the text of the Draft Development Plan to afford the Bloodstock Industry the recognition it deserves.

To amend the high level objective for Ratoath contained in the Settlement Strategy of the Development Plan to make reference to the potential of further developing the Bloodstock Industry on the Fairhouse Road.

### Gaeltacht Areas

#### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the context provided in Section 6.7.5 be updated to reflect a number of points made by Údarás na Gaeltachta.

To include an additional policy as follows:

In the preparation of the Local Area Plans for Baile Ghib and Rathcairn, that the following fundamental principles should be taken on board:

- To recognise the economic, social and cultural importance of the Irish language in Gaeltacht life
- To recognise developments that could damage the use, visibility and status of the Irish language in Meath and to reduce/prevent their impact.
- To identify methods whereby the Irish language can be preserved;
- To plan an efficient system whereby the aspects of the Gaeltacht environment can be assessed and protected as part of the planning process, including the use of language conditions.

No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment

### Vernacular Rural Buildings and Replacement Dwellings

#### Recommendation:

To omit the following from the Development Assessment Criteria in Vernacular Rural Buildings and Replacement Dwellings

*“Where an applicant can demonstrate that their proposals ensure the sensitive restoration of vernacular and traditional buildings in the rural area, such proposals shall not be subject to the Rural Housing Policy (i.e. local need) that applies to new dwellings.”*

and propose the following amendment to RD POL 45 in this section

RD POL 45      That in respect to the sensitive restoration and conversion to residential use of disused vernacular or traditional dwellings or traditional farm buildings, including those which are Protected Structures, such proposals shall not be subject to the Rural Housing Policy (i.e. local need) that applies to new dwellings.

### Rural Settlement Strategy

#### Recommendation:

It is necessary to amend a number of policies and objectives in the Rural Development Strategy to reflect proposed amendments in the Settlement Strategy.

#### Areas Under Strong Urban Influence

RD OBJ 10	To facilitate the availability of an appropriate level of housing options in <b>Small Growth Towns</b> , on appropriately zoned lands, for persons from the adjoining rural catchment area or from the town or village itself or those who virtue of their employment require to live in the urban centre. In this regard, at least 50% of all housing options in multiple housing schemes (being developments of 4 houses or more) in Small Growth Towns shall be reserved for persons from the adjoining catchment. The Small Growth Towns are Athboy, Enfield, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, Duleek, Stamullen & Laytown – Bettystown – Mornington East. The adjoining Rural Catchment Area is 10km from the respective settlement or from the parish within which the settlement is located. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.
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No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment

RD OBJ (New)	To facilitate the availability of all housing options in the <b>Key Villages and Villages</b> , on appropriately zoned lands, for persons from the adjoining rural catchment area or from the town or village itself. In this regard, all housing options in multiple housing schemes (being developments of 4 houses or more) in Key Villages and Villages shall be reserved for persons from the adjoining catchment. The Key Villages and Villages in this regard are Longwood, Summerhill, Gormonston, Julianstown, Mornington / Donacarney, Donore, Kilmessan, and Kilbride. The adjoining Rural Catchment Area is 10km from the respective settlement or from the parish within which the settlement is located. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.
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No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment

#### Strong Urban Areas

RD OBJ 11	To facilitate the availability of all housing options in the <b>Key Villages and Villages</b> , on appropriately zoned lands, for persons from the adjoining rural catchment area or from the town or village itself. In this regard, all housing options in multiple housing schemes (being developments of 4 houses or more) in Key Villages and Villages shall be reserved for persons from the adjoining catchment. The Key Villages and Villages in this regard are Slane, Rathmolyon, Ballivor, Clonard, Kildalkey and Drumcondrath. The adjoining Rural Catchment Area is 10km from the respective settlement or from the parish within which the settlement is located. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.
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No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment

#### Low Development Pressure Areas

RD OBJ 14	To facilitate the availability of an appropriate level (not less than 50%) of housing options in smaller villages, on appropriately zoned lands, for persons from the adjoining rural catchment area. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for. Smaller villages in this regard are Nobber, Carlanstown, Moynalty, Kilmainhamwood and Crossakiel. The adjoining Rural Catchment Area is 10km from the respective settlement or from the parish within which the settlement is located. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.
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No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment

To insert the following in **Low Development Pressure Areas**

#### Development Assessment Criteria

The considerations outlined above in **Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence** in assessing individual proposals for one off rural housing will also apply to this area type.

## Measures Relating to Section 7 – Social Strategy

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### Disability Policy

#### **Recommendation:**

To include the paragraph below in Section 7.4.7 Persons with a Disability.

"Meath County Council is committed to supporting the National Disability Strategy. All efforts will be made to ensure that access and other needs for disabled people will be considered in all aspects of planning and implementation under this County Development Plan. Meath County Council commit to ensuring that no action under this plan will create barriers for disabled people and all reasonable efforts will be made to remove such barriers where the creation of such barriers were the responsibility of the Council. Meath County Council are committed to promote and pursue best practice in relation to design for all within all areas of Meath County Council's responsibility".

To amend SOC POL 13 to refer also to the "National Disability Strategy".

To include the following sentence at the end of the fourth paragraph on Page 250

"In the regard, the Meath Access Committee has been re-established as per the recommendation of the Social, Community & Cultural Strategic Policy Committee of Meath County Council."

### Community Infrastructure in County Meath:

#### **Recommendation:**

Section 7.4, Pg 242, to amend Goal as follows

"To provide for the future well being of the residents of the county ensuring the provision of necessary services and facilities by means of consultation through available fora".

Section 7.4.1, Pg 246, At end of last paragraph that the following be included

"The next planned review of the County Development Board Strategy will result in the production of an Action Plan to cover the period 2009-2012".

Section 7.4.8, Pg 251, that a 4<sup>th</sup> and new paragraph be introduced as follows

"There is a process presently underway to adopt an inter-agency strategy for the delivery of services and supports to the Traveller Community and the Draft Plan will support any actions or core objectives that will emanate from this process".

### Youth Facilities

#### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that SOC OBJ 3 be amended to include *"provision of youth clubs / cafés and other facilities for younger people."*

### Educational Facilities

#### **Recommendation:**

To insert the following Objective

*"SOC OBJ To facilitate the development of post primary and Post Leaving Certificate educational facilities in the County by reserving adequate lands in the relevant Local Area Plan for the establishment of the requisite facilities in Dunboyne, Clonee, Longwood, Enfield & Drogheda Environs."*

Section 7.5.6, Pg 259, To amend SOC POL 16 as follows

*"To facilitate the development of primary, post-primary, third level, outreach, research, adult and further educational facilities to meet the needs of the County"*

### **Childcare Facilities**

#### **Recommendation:**

Section 7.6, Pg 261, to amend SOC POL 22 as follows

*"To ensure the provision of quality affordable childcare throughout the County in consultation with the Meath County Childcare Committee in the implementation of the Meath County Childcare Committee Plan 2006 – 2010 and subsequent plans, the County Development Board and the Health Services Executive, North East".*

Section 7.6, Pg 261, That the following sentence be added to the end of SOC POL 24 as follows

*"To encourage the provision of childcare facilities in tandem with proposals for new residential developments. Generally, one childcare facility with places for 20 children shall be provided for each 75 family dwellings. The Planning Authority will encourage developers of new residential developments to consult with MCCC on how best to meet the childcare needs of that area".*

To amend the context provided in Section 7.6 having regard to the information submitted by the Meath County Childcare Committee.

### **Sporting, Leisure & Recreation Facilities**

#### **Recommendation:**

To include specific reference to the role of angling in passive recreation.

### **Rapid & CLAR Programmes**

#### **Recommendation:**

Section 7.4.12, Pg 254

To amend SOC POL 12 as follows

*"To encourage and promote the renewal of disadvantaged areas, with specific reference to the principle of targeting investment in disadvantaged areas through the implementation of commitments outlined in the RAPID programme for Navan, the CLAR programme for the north west Meath Electoral Divisions, and the utilisation of the Council's Development Contributions Scheme to form a basis for the improvement of existing community and recreational facilities and the funding of new facilities in disadvantaged areas. In this regard, to also promote of the County wide Local Development Social Inclusion Programme and the National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, both delivered through Meath Partnership".*



## Measures Relating to Section 8 – Cultural, Heritage and Landscape Protection

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### Recommendation

Amend the following Policies;

HER POL 63 'To employ the full extent of the statutory provisions of the Planning & Development Acts and Regulations and all other relevant legislation including the National Monuments Act to ensure the sustained protection of landscapes of exceptional value and sensitivity and in particular to protect the rural character, setting, amenity and archaeological heritage of Brú na Bóinne and the Hill of Tara, and of the surrounding areas including the area in the vicinity of the proposed M3 motorway and its related interchanges.'

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

HER POL 53 'To protect archaeological sites, monuments (including their setting), underwater archaeology and peatlands, and objects within the jurisdiction of Meath County Council, including those that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places or newly discovered sub-surface archaeological remains.'

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

HER POL 18 'To ensure that peatland areas which are designated (or proposed for designation) as NHAs or SACs are conserved and managed appropriately to conserve their ecological, archaeological, cultural and educational significance.'

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

HER POL 55 'To ensure that all development proposals affecting sites specified in the Record of Monuments and Places or Zones of Archaeological Potential are referred to the Prescribed Bodies (as set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000) and to have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Prescribed Bodies in relation to undertaking, approving or authorising development.'

HER POL 58 'To seek the preservation in situ (or at a minimum, preservation by record) of all archaeological sites or objects and their settings.'

This is unreasonable replace with

HER POL 58 'To seek the preservation in situ (or at a minimum, preservation by record) of all **designated** archaeological sites or objects and their settings.'

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

HER POL 19 'Further to the designation of sites of geological and geomorphological interest within the County, it is the policy of the Council to protect and conserve such sites from inappropriate development that would detract from their heritage value and interpretation.'

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

HER POL 20 'To ensure that where development is permitted, its effect on future designated sites of geological and geomorphological interest is minimised through appropriate conditions and retention of a buffer zone.'

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

Insert new policy into Section 8.2.11 Hedgerows

'To recognise the archaeological importance of townland boundaries including hedgerows and promote their protection and retention.'

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

Insert the following paragraph into Section 8.3.2 Archaeological Heritage

'All excavation, digging, ploughing or disturbance of the ground in proximity to National Monuments in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government or of the local authority requires the consent in writing of the Minister (Section 14 as substituted by Section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004).'

Amend Section 8.3.2 Archaeological Heritage : Development Assessment Criteria

'Seek archaeological impact assessments as part of the planning submission when a proposed development could affect a Recorded Monument, a Zone of Archaeological Potential, or as yet unidentified element of archaeological heritage, or their setting.'

'Ensure that a suitably qualified archaeologist carries out all archaeological works required when permission is granted for development that require mitigation of impacts on the archaeological heritage.'

## Public Rights of Way

### Recommendation

To amend the following policy;

POL HER 36: 'To preserve and protect for the common good all existing public rights of way in the interests of amenity.'

## The Coast

### Recommendation

Insert new policy;

It is the policy of the Council to maintain its beaches along the East Coast to a high standard and develop recreational potential as a seaside amenity in co-operation with the relevant agencies, in order to bring them to a Blue Flag standard.

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

## Draft Landscape Character Types and Areas and Protected Views

### Recommendation

Revise the boundaries of the Boyne Valley LCA and associated boundaries to include the World Heritage Site in its entirety. Consequently, all maps contained within the Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix VI) will be amended.

No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment

Add additional information to page three of the LCA describing the meaning of designations of International, National, Regional and Local Importance.

To provide an additional map within the Book of Maps accompanying Volume 1 showing existing views and prospects contained within the 2001 County Development Plan together with a list of those views and prospects.

No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment

To include a new Policy in Section 8.4.2

'To protect from inappropriate development the views identified on the Landscape Character Map 05: Visual Amenity, and the views and prospects as indicated on Map X (to be included as an amendment) and listed below:'

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

### **Tara-Skyrne (including Blundelstown Interchange)**

#### **Recommendation**

To amend the first paragraph in Section 8.4.4 Heritage Landscapes to read as follows:

'Areas which are of exceptional value and of international importance, such as the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site are highly sensitive to development and thus must be afforded particular protection. The Council, will over the life of the plan, move towards the preparation of a Local Area Plan in respect of areas surrounding and influencing (a) the World Heritage site of the Brú na Bóinne complex and will explore the designation of Landscape Conservation Area(s), pursuant to Section 204 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000, in respect of their core areas for (a) the Tara and Skreen area(s) and (b) Loughcrew and Slieve na Calliagh Hills.'

To amend the Landscape Character Area 12 Tara – Skyrne Hills to read Landscape Importance: 'International'.

To amend Policy HER POL 63 to read;

'To employ the full extent of the statutory provisions of the Planning & Development Acts and Regulations and all other relevant legislation (including the National Monuments Act) to ensure the sustained protection of landscapes of exceptional value and sensitivity and in particular to protect the rural character, setting, amenity and archaeological heritage of Brú na Bóinne and the Hill of Tara, and of the surrounding areas including the area in the vicinity of the proposed M3 motorway and its related interchanges.'

Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment

To amend Policy INF POL 25;

'To facilitate the provision of Motorway Service Stations at appropriate Interchange locations in the County, with the exception of the Blundelstown Interchange having regard to the exceptional value and sensitivity of the Landscape surrounding the Hill of Tara.'

Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [SEO's B2, S2]

### **Brú na Bóinne**

#### **Recommendation**

To amend Policy HER POL 65 to the following;

'Pending the preparation of the LAP (see objective HER OBJ 10), it shall be the express policy within the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site, as shown on Map No. 8.4 to permit individual housing only to those involved locally in full time agriculture and who do not own land outside of the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site and that in addition to satisfying a clear agricultural housing need, such development is also subject to the Development Assessment Criteria set out in Volume 1, Chapter 8, Section 3.3.2 and elsewhere in the Development Plan.'

Amend Development Assessment Criteria contained in Section 8.3.3.2 to the following;

- There should be no inter-visibility between the development sites and the National Monuments of Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth, up to and including apex of roof level, and minimisation of inter-visibility between the development site and the other National Monuments sites;

- Existing protected views shall be retained;
- Development must not negatively affect the amenity, views, and landscape setting of the National Monuments, i.e. protecting all of the above;
- Extensive screen planting which would alter the landscape setting of the National Monuments will not in itself be considered as adequate mitigation;
- Development that would give rise to or exacerbate inappropriate clustering or ribbon development will not be permitted.

Insert the following paragraph on exempted development under Development Assessment Criteria

Exempted development is subject to restrictions in certain circumstances, For example, exemption does not apply to development which would interfere with sites, features or views listed for protection in the Meath County Development Plan. Please refer to the Development and Planning Regulations 2001, Part 2 'Exempted Development' in particular Article 9(1)(a) parts (i), (vi), and (vii).

To add statement after Strategic Policy RUR DEV SP 1 to indicate that an assessment of individual rural development proposals including one-off houses shall have regard to other policies and objectives in this Development Plan, and in particular Section 8.3.3 Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site.

### **Architectural Conservation Areas**

#### **Recommendation**

To amend HER OBJ 18 & Maps 8.1 Associated with the Draft Plan to designate the following list of locations as ACA's and to ensure that a character appraisal for each is contained in Appendix III.

HER OBJ 18 To designate the Architectural Conservation Areas listed below and to carry out ongoing assessment and appraisal of existing and proposed ACAs during the lifetime of the Plan:

- i.) Kilmessan
- ii.) Slane
- iii.) Julianstown
- iv.) Longwood
- v.) Summerhill
- vi.) Athboy
- vii.) Moynalty
- viii.) Oldcastle
- ix.) Dunboyne
- x.) Slane Mill Complex
- xi.) .Demesnes – Ardbraccan, Dunsany Castle, Headfort, Oldbridge Estate, Slane Castle, Sommerville & Stackallen.

### **Inaccuracies in relation to Designated Sites**

#### **Response and Recommendation**

The Council shall liaise with National Parks and Wildlife Service to correct any inaccuracies and provide up to date lists of SAC's, SPA's and pNHA's for inclusion in the Development Plan.

Amend Map no.8.4 outlining the entire boundary of the Core Area of the World Heritage Site with the yellow line.

## Measures Relating to Section 10 –Development Management Guidelines and Strategies

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### Development Management Siting and Design Standards:

#### Recommendation:

To delete the density Policy in Section 10 **Development Management Guidelines & Standards** and to include the following policy in the Settlement Strategy

*“The Planning Authority is committed to the promotion of higher densities in suitable locations in accordance with the Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities. In respect of large growth towns, moderate growth towns and small growth towns which are located on well established, existing or proposed public transport routes or nodes with additional capacity, it shall therefore be the policy of Meath County Council, subject to good design and in the absence of onerous site constraints, to facilitate residential densities in excess of 35 residential units per hectare, particularly in town centre locations. In all other instances, in the county's smaller towns and villages, maximum densities of 35 per hectare shall be applicable, and in general densities and house types shall be compatible with established densities and housing character in the area.”*

Section 10.1.3(iii) Pg 339

That the sentence at the end of this point which states “Parking should generally be off the carriageway, principally within the curtilage of each house” be removed.

To include the **Building Height Control** section contained in the Manager's Response in Section 10 **Development Management Guidelines & Standards**.

### Enforcement

#### Recommendation:

That a paragraph be included within Chapter 10 of the Draft Plan informing the public of the existence of the Planning Compliance and Enforcement section and that prosecutions can be taken against those who contravene the planning laws.

# OUTLINE OF SIGNIFICANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

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OF RELEVANT MEASURES IN THE  
**MANAGER'S REPORT TO MEMBERS ON SUBMISSIONS**

AND IN THE ACCEPTED

## NOTICES OF MOTION

IN RELATION TO THE

**DRAFT MEATH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
2007 - 2013**

**For: Meath County Council**

County Hall  
Navan  
County Meath



**By: CAAS (Environmental Services) Limited**

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**JANUARY 2007**

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## Introduction

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### Introduction and Terms of Reference

This report outlines the environmental impact of changes to the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2005 to 2011 which have been identified as being material alterations from an environmental perspective within the scope of the Draft County Development Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment. These changes, which are a result of recommendations in the Manager's Report as well as accepted notices of motion, are evaluated against the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) shown on Table 1 which were developed for the County Development Plan SEA.

### Evaluation

SEOs are methodological measures against which the environmental effects of the plan can be tested. If complied with in full, SEOs would result in an environmentally neutral impact from implementation of the plan. The SEOs are set out under a range of topics and are used as standards against which the development strategies, policies and objectives of the plan can be evaluated in order to help identify areas in which significant adverse impacts are likely to occur, if unmitigated against. SEOs are distinct from the objectives of the plan - although they will often overlap - and are developed from international, national and county policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives. Such policy includes that of various European Directives which have been transposed into Irish law, relevant other Irish environmental legislation together with the RPGs.

The evaluation of the relevant changes in the sections below is shown in orange coloured font with references such as B3 relating to SEOs detailed in Table 1 overleaf.

### Mitigation

Adverse impacts which could potentially arise as a result of implementation of the County Development Plan are to be mitigated against as suggested by the SEA Environmental Report by the preparation of spatial strategies which will identify in detail the location, significance and sensitivity of the range of environmental assets and constraints that occur within particularly sensitive areas that are likely to be subject to higher than average intensities of development. These areas include:

- Navan
- Trim
- Kells
- Dynamic Clusters 2 & 3 - Area including Dunboyne / Clonee, Dunshaughlin, Ashbourne & Ratoath
- Boyne Valley Area - area including Slane, Duleek, Donore, Drogheda and the East Meath urban centres
- Oldcastle / Loughcrew / Slieve na Calliagh

In addition to these six specific areas mitigation will be provided by the preparation and assessment of Thematic Spatial Strategies for:

- Rural Development and Agricultural Restructuring
- Industry and Enterprise
- Forestry
- Infrastructure



<b>SEO Reference</b>	<b>SEO Description</b>
W1 (Water)	Maintain water abstraction, run-off and recharge within carrying capacity (including future capacity)
W2 (Water)	Reduce progressively discharges of polluting substances to waters
W3 (Water)	Mitigate the effects of floods and droughts including vulnerability to climate change. (extreme weather, sea level rise, coastal erosion) <sup>1</sup>
W4 (Water)	Promote sustainable water use based on a long term projection of available water resources.
C1 (Cultural Heritage)	Promote the identification, protection and conservation of the cultural, including architectural and archaeological, heritage.
L1 (Landscape)	Conserve and enhance valued natural, historic and cultural landscapes and features within them
B1 (Biodiversity)	Avoid damage by development to designated wildlife sites and protected species.
B2 (Biodiversity)	Conserve the diversity of habitats avoiding irreversible losses
B3 (Biodiversity)	Ensure that any development promotes sustainable management of key wildlife sites and the ecological processes upon which they depend
B4 (Biodiversity)	Protect aquatic ecosystems including the marine environment, and terrestrial ecosystems which are interdependent (promote integrated management strategies)
B5 (Biodiversity)	Provide opportunities for sustainable public access to wildlife and wild places
S1 (Soil)	Maintain the quality of soil.
S2 (Soil)	Maximise the sustainable re-use of brownfield lands, and maximise the use of the existing built environment rather than developing greenfield lands
S3 (Soil)	Minimise the consumption of non-renewable sand, gravel, rock and peat deposits
S4 (Soil)	Minimise the amount of waste to landfill
P1 (Population and Human Health)	Improve people's quality of life based on high-quality residential, working and recreational environments, on sustainable travel patterns at all stages of life.
P2 (Population and Human Health)	Minimise noise and vibration from traffic, industrial processes and extractive industry
A1 (Air & Climate)	Reduce all forms of air pollution
A2 (Air & Climate)	Reduce waste of energy, and maximise use of renewable energy sources
A3 (Air & Climate)	Reduce progressively discharges of polluting substances to air Including greenhouse gases
A4 (Air & Climate)	Reduce the need to travel
M1 (Material Assets)	Maintain the quality of and access to assets such as aquifers, aggregates, ports, motorways, and all physical and social infrastructure.

**Table 1 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs)**

## Main Issues

Significant issues from an environmental perspective in relation to the changes are detailed below.

- In order to accommodate recent and future growth programmes of waste water treatment plants and networks, water supply infrastructure, transport infrastructure and powerlines etc need to be implemented. These programmes are likely to have significant adverse impacts on the environment if unmitigated against. These programmes would require environmental assessments to be carried out on them in order to prevent such impacts.
- Increases in population exceeded 2010 targets set out for the County in the Regional Planning Guidelines in 2006. As forward planning in Meath has had regard to the RPG targets it is likely that there has been a deficit of land zoned to accommodate the increasing population and that growth has occurred in areas not identified as having environments which are compatible to such land uses. As there is likely to be further increases in population over the coming years, there is a need to zone sufficient amounts of land in order to ensure that growth is directed towards the most compatible environments.
- Encouraging and facilitating the accommodation of growth on brownfield sites will contribute to mitigating a number of the adverse impacts associated with greenfield development, however, brownfield development has the potential to significantly adversely impact upon cultural heritage – both archaeological and architectural - if unmitigated against. These impacts are most likely in heritage towns such as Kells and Maynooth.
- Any diluting of proposed demand management techniques that seek to restrict those who can reside in smaller towns and villages to persons from a local catchment areas or working locally would be likely to have adverse impacts on: reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions; reducing the need to travel and; improving people's quality of life with regard to sustainable travel patterns.
- Upgrading of settlements to higher hierarchical levels and the allocation of increase housing allocations to certain settlements in the absence of appropriate waste water infrastructure would have the potential to adversely and significantly impact upon flora & fauna, biodiversity and water quality.

## Manager's Report Section 2 Settlement Strategy

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### County Meath Broad Settlement Structure

#### Criteria Determining the Release of Residential Land

In the case of the Heritage Towns of Kells and Trim, Small Growth Towns, Key Villages and Villages, the release and development of residential lands shall be linked to;

- the provision of necessary physical infrastructure, primarily the availability, in advance of development occurring, of capacity in water and wastewater infrastructure. The environment must be capable of absorbing the scale and quantum of development that is envisaged.

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

*However any programme for providing waste water treatment plants, sewerage treatment systems, water supply, road extensions, powerlines etc would have the potential to significantly, adversely impact upon the environment and SEOs.*

- spare capacity in existing (and planned) social infrastructure, primarily national and second level educational facilities. The future planning of the Department of Education and Science of national and second level educational facilities shall also be taken into account. The development of additional residential lands shall leverage the necessary recreational and amenity infrastructure commensurate with the needs of the resident population. The proposed scale and quantum of development must reinforce the integrity and vitality of the local community and services that can be provided.

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

- a more sustainable economic base whereby a greater percentage of local persons are employed locally. This will require closer liaison between the County Enterprise Board, County Development Board, Economic Development & Promotion Officer and the Planning Department;

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

- the efficient use of land by consolidating existing settlements, focusing in particular on development capacity within central urban areas through the re-use of under utilised lands and buildings as a priority, rather than extending green field development. This should also ensure that development is concentrated in location where it is possible to integrate employment, community services, retailing and public transport. The order of priority for the release of residentially zoned land shall attempt to ensure that there is a sequential approach which de-prioritises outer suburban greenfield sites.

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [C1 - archaeological and other cultural heritage impacts], especially in Heritage Towns*

## High Level Development Objectives for Towns & Villages

### 1. Strategic Development Centres

#### Navan, Drogheda Environs and Clonsilla – Dunboyne – Pace rail corridor

The allocation of future household and population growth will be channelled first and foremost to Navan, Drogheda and Clonsilla / Dunboyne / Pace rail corridor. The majority of the projected additional population and households will be allocated to these identified strategic centres. This will necessitate the prioritisation of the preparation of the Local Area Plans for these centres by the Planning Authority to ensure that there are no restrictions in place which is adversely affecting the release and development of these strategic residential landbanks. The preparation of these LAPs must ensure that employment generating uses and the requisite social and physical infrastructure are included and developed contemporaneously with residential development. The Planning Authority will prioritise the provision of key physical and social infrastructure in these centres to ensure that all necessary infrastructure is in place contemporaneously with the needs of the resultant residential communities.

*Pace concept should undergo SEA*

#### Thematic Spatial Strategies

### Moderate Growth Towns in the Metropolitan Area

#### Maynooth and Kilcock Environs

The environs of Maynooth and Kilcock, both located in Co. Meath, are located within a Primary Dynamic Cluster in the Metropolitan Area.<sup>2</sup> A Local Area Plan was prepared and adopted by this Planning Authority for Kilcock Environs subsequent to the adoption of the 2001 County Development Plan. Kildare County Council have not facilitated the development of these residential lands to date due to their lack of water services capacity. These deficiencies are expected to be rectified by 2008 – 2009 and the Council is grateful to the assistance of Kildare County Council in their progress on these schemes. The application of the sequential approach to development, and in particular residential development, would appear to be ignored by Kildare County Council in the case of Kilcock as lands adjoining the Square, located in Co. Meath, remain undeveloped. It is an objective of the Development Plan to seek to advance the preparation of joint Local Area Plans for both Kilcock and Maynooth, inclusive of the areas located in Co. Meath rather than to prepare Local Area plans only for the Environs Areas. Meath County Council will reserve the right to approach the DoEHLG to facilitate the joint preparation of Local Area Plans for both settlements in accordance with Section 18 (2). The development of the environs of both towns must be on a balanced and sustainable basis whereby residential development is matched by the delivery of key physical and social infrastructure and a strong economic base.

*Note that Maynooth is a heritage town and there could be potential impacts upon cultural heritage*

### Strategic Settlement Policy

Settlement Strategy SP1	The Council will implement the Settlement Strategy of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area by concentrating residential development first and foremost into the designated centres of Navan, Drogheda and the Dunboyne / Pace Rail Corridor. These centres shall accommodate the majority of
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	Meath's share of the Mid Eastern regional residential growth over the life of this Development Plan and beyond.
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*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]*

Settlement Strategy SP2	To ensure that all of the Large Growth Towns and Moderate Growth Towns will in so far as practical be self sufficient incorporating employment activities, sufficient retail services and social and community facilities. Residential development will only be permitted if sufficient progress is made in providing employment, retail, social and community facilities within the settlement. The Planning Authority shall agree a series of monitoring measures in this regard within 6 months of the adoption of this Development Plan. The Council will give consideration to the capacity of existing appropriately zoned, serviceable and undeveloped land to deliver sustainable mixed use communities in advance of zoning previously unzoned greenfield land for new development.
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*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, C1 (especially in heritage towns), S1, S2, A4, M1]*

Settlement Strategy SP3	In all small growth towns, 50% of all new multi-house developments, being developments in excess of 4 houses, shall be reserved for persons who are first time owners in the area who are native to the area (being persons who can prove they have lived within 10km of the area for at least 5 consecutive years of their lives) or those who by virtue of their employment require to live in the urban centre. This will ensure that the development of Small Growth Towns is more closely linked to local rather than to regional residential growth. The Small Growth Towns are Athboy, Enfield, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, Duleek, Stamullen & Laytown – Bettystown – Mornington East. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.
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*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

Settlement Strategy SP4	In all key villages and villages, all new multi-house developments, being developments in excess of 4 houses, shall be subject to compliance with a set percentage being reserved for persons who are first time owners in the area who are native to the area (being persons who can prove they have lived within 10km of the area for at least 5 consecutive years of their lives) or those who by virtue of their employment
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require to live in the urban centre. This will ensure that all multiple house developments shall be provided for local growth only in accordance with the recommendations of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. The Rural Strategy (Section 7) specifies the percentage ranging from 50 – 100 % which must be reserved for local persons depending on the Rural Area Type in which the centre is located. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

#### Settlement Strategy SP5

Having regard to the amount of existing residentially zoned land, the annual construction of over 3,500 housing units and the inadequacies of basic infrastructure such as water, sewerage, roads, transport, communications, etc., only limited and strategic additional residential land use zoning shall be agreed for the life of this development plan. The location of these strategic additional residential lands shall comply with the Settlement Strategy contained in this Development Plan and to the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. "Limited" shall be defined as areas, either individually or cumulatively, less than 10 hectares for any one centre. "Strategic" shall be defined as the Large Growth Towns of Navan and Drogheda and the Metropolitan Area Moderate Growth Town of Dunboyne and Maynooth, the Hinterland Area Moderate Growth Town of Ashbourne and the Small Growth Town of Enfield.

*Neutral Interaction with SEOs; Neutral Interaction with the status of the environment*

#### Settlement Strategy SP6

The household and population distribution shown on Table 6 will have to reviewed firstly in the context of the detailed results of the 2006 Census of Population (the definitive population results, based on the scanned Census Forms, will be released between April and December 2007) and thereafter on regular assessments on housing development activity across the County as carried out by the Planning Department. The distribution may change in light of such review and the availability and / or planned provision of concurrent necessary physical and social services required to facilitate the scale and quantum of residential development indicated in Table 6. The amendment of the household and population distribution shown on Table 5 and / or Table 6 will require a Variation to the County Development Plan.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

## Strategic Settlement Objectives

Settlement Strategy SO 1	<p>The Planning Authority shall, within 6 months of the County Development Plan coming into effect, revisit all existing residentially zoned lands in the County as contained in Volume II of the Draft Development Plan 2007 – 2013. The Planning Authority shall identify and adopt an order of priority for the release of existing residentially zoned lands (i.e. phasing) that shall conform to the scale and quantum of development indicated in Table 5 and Table 6. The release of these existing residentially zoned lands shall be on the basis of the Criteria Determining the Release of Residential Lands outlined in Section **. This shall also apply to the preparation of the new Kells &amp; Trim Development Plans. This exercise shall not apply to Navan, Dunboyne / Clonee &amp; Ashbourne having regard to the preparation of Local Area Plans / Framework Plans which provides for the phasing of the residential landbank and by virtue of the limited remaining uncommitted residential landbank in Ashbourne.</p>
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*Uncertain Interaction with SEOs; Uncertain Interaction with the status of the environment*

Strategic Settlement SO 2.	<p>To prepare an Integrated Development Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation <b>and associated Environmental Assessment</b> for the Clonsilla to Pace Interchange corridor in conjunction with relevant public transportation bodies, the DoEHLG and Fingal County Council. The Integrated Framework Plan shall provide inter alia, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) The appropriate location for additional public transport nodes along the rail corridor;</li> <li>ii) The development potential and appropriate land uses around these public transport nodes; Large trip generators such as major employers or town / district centres should be located near the intersection of transportation corridors.</li> <li>iii) The location, significance and sensitivity of the range of environmental assets and constraints that occur within this corridor.</li> <li>iv) In relation to industrial and enterprise development, to identify and support the development of areas where significant clusters of power, roads, water and gas could be harnessed to become nationally important areas to accommodate very large scale value added employment while avoiding potential for future environmental and planning conflicts within the corridor.</li> </ul> <p>The preparation of the Dunboyne / Clonee Local Area Plan shall be influenced by the Integrated Development</p>
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Framework Plan for Land Use and .Transportation and shall be prepared in advance of the latter. Pending the preparation of this Strategic Study, the quantum and scale of residential development allocated to Dunboyne / Clonee shall be revisited and Table 6 shall be varied accordingly.

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]*

## **Preparation of Local Area Plans for Individual Towns and Villages**

### Policy

SS POL 2 The preparation of the subsequent individual or grouped Local Area Plans shall ensure that they are consistent with the objectives of this Development Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Planning & Development Acts 2002 – 2002. In particular, the population growth and household formation provided for in each Local Area Plan shall demonstrate compliance with the Household & Population Projection contained in this Development Plan, and in particular Table 6 . This compliance shall be explicitly demonstrated on the basis of the amount of residential land being released for development in a particular centre being quantified by applying reasonable density and average occupancy rates to the scale and quantum of development provided for in Table 6. In all instances, the release of land must have regard to the existing and future availability of, or the capacity to provide physical and social infrastructure. The preparation of individual or grouped Local Area Plans shall be consistent with the order of priority identified in the forthcoming review of all existing residentially zoned lands in towns and village pursuant to Settlement Strategy SP 2.

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]*

SS POL 4 The preparation of the Drogheda Environs Local Area Plan shall have regard to and be influenced by the recently adopted Greater Drogheda Area Planning Strategy in the identification of additional significant lands for residential development. The strategic reserve at Bryanstown in addition to the lands between the Mill Road and the rail line have been identified for future residential development. The availability of adequate capacity in piped water services and roads infrastructure will be taken into account in the order of priority afforded to the release of residential lands. The preparation of the Local Area Plan shall take cognisance of the proposed Drogheda Traffic Management Study, and the Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan 2005 – 2011.

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2]*

SS POL 8 Having regard to the extent of zoned land in Donore (12.21 hectares), the position of the village in the Settlement Strategy and the juxtaposition of the village in the buffer area of the World Heritage



Site, to desist from zoning additional zoned land in the preparation of the forthcoming Local Area Plan.

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

### Objectives

SS OBJ 3	To revisit employment generating uses, namely E1 and E2 land use zoning objectives, in the preparation of individual Local Area Plans and lower level Development Plans having regard to changing nature and requirements of industry and enterprise. The location of employment and enterprise will be informed by the preparation of the Thematic Spatial Strategy for industrial development and enterprise required pursuant to Strategic Objective ECON DEVT SO 1, the examination of land uses at existing and proposed Motorway Interchanges pursuant to Infrastructure Objective INF OBJ 16 and the Economic Strategy.
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*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

## Manager's Report Section 3 – Economic Development

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### Recommendation

Insert new Policy ED POL 10

'To facilitate economic development and growth of employment in the County through support for the implementation of objectives outlined in the Meath County Development Board Strategy 'Le Cheile' in co-operation with the relevant agencies.'

*Neutral Interaction with SEOs; Neutral Interaction with the status of the environment*

### Rural Enterprise

To amend Strategic Objective ECON DEVT SO 1 to;

'To prepare a Thematic Spatial Strategy for industrial development and enterprise which would identify and support the development of areas where significant clusters of power, roads, water and gas could be harnessed to become nationally important areas to accommodate very large scale value added employment while avoiding potential for future environmental and planning conflicts. This process will include the assessment of existing industrial/employment centres outside of established rural areas. In the first instance, the south east of the County will be examined.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

### Integrated Transport and Land Use Planning

To insert the following Policy into Section 3.1.6 Future Employment, Enterprise & Economic Strategy;

*'The preparation of Local Area Plans and Development Plans for centres located in Dynamic Clusters shall endeavour to match the different mobility needs of businesses with the accessibility of different locations by zoning appropriate lands for people intensive and product intensive uses. In identifying such locations, regard will be had to Table 12 'Matrix Assessing Economic Development Uses Against Location Criteria'.'*

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [SEOs W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]*

To insert the following Strategic Settlement Objective 'Settlement Strategy SO 2' into Section 2.1.7 County Meath Broad Settlement Structure;

*'To prepare an Integrated Development Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation for the Clonsilla to Pace Interchange corridor in conjunction with relevant public transportation bodies, the DoEHLG and Fingal County Council. The Integrated Framework Plan shall provide inter alia, the following:*

- i. The appropriate location for additional public transport nodes along the rail corridor;*
- ii. The development potential and appropriate land uses around these public transport nodes; Large trip generators such as major employers*

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [SEOs W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]*

### Development at Motorway Interchanges

#### Recommendation

To amend Section 3.1.8 Development at Motorway Interchanges in Chapter 3 Economic Development to include the revised objective INF OBJ 16 together with the assessment

criteria for the selection of possible Motorway Interchanges for development from Chapter 4 Infrastructure.

To amend Policy INF POL 25;

'To facilitate the provision of Motorway Service Stations at appropriate Interchange locations in the County, with the exception of the Blundelstown Interchange having regard to the exceptional value and sensitivity of the Landscape surrounding the Hill of Tara.'

*Likely to significantly conflict with the status of the environment [SEOs B2, S2]*

## **Retail**

Insert the following policy under the heading 'Improving Town Centres' (Page 76)

'Through the Local Area Plan process it is the policy of the Council to promote the optimal development and future use of potential sites in town and village centres, especially redevelopment of brownfield sites or development comprising infill or backland development in an integrated and planned manner.'

*Neutral Interaction with SEOs; Neutral Interaction with the status of the environment, except with regard to SEO C1 (especially archaeology) which the policy has the potential to significantly adversely impact upon especially in heritage towns*

## Manager's Report Section 4– Infrastructure

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### Sustainable Modes of Transport

#### Recommendation:

To include 2 additional Public Transport Policies as follows

*“To support the improvement of the existing Dublin – Drogheda rail service which serves the urban settlements of Laytown and Gormanston and to seek to have the proposed electrification of this rail line extends to Drogheda.”*

*“The Planning Authority shall ensure that the preparation of the revised Development Contribution Scheme adequately provides the needs of public transport. In particular, regard will be had to the provision of bus corridors and lanes, bus interchange facilities (including car parks for those facilities), infrastructure to facilitate public transport, cycle and pedestrian facilities and traffic calming measures commensurate with the needs of the County.”*

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

To revise the wording of Public Transport Policy INF POL 9 to read as follows:

*“To co-operate with the Dublin Transportation Office, the Quality Bus Network Office, Bus Eireann, private operators and other appropriate transport bodies in the implementation of an agreed QBN programme and to provide an improved service delivery in the Meath area delivering more sustainable travel patterns at local and regional level.”*

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

### Roads Infrastructure

It is recommended that an additional statement be included at the end of INF POL 28 as follows:

*“A Traffic Impact Assessment will be required as part of any development proposal which impacts on an existing junction of a National Route. Any additional works required as a result of the Transport Assessment shall be funded by the developer.”*

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

To amend INF POL 23 as follows

*“To safeguard the capacity and safety of National roads by restricting further access onto National Primary roads and National Secondary roads outside of restricted speed limits which correspond with identified development boundaries in line with National Roads Authority policy”.*

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

### Interim Water Services Arrangements

To amend Interim Arrangements in Section 4.6 Water Services – Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage to reflect the following;

The Planning Authority shall only consider such provision where capital funding to provide a permanent solution has been included in the Water Services Investment Programme or where the development is located in a settlement earmarked for significant population growth in the Settlement Strategy of this Development Plan subject to environmental considerations being respected.

This shall be reflected in the introduction to the section dealing with Interim Arrangements and the wordings of INF POL 38 and INF POL 41 shall be amended accordingly.

*Uncertain Interaction with SEOs; Uncertain Interaction with the status of the environment*

## **Water Services**

### **Flood Protection**

#### Recommendation

It is recommended to insert the following policy in relation to "Flood Protection"

*"Development should not itself be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding nor should it cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations. Development that is sensitive to the effects of flooding will generally not be permitted in flood prone or marginal areas."*

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

It is considered that the Development Assessment Criteria (Section 4.8.4) can be amended to include the recommendations of the OPW.

## Manager's Report Section 6 – Rural Development

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### Gaeltacht Areas

#### Recommendation:

It is recommended that the context provided in Section 6.7.5 be updated to reflect a number of points made by Údarás na Gaeltachta.

To include an additional policy as follows:

In the preparation of the Local Area Plans for Baile Ghib and Rathcairn, that the following fundamental principles should be taken on board:

- To recognise the economic, social and cultural importance of the Irish language in Gaeltacht life
- To recognise developments that could damage the use, visibility and status of the Irish language in Meath and to reduce/prevent their impact.
- To identify methods whereby the Irish language can be preserved;
- To plan an efficient system whereby the aspects of the Gaeltacht environment can be assessed and protected as part of the planning process, including the use of language conditions.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

### Rural Settlement Strategy

#### Recommendation:

It is necessary to amend a number of policies and objectives in the Rural Development Strategy to reflect proposed amendments in the Settlement Strategy.

#### Areas Under Strong Urban Influence

RD OBJ 10	To facilitate the availability of an appropriate level of housing options in <b>Small Growth Towns</b> , on appropriately zoned lands, for persons from the adjoining rural catchment area or from the town or village itself or those who virtue of their employment require to live in the urban centre. In this regard, at least 50% of all housing options in multiple housing schemes (being developments of 4 houses or more) in Small Growth Towns shall be reserved for persons from the adjoining catchment. The Small Growth Towns are Athboy, Enfield, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, Duleek, Stamullen & Laytown – Bettystown – Mornington East. The adjoining Rural Catchment Area is 10km from the respective settlement or from the parish within which the settlement is located. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.
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*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

RD OBJ (New)	To facilitate the availability of all housing options in the <b>Key Villages and Villages</b> , on appropriately zoned lands, for persons from the adjoining rural catchment area or from the town or village itself. In this regard, all housing options in multiple housing schemes (being developments of 4 houses or more) in Key Villages and Villages shall be reserved for persons from the adjoining catchment. The Key Villages and Villages in this regard are Longwood, Summerhill, Gormonston, Julianstown, Mornington / Donacarney,
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Donore, Kilmessan, and Kilbride. The adjoining Rural Catchment Area is 10km from the respective settlement or from the parish within which the settlement is located. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

#### **Strong Urban Areas**

RD OBJ 11 To facilitate the availability of all housing options in the **Key Villages and Villages**, on appropriately zoned lands, for persons from the adjoining rural catchment area or from the town or village itself. In this regard, all housing options in multiple housing schemes (being developments of 4 houses or more) in Key Villages and Villages shall be reserved for persons from the adjoining catchment. The Key Villages and Villages in this regard are Slane, Rathmolyon, Ballivor, Clonard, Kildalkey and Drumcondrath. The adjoining Rural Catchment Area is 10km from the respective settlement or from the parish within which the settlement is located. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

#### **Low Development Pressure Areas**

RD OBJ 14 To facilitate the availability of an appropriate level (not less than 50%) of housing options in smaller villages, on appropriately zoned lands, for persons from the adjoining rural catchment area. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for. Smaller villages in this regard are Nobber, Carlanstown, Moynalty, Kilmainhamwood and Crossakiel. The adjoining Rural Catchment Area is 10km from the respective settlement or from the parish within which the settlement is located. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

To insert the following in **Low Development Pressure Areas**

#### Development Assessment Criteria

The considerations outlined above in **Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence** in assessing individual proposals for one off rural housing will also apply to this area type.

## Manager's Report Section 8 – Cultural, Heritage and Landscape Protection

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HER POL 63 'To employ the full extent of the statutory provisions of the Planning & Development Acts and Regulations and all other relevant legislation including the National Monuments Act to ensure the sustained protection of landscapes of exceptional value and sensitivity and in particular to protect the rural character, setting, amenity and archaeological heritage of Brú na Bóinne and the Hill of Tara, and of the surrounding areas including the area in the vicinity of the proposed M3 motorway and its related interchanges.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

HER POL 53 'To protect archaeological sites, monuments (including their setting), underwater archaeology and peatlands, and objects within the jurisdiction of Meath County Council, including those that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places or newly discovered sub-surface archaeological remains.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

HER POL 18 'To ensure that peatland areas which are designated (or proposed for designation) as NHAs or SACs are conserved and managed appropriately to conserve their ecological, archaeological, cultural and educational significance.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

HER POL 58 'To seek the preservation in situ (or at a minimum, preservation by record) of all designated archaeological sites or objects and their settings.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

HER POL 19 'Further to the designation of sites of geological and geomorphological interest within the County, it is the policy of the Council to protect and conserve such sites from inappropriate development that would detract from their heritage value and interpretation.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

HER POL 20 'To ensure that where development is permitted, its effect on future designated sites of geological and geomorphological interest is minimised through appropriate conditions and retention of a buffer zone.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

Insert new policy into Section 8.2.11 Hedgerows

'To recognise the archaeological importance of townland boundaries including hedgerows and promote their protection and retention.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

### The Coast

Insert new policy;

It is the policy of the Council to maintain its beaches along the East Coast to a high standard and develop recreational potential as a seaside amenity in co-operation with the relevant agencies, in order to bring them to a Blue Flag standard.

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*



### **Draft Landscape Character Types and Areas and Protected Views**

Revise the boundaries of the Boyne Valley LCA and associated boundaries to include the World Heritage Site in its entirety. Consequently, all maps contained within the Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix VI) will be amended.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

Add additional information to page three of the LCA describing the meaning of designations of International, National, Regional and Local Importance.

To provide an additional map within the Book of Maps accompanying Volume 1 showing existing views and prospects contained within the 2001 County Development Plan together with a list of those views and prospects.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

To include a new Policy in Section 8.4.2

'To protect from inappropriate development the views identified on the Landscape Character Map 05: Visual Amenity, and the views and prospects as indicated on Map X (to be included as an amendment) and listed below:'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

### **Tara-Skyrne (including Blundelstown Interchange)**

To amend Policy HER POL 63 to read;

'To employ the full extent of the statutory provisions of the Planning & Development Acts and Regulations and all other relevant legislation (including the National Monuments Act) to ensure the sustained protection of landscapes of exceptional value and sensitivity and in particular to protect the rural character, setting, amenity and archaeological heritage of Brú na Bóinne and the Hill of Tara, and of the surrounding areas including the area in the vicinity of the proposed M3 motorway and its related interchanges.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

To amend Policy INF POL 25;

'To facilitate the provision of Motorway Service Stations at appropriate Interchange locations in the County, with the exception of the Blundelstown Interchange having regard to the exceptional value and sensitivity of the Landscape surrounding the Hill of Tara.'

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [SEOs B2, S2]*

## Accepted Notices of Motion

Settlement Strategy SP3	In all small growth towns, <b>25% of all new multi-house developments</b> , being developments in excess of 4 houses, shall be reserved for persons who are <b>native to the County</b> or those who by virtue or their employment require to live in the urban centre. This will ensure that the development of Small Growth Towns is more closely linked to local rather than to regional residential growth. The Small Growth Towns are Athboy, Enfield, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, Duleek, Stamullen & Laytown – Bettystown – Mornington East. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.
Settlement Strategy SP4	In all key villages and villages, <b>30% of all new multi-house developments</b> , being developments in excess of 4 houses, shall be reserved for persons who are <b>native to the County</b> or those who by virtue or their employment require to live in the urban centre. This will ensure that all multiple house developments shall be provided for local growth only in accordance with the recommendations of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [A1, A3, A4]*

To amend Table 6 at page 191 of the Managers Report as follows;

Stamullen – Amend 337 (no. of units to meet household targets) to 650, and reduce other settlements in the Slane Electoral Area by 313 unit

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [A1, A3, A4, P1]*

To amend Interim Arrangements in Section 4.6 Water Services – Water Supply, Sewerage and drainage to reflect the following:

The Planning Authority shall only consider such provision where capital funding to provide a permanent solution has been included in the Water Services Investment Programme or where in the opinion of the Planning Authority, such capital funding will be included in subsequent Water Services Investment Programme(s) within the life span of this County Development Plan, subject to environmental considerations being respected. Such temporary provision will only be considered in locations which accord with the Regional Planning Guidelines as outlined in the Settlement Strategy of this Development Plan.

Where capital funding to provide a permanent solution has not been included in the Water Services Investment Programme or in the opinion of the Planning Authority is unlikely to be included in subsequent Water Services Investment Programme(s) within the lifetime of this County Development Plan, the Planning Authority will consider proposals to provide permanent solutions. The consideration of such solutions will be restricted to where they facilitate significant population and/or commercial/industrial growth in accordance with the objectives of this County Development Plan and where the scale and location of such growth is such that high quality, sustainable, permanent solutions can be feasibly and affordably delivered to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

In all instances,

- Developers to bear full cost of interim solutions;
- Area based rather than site based solutions preferred; and
- In relation to water supply solutions,
  - the adequacy and sustainability of proposed water source must be proved;
  - source protection required;
  - water produced must consistently meet the requirements of the Drinking Water Regulations,
  - provision for security of supply and fire fighting needs is essential,
  - Operational & Maintenance agreements, bonds etc. will be required.

To amend Interim Arrangements in Section 4.6 Water Services – Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage to reflect the following;

The Planning Authority shall only consider such provision where capital funding to provide a permanent solution has been included in the Water Services Investment Programme or where the development is located in a settlement earmarked for significant population growth in the Settlement Strategy of this Development Plan subject to environmental considerations being respected.

This shall be reflected in the introduction to the section dealing with Interim Arrangements and the wordings of INF POL 38 and INF POL 41 shall be amended accordingly.

*Uncertain Interaction with SEOs; Uncertain Interaction with the status of the environment. Should development proceed appropriate waste water treatment infrastructure then conflicts would be likely with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]*

Settlement Strategy SO 1 wording to be amended

"That Dunshaughlin shall be indicated as a Moderate Growth Town in the Settlement Strategy and elsewhere throughout the Draft County Meath Development Plan, and that the appropriate consequential changes shall be made in all relevant text (including the text of the Revised Settlement Strategy, including Settlement Strategy text relating to Strategies SP3 & SP7 including Tables 4.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment as the number of housing units allocated to Dunshaughlin over the life of the Plan is unchanged. {However, as Dunshaughlin is primarily expanding in a dormitory nature an increase in the number of housing units allocated to Dunshaughlin over the life of the Plan would be likely to conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, B2, B4, S1, S2, A1, A3, A4, A4, M1, P1]}*

**To upgrade Carnaross to a Village and to allocate 40 units previously provided for Kells to Carnaross**

To add Ballinacree to the list of graigs in Appendix II of the Draft County Development Plan.

To add Coolronan to the list of graigs in Appendix II of the Draft County Development Plan.

**To add "Mullagh Lane", Kilmainham** to the list of graigs in Appendix II of the Draft County Development Plan.

*Likely to cumulatively conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]*

"No residential developments may take place in open green spaces that are the subject of a deed of dedication or identified in a planning application as open space."

"That areas designated open space/green area as a condition of planning be retained as such and be precluded from any further development to ensure the availability of community facilities for the residents of the area which is subject of the grant of planning permission".

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

It is recommended to include the following new policy in the Infrastructure Chapter of the County Development Plan.

‘To require that the design of external lighting minimises the incidence of light spillage or pollution into the surrounding environment.’

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

No. 76

Insert new objective in Section 6.7.4 “Rural Villages & Graigs” to read

The Planning Authority will consider a limited amount of cluster type development in Rural Areas outside of designated graigs for persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community with strong familial, social and functional ties to the area as set out in Section 6.7.3 (One Off Housing in the Countryside). A cluster type development shall be defined as a maximum of 5 houses for which a local housing co-operative has been formed and subject to site suitability criteria as contained in the Draft Development Plan. Pending the satisfactory operation of a pilot cluster in each of the Electoral Areas, the Planning Authority may consent to the application of this policy on a more widespread basis.

*Likely to cumulatively conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]*

To insert a new policy in Section 7.4 “Community Infrastructure in Co. Meath”

“The Planning Authority will strive for meaningful consultation with community groups and youth agencies in the development of any significant public space that occurs with Large and Moderate Growth Towns and in particular in relation to the Local Authority’s own development.”

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

To insert a new policy in Section 7.4 “Community Infrastructure in Co. Meath”

“The Planning Authority shall seek the efficient delivery of community and social facilities commensurate with the needs of the resultant resident population and that these facilities are developed contemporaneously with residential development. The preparation of Local Area Plans and Framework Plans assisted by the Residential Estate Guidelines (when prepared) shall provide for the delivery of such facilities.”

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

Insert new objective in Section 8.2.16 Public Rights of Way to read

“The Planning Authority shall engage with external bodies to seek to obtain internal and external resources to complete a list of existing public rights of way within two years of the adoption of this plan. This list will be accompanied by detailed mapping showing public rights of way and that appropriate signage will be put in place.”

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

# OUTLINE OF SIGNIFICANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

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Of relevant measures in the:

1. Manager's Report to Members on Submissions
2. Accepted Notices of Motion, and;
3. Manager's Report to Members on Submissions to Proposed Amendments

In relation to the Draft Meath County Development Plan  
2007 - 2013

**For: Meath County Council**

County Hall  
Navan  
County Meath



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**MARCH 2007**

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## Introduction

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### Introduction and Terms of Reference

This report outlines the environmental impact of changes to the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2005 to 2011 which have been identified as being material alterations from an environmental perspective within the scope of the Draft County Development Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment. These changes, which are a result of recommendations in the Manager's Report as well as accepted notices of motion, are evaluated against the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) shown on Table 1 which were developed for the County Development Plan SEA.

### Evaluation

SEOs are methodological measures against which the environmental effects of the plan can be tested. If complied with in full, SEOs would result in an environmentally neutral impact from implementation of the plan. The SEOs are set out under a range of topics and are used as standards against which the development strategies, policies and objectives of the plan can be evaluated in order to help identify areas in which significant adverse impacts are likely to occur, if unmitigated against. SEOs are distinct from the objectives of the plan - although they will often overlap - and are developed from international, national and county policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives. Such policy includes that of various European Directives which have been transposed into Irish law, relevant other Irish environmental legislation together with the RPGs.

The evaluation of the relevant changes in the sections below is shown in orange coloured font with references such as B3 relating to SEOs detailed in Table 1 overleaf.

### Mitigation

Adverse impacts which could potentially arise as a result of implementation of the County Development Plan are to be mitigated against as suggested by the SEA Environmental Report by the preparation of spatial strategies which will identify in detail the location, significance and sensitivity of the range of environmental assets and constraints that occur within particularly sensitive areas that are likely to be subject to higher than average intensities of development. These areas include:

- Navan
- Trim
- Kells
- Dynamic Clusters 2 & 3 - Area including Dunboyne / Clonee, Dunshaughlin, Ashbourne & Ratoath
- Boyne Valley Area - area including Slane, Duleek, Donore, Drogheda and the East Meath urban centres
- Oldcastle / Loughcrew / Slieve na Calliagh

In addition to these six specific areas mitigation will be provided by the preparation and assessment of Thematic Spatial Strategies for:

- Rural Development and Agricultural Restructuring
- Industry and Enterprise
- Forestry
- Infrastructure

<b>SEO Reference</b>	<b>SEO Description</b>
W1 (Water)	Maintain water abstraction, run-off and recharge within carrying capacity (including future capacity)
W2 (Water)	Reduce progressively discharges of polluting substances to waters
W3 (Water)	Mitigate the effects of floods and droughts including vulnerability to climate change. (extreme weather, sea level rise, coastal erosion) <sup>1</sup>
W4 (Water)	Promote sustainable water use based on a long term projection of available water resources.
C1 (Cultural Heritage)	Promote the identification, protection and conservation of the cultural, including architectural and archaeological, heritage.
L1 (Landscape)	Conserve and enhance valued natural, historic and cultural landscapes and features within them
B1 (Biodiversity)	Avoid damage by development to designated wildlife sites and protected species.
B2 (Biodiversity)	Conserve the diversity of habitats avoiding irreversible losses
B3 (Biodiversity)	Ensure that any development promotes sustainable management of key wildlife sites and the ecological processes upon which they depend
B4 (Biodiversity)	Protect aquatic ecosystems including the marine environment, and terrestrial ecosystems which are interdependent (promote integrated management strategies)
B5 (Biodiversity)	Provide opportunities for sustainable public access to wildlife and wild places
S1 (Soil)	Maintain the quality of soil.
S2 (Soil)	Maximise the sustainable re-use of brownfield lands, and maximise the use of the existing built environment rather than developing greenfield lands
S3 (Soil)	Minimise the consumption of non-renewable sand, gravel, rock and peat deposits
S4 (Soil)	Minimise the amount of waste to landfill
P1 (Population and Human Health)	Improve people's quality of life based on high-quality residential, working and recreational environments, on sustainable travel patterns at all stages of life.
P2 (Population and Human Health)	Minimise noise and vibration from traffic, industrial processes and extractive industry
A1 (Air & Climate)	Reduce all forms of air pollution
A2 (Air & Climate)	Reduce waste of energy, and maximise use of renewable energy sources
A3 (Air & Climate)	Reduce progressively discharges of polluting substances to air Including greenhouse gases
A4 (Air & Climate)	Reduce the need to travel
M1 (Material Assets)	Maintain the quality of and access to assets such as aquifers, aggregates, ports, motorways, and all physical and social infrastructure.

**Table 1 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs)**



## Main Issues

Significant issues from an environmental perspective in relation to the changes are detailed below.

- In order to accommodate recent and future growth programmes of waste water treatment plants and networks, water supply infrastructure, transport infrastructure and powerlines etc need to be implemented. These programmes are likely to have significant adverse impacts on the environment if unmitigated against. These programmes would require environmental assessments to be carried out on them in order to prevent such impacts.
- Increases in population exceeded 2010 targets set out for the County in the Regional Planning Guidelines in 2006. As forward planning in Meath has had regard to the RPG targets it is likely that there has been a deficit of land zoned to accommodate the increasing population and that growth has occurred in areas not identified as having environments which are compatible to such land uses. As there is likely to be further increases in population over the coming years, there is a need to zone sufficient amounts of land in order to ensure that growth is directed towards the most compatible environments.
- Encouraging and facilitating the accommodation of growth on brownfield sites will contribute to mitigating a number of the adverse impacts associated with greenfield development, however, brownfield development has the potential to significantly adversely impact upon cultural heritage – both archaeological and architectural - if unmitigated against. These impacts are most likely in heritage towns such as Kells and Maynooth.
- Any diluting of proposed demand management techniques that seek to restrict those who can reside in smaller towns and villages to persons from a local catchment areas or working locally would be likely to have adverse impacts on: reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions; reducing the need to travel and; improving people's quality of life with regard to sustainable travel patterns.
- Upgrading of settlements to higher hierarchical levels and the allocation of increase housing allocations to certain settlements in the absence of appropriate waste water infrastructure would have the potential to adversely and significantly impact upon flora & fauna, biodiversity and water quality.

## Manager's Report Section 2 Settlement Strategy

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### County Meath Broad Settlement Structure

Change in the level of growth planned for: Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington East (increased from 1,000 units to 2,500 units); Trim (increased from 1,500 units to 2,500 units), and; Drogheda (increase of approximately 810 additional households)

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [SEOs W1, W2, W3, L1, B2, B3, B4, S1, S2, M1], however, a mitigation measure which has been integrated into the Development Plan*

*'To prepare a Spatial Strategy for each of the following centres or areas to assist in the preparation of future development plans or local area plans. These strategies will identify the location, significance and sensitivity of the range of environmental assets and constraints that occur within these particularly sensitive areas that are likely to comprise higher than average intensities of development.'*

*relates to: the Boyne Valley Area - which includes the East Meath urban centres of Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington East (Impact Zone 3) and Trim (Impact Zone 5). This mitigation measure would enable conflicts between the accommodation of growth and the environment to be mitigated against.*

#### Criteria Determining the Release of Residential Land

In the case of the Heritage Towns of Kells and Trim, Small Growth Towns, Key Villages and Villages, the release and development of residential lands shall be linked to;

- the provision of necessary physical infrastructure, primarily the availability, in advance of development occurring, of capacity in water and wastewater infrastructure. The environment must be capable of absorbing the scale and quantum of development that is envisaged.

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

*However any programme for providing waste water treatment plants, sewerage treatment systems, water supply, road extensions, powerlines etc would have the potential to significantly, adversely impact upon the environment and SEOs.*

- spare capacity in existing (and planned) social infrastructure, primarily national and second level educational facilities. The future planning of the Department of Education and Science of national and second level educational facilities shall also be taken into account. The development of additional residential lands shall leverage the necessary recreational and amenity infrastructure commensurate with the needs of the resident population. The proposed scale and quantum of development must reinforce the integrity and vitality of the local community and services that can be provided.

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

- a more sustainable economic base whereby a greater percentage of local persons are employed locally. This will require closer liaison between the County Enterprise Board, County Development Board, Economic Development & Promotion Officer and the Planning Department;

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

- the efficient use of land by consolidating existing settlements, focusing in particular on development capacity within central urban areas through the re-use of under utilised lands and buildings as a priority, rather than extending green field development. This should also ensure that development is concentrated in location where it is possible to integrate employment, community services, retailing and public transport. The order of priority for the release of residentially zoned land shall attempt to ensure that there is a sequential approach which de-prioritises outer suburban greenfield sites.

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [C1 - archaeological and other cultural heritage impacts], especially in Heritage Towns*

- To facilitate the realisation of objectives contained in existing Local Area Plans or existing Written Statement and Detailed Objectives for Towns and Villages (Volume II of the 2001 County Development Plan as amended) in relation to the delivery of identified critical and necessary social and / or physical infrastructure in conjunction with residential development. Priority of phasing may be given to such residential lands accordingly.

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

*However any programme for providing waste water treatment plants, sewerage treatment systems, water supply, road extensions, powerlines etc would have the potential to significantly, adversely impact upon the environment and SEOs.*

- The extent of existing residentially zoned lands will be revised in the context of the individual Local Area Plan or Development Plan review for each centre and does not necessarily preclude identifying additional zoning in specific locations where the Planning Authority is satisfied that a clearly established need for such zoning is evident. Such additional zoning may only be considered where the development of such lands for residential purposes would deliver an identified piece of critical and necessary social and/or physical infrastructure in conjunction with such development and may require such lands to be prioritized for development over existing residentially zoned lands or that a corresponding amount of land has been de-zoned.

*If environmental considerations are integrated into decision making with regard to the zoning of land, residential development will be directed to the most robust environments with the most sensitive environments avoided. In the absence of zoning, development will not be explicitly directed to the most robust environments and more adverse impacts would be likely to arise from development. However any residential development would have the potential to significantly and adversely impact upon the environment and SEOs.*

## **High Level Development Objectives for Towns & Villages**

### **1. Strategic Development Centres**

#### **Navan, Drogheda Environs and Clonsilla – Dunboyne – Pace rail corridor**

The allocation of future household and population growth will be channelled first and foremost to Navan, Drogheda and Clonsilla / Dunboyne / Pace rail corridor. The majority of the projected additional population and households will be allocated to these identified strategic centres. This will necessitate the prioritisation of the preparation of the Local Area Plans for these centres by the Planning Authority to ensure that there are no restrictions in place which is adversely affecting the release and development of these strategic residential landbanks. The preparation of these LAPs must ensure that employment generating uses and the requisite social and physical infrastructure are included and developed contemporaneously with residential development. The Planning Authority will prioritise the

provision of key physical and social infrastructure in these centres to ensure that all necessary infrastructure is in place contemporaneously with the needs of the resultant residential communities.

*Pace concept should undergo SEA*

#### Thematic Spatial Strategies

### **Moderate Growth Towns in the Metropolitan Area**

#### **Maynooth and Kilcock Environs**

The environs of Maynooth and Kilcock, both located in Co. Meath, are located within a Primary Dynamic Cluster in the Metropolitan Area.<sup>2</sup> A Local Area Plan was prepared and adopted by this Planning Authority for Kilcock Environs subsequent to the adoption of the 2001 County Development Plan. Kildare County Council have not facilitated the development of these residential lands to date due to their lack of water services capacity. These deficiencies are expected to be rectified by 2008 – 2009 and the Council is grateful to the assistance of Kildare County Council in their progress on these schemes. The application of the sequential approach to development, and in particular residential development, would appear to be ignored by Kildare County Council in the case of Kilcock as lands adjoining the Square, located in Co. Meath, remain undeveloped. It is an objective of the Development Plan to seek to advance the preparation of joint Local Area Plans for both Kilcock and Maynooth, inclusive of the areas located in Co. Meath rather than to prepare Local Area plans only for the Environs Areas. Meath County Council will reserve the right to approach the DoEHLG to facilitate the joint preparation of Local Area Plans for both settlements in accordance with Section 18 (2). The development of the environs of both towns must be on a balanced and sustainable basis whereby residential development is matched by the delivery of key physical and social infrastructure and a strong economic base.

*Note that Maynooth is a heritage town and there could be potential impacts upon cultural heritage*

#### **Strategic Settlement Policy**

Settlement Strategy SP1	The Council will implement the Settlement Strategy of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area by concentrating residential development first and foremost into the designated centres of Navan, Drogheda and the Dunboyne / Pace Rail Corridor. These centres shall accommodate the majority of Meath's share of the Mid Eastern regional residential growth over the life of this Development Plan and beyond.
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*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]*

Settlement Strategy SP2	To ensure that all of the Large Growth Towns and Moderate Growth Towns will in so far as practical be self sufficient incorporating employment activities, sufficient retail services and social and community facilities. Residential development will only be permitted if sufficient progress is made in providing employment, retail, social and community facilities within the settlement. The Planning Authority shall agree a series of monitoring measures in this regard within 6 months of the adoption of this Development Plan. The Council will give consideration to the capacity of existing appropriately zoned, serviceable and undeveloped land to deliver
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sustainable mixed use communities in advance of zoning previously unzoned greenfield land for new development.

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, C1 (especially in heritage towns), S1, S2, A4, M1]*

Settlement Strategy SP3

In all small growth towns, 50% of all new multi-house developments, being developments in excess of 4 houses, shall be reserved for persons who are first time owners in the area who are native to the area (being persons who can prove they have lived within 10km of the area for at least 5 consecutive years of their lives) or those who by virtue or their employment require to live in the urban centre. This will ensure that the development of Small Growth Towns is more closely linked to local rather than to regional residential growth. The Small Growth Towns are Athboy, Enfield, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, Duleek, Stamullen & Laytown – Bettystown – Mornington East. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

Settlement Strategy SP4

In all key villages and villages, all new multi-house developments, being developments in excess of 4 houses, shall be subject to compliance with a set percentage being reserved for persons who are first time owners in the area who are native to the area (being persons who can prove they have lived within 10km of the area for at least 5 consecutive years of their lives) or those who by virtue or their employment require to live in the urban centre. This will ensure that all multiple house developments shall be provided for local growth only in accordance with the recommendations of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. The Rural Strategy (Section 7) specifies the percentage ranging from 50 – 100 % which must be reserved for local persons depending on the Rural Area Type in which the centre is located. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

Settlement Strategy SP5

Having regard to the amount of existing residentially zoned land, the annual construction of over 3,500 housing units and the inadequacies of basic infrastructure such as water, sewerage, roads, transport, communications, etc., only limited and strategic additional residential land use zoning shall be agreed for the life of this development plan. The location of these strategic additional residential lands shall comply with the Settlement Strategy contained in this Development Plan and to the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. "Limited" shall be defined as areas, either individually or cumulatively, less than 10

hectares for any one centre. "*Strategic*" shall be defined as the Large Growth Towns of Navan and Drogheda and the Metropolitan Area Moderate Growth Town of Dunboyne and Maynooth, the Hinterland Area Moderate Growth Town of Ashbourne and the Small Growth Town of Enfield.

*Neutral Interaction with SEOs; Neutral Interaction with the status of the environment*

Settlement Strategy SP6

The household and population distribution shown on Table 6 will have to reviewed firstly in the context of the detailed results of the 2006 Census of Population (the definitive population results, based on the scanned Census Forms, will be released between April and December 2007) and thereafter on regular assessments on housing development activity across the County as carried out by the Planning Department. The distribution may change in light of such review and the availability and / or planned provision of concurrent necessary physical and social services required to facilitate the scale and quantum of residential development indicated in Table 6. The amendment of the household and population distribution shown on Table 5 and / or Table 6 will require a Variation to the County Development Plan.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

## Strategic Settlement Objectives

Settlement Strategy SO 1

The Planning Authority shall, within 6 months of the County Development Plan coming into effect, revisit all existing residentially zoned lands in the County as contained in Volume II of the Draft Development Plan 2007 – 2013, the Kilcock Local Area 2003 and East Meath Local Area Plans North & South 2005. All subsequent Framework Plans (to include Local Area Plans, Action Area Plans or similar Framework Plans) adopted pursuant to the adoption of the 2001 County Development Plan within individual towns and villages shall also be revisited. The Planning Authority shall identify and adopt by way of Variation to the County Development Plan an order of priority for the release of existing residentially zoned lands (i.e. phasing) that shall conform to the scale and quantum of development indicated in Table 5 and Table 6. The release of these existing residentially zoned lands shall be on the basis of the Criteria Determining the Release of Residential Lands as set out in Section 2.1.7 This shall also apply to the preparation of the new Kells & Trim Development Plans. This exercise shall not apply to Navan, Dunboyne / Clonee, Enfield & Ashbourne having regard to the preparation of Local Area Plans / Framework Plans which provides for the phasing of the residential landbank and by virtue of the limited remaining uncommitted residential landbank in Ashbourne.

*Uncertain Interaction with SEOs; Uncertain Interaction with the status of the environment*

Strategic Settlement SO 2.

To prepare an Integrated Development Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation **and associated Environmental Assessment** for the Clonsilla to Pace Interchange corridor in conjunction with relevant public transportation bodies, the DoEHLG and Fingal County

Council. The Integrated Framework Plan shall provide inter alia, the following:

- i) The appropriate location for additional public transport nodes along the rail corridor;
- ii) The development potential and appropriate land uses around these public transport nodes; Large trip generators such as major employers or town / district centres should be located near the intersection of transportation corridors.
- iii) The location, significance and sensitivity of the range of environmental assets and constraints that occur within this corridor.
- iv) In relation to industrial and enterprise development, to identify and support the development of areas where significant clusters of power, roads, water and gas could be harnessed to become nationally important areas to accommodate very large scale value added employment while avoiding potential for future environmental and planning conflicts within the corridor.

The preparation of the Dunboyne / Clonee Local Area Plan shall be influenced by the Integrated Development Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation and shall be prepared in advance of the latter. Pending the preparation of this Strategic Study, the quantum and scale of residential development allocated to Dunboyne / Clonee shall be revisited and Table 6 shall be varied accordingly.

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]*

## Preparation of Local Area Plans for Individual Towns and Villages

### Policy

SS POL 2	<p>The preparation of the subsequent individual or grouped Local Area Plans shall ensure that they are consistent with the objectives of this Development Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Planning &amp; Development Acts 2002 – 2002. In particular, the population growth and household formation provided for in each Local Area Plan shall demonstrate compliance with the Household &amp; Population Projection contained in this Development Plan, and in particular Table 6. This compliance shall be explicitly demonstrated on the basis of the amount of residential land being released for development in a particular centre being quantified by applying reasonable density and average occupancy rates to the scale and quantum of development provided for in Table 6. In all instances, the release of land must have regard to the existing and future availability of, or the capacity to provide physical and social infrastructure. The preparation of individual or grouped Local Area Plans shall be consistent with the order of priority identified in the forthcoming review of all existing residentially zoned lands in towns and village pursuant to Settlement Strategy SP 2.</p>
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*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]*



SS POL 4	The preparation of the Drogheda Environs Local Area Plan shall have regard to and be influenced by the recently adopted Greater Drogheda Area Planning Strategy in the identification of additional significant lands for residential development. The strategic reserve at Bryanstown in addition to the lands between the Mill Road and the rail line have been identified for future residential development. The availability of adequate capacity in piped water services and roads infrastructure will be taken into account in the order of priority afforded to the release of residential lands. The preparation of the Local Area Plan shall take cognisance of the proposed Drogheda Traffic Management Study, and the Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan 2005 – 2011.
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*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2]*

SS POL 8	Having regard to the extent of zoned land in Donore (12.21 hectares), the position of the village in the Settlement Strategy and the juxtaposition of the village in the buffer area of the World Heritage Site, to desist from zoning additional zoned land in the preparation of the forthcoming Local Area Plan.
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*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

### Objectives

SS OBJ 2	To explore the joint preparation of a Local Area Plan, in conjunction with Kildare County Council for Kilcock, to include the area north east of Kilcock which are located in Co. Meath. The preparation of a joint Local Area Plan shall subsume the existing Local Area Plan for Kilcock as adopted by Meath County Council. It shall be an objective to advance the preparation of the Joint Local Area Plans within 2 years of the adoption of the Development Plan.
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*If a SEA was to accompany the LAP for Kilcock environmental considerations would be integrated into decision making with regard to the zoning of land and development would be directed to the most robust environments with the most sensitive environments avoided. In the absence of zoning, development will not be explicitly directed to the most robust environments and more adverse impacts would be likely to arise from development. However development would have the potential to significantly and adversely impact upon the environment and SEOs.*

SS OBJ 3	To revisit employment generating uses, namely E1 and E2 land use zoning objectives, in the preparation of individual Local Area Plans and lower level Development Plans having regard to changing nature and requirements of industry and enterprise. The location of employment and enterprise will be informed by the preparation of the Thematic Spatial Strategy for industrial development and enterprise required pursuant to Strategic Objective ECON DEVT SO 1, the examination of land uses at existing and proposed Motorway Interchanges pursuant to Infrastructure Objective INF OBJ 16 and the Economic Strategy.
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*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*



## Manager's Report Section 3 – Economic Development

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### Recommendation

Insert new Policy ED POL 10

'To facilitate economic development and growth of employment in the County through support for the implementation of objectives outlined in the Meath County Development Board Strategy 'Le Cheile' in co-operation with the relevant agencies.'

*Neutral Interaction with SEOs; Neutral Interaction with the status of the environment*

### Rural Enterprise

To amend Strategic Objective ECON DEVT SO 1 to;

'To prepare a Thematic Spatial Strategy for industrial development and enterprise which would identify and support the development of areas where significant clusters of power, roads, water and gas could be harnessed to become nationally important areas to accommodate very large scale value added employment while avoiding potential for future environmental and planning conflicts. This process will include the assessment of existing industrial/employment centres outside of established rural areas. In the first instance, the south east of the County will be examined.'

'To prepare a Thematic Spatial Strategy for industrial development and enterprise which would identify and support the development of areas where significant clusters of power, roads, water and gas could be harnessed to become nationally important areas to accommodate very large scale value added employment while avoiding potential for future environmental and planning conflicts. This process will include the assessment of existing industrial/employment centres outside of established rural areas. In the first instance, the south east and east of the County will be examined.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

### Integrated Transport and Land Use Planning

To insert the following Policy into Section 3.1.6 Future Employment, Enterprise & Economic Strategy;

*'The preparation of Local Area Plans and Development Plans for centres located in Dynamic Clusters shall endeavour to match the different mobility needs of businesses with the accessibility of different locations by zoning appropriate lands for people intensive and product intensive uses. In identifying such locations, regard will be had to Table 12 'Matrix Assessing Economic Development Uses Against Location Criteria'.'*

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [SEOs W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]*

*To insert the following Strategic Settlement Objective 'Settlement Strategy SO 2' into Section 2.1.7 County Meath Broad Settlement Structure;*

*To commence the preparation of an Integrated Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation (IFPLUT) for the area of the Clonsilla to Pace Interchange Rail Corridor in Co. Meath including Clonee within three months of the adoption of the County Development Plan in conjunction with relevant public transportation bodies, the DoEHLG and Fingal County Council. The IFPLUT Plan shall provide inter alia, the following:*

- i) The appropriate location for additional public transport nodes along the rail corridor;*

- ii) *The development potential and appropriate land uses around these public transport nodes; Large trip generators such as major employers or town / district centres should be located near the intersection of transportation corridors.*
- iii) *The location, significance and sensitivity of the range of environmental assets and constraints that occur within this corridor*
- iv) *To identify and support the development of areas where significant clusters of power, roads, water and gas could be harnessed to become nationally important areas to accommodate very large scale value added employment while avoiding potential for future environmental and planning conflicts within the corridor.*

*The preparation of the Dunboyne / Clonee / Pace Corridor Local Area Plan which shall include, inter alia, all the lands identified in the Clonsilla / Pace Rail Corridor Section 49 Supplementary Development Contribution Scheme, shall be influenced by the Integrated Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation (IFPLUT) and which shall be prepared in advance of the former. On completion of this Strategic Study, the quantum and scale of residential development allocated to Dunboyne / Clonee / Pace Corridor shall be revisited and Table 6 shall be varied accordingly.*

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [SEOs W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]*

### **Development at Motorway Interchanges**

#### **Recommendation**

To amend Section 3.1.8 Development at Motorway Interchanges in Chapter 3 Economic Development to include the revised objective INF OBJ 16 together with the assessment criteria for the selection of possible Motorway Interchanges for development from Chapter 4 Infrastructure.

To amend Policy INF POL 25;

‘To facilitate the provision of Motorway Service Stations at appropriate Interchange locations in the County subject to normal planning considerations and the undertakings of the National Roads Authority Policy Statement on the Provision of Service Areas and Rest Areas on Motorways and High Quality Dual Carriageways, with the exception of the Blundelstown Interchange having regard to the exceptional value and sensitivity of the Landscape surrounding the Hill of Tara.’

*Likely to significantly conflict with the status of the environment [SEOs B2, S2]*

### **Retail**

Insert the following policy under the heading ‘Improving Town Centres’ (Page 76)

‘Through the Local Area Plan process it is the policy of the Council to promote the optimal development and future use of potential sites in town and village centres, especially redevelopment of brownfield sites or development comprising infill or backland development in an integrated and planned manner.’

*Neutral Interaction with SEOs; Neutral Interaction with the status of the environment, except with regard to SEO C1 (especially archaeology) which the policy has the potential to significantly adversely impact upon especially in heritage towns*

## Manager's Report Section 4– Infrastructure

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### Sustainable Modes of Transport

#### Recommendation:

To include 2 additional Public Transport Policies as follows

*“To support the improvement of the existing Dublin – Drogheda rail service which serves the urban settlements of Laytown and Gormanston and to seek to have the proposed electrification of this rail line extends to Drogheda.”*

*“The Planning Authority shall ensure that the preparation of the revised Development Contribution Scheme adequately provides the needs of public transport. In particular, regard will be had to the provision of bus corridors and lanes, bus interchange facilities (including car parks for those facilities), infrastructure to facilitate public transport, cycle and pedestrian facilities and traffic calming measures commensurate with the needs of the County.”*

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

To revise the wording of Public Transport Policy INF POL 9 to read as follows:

*“To co-operate with the Dublin Transportation Office, the Quality Bus Network Office, Bus Éireann, private operators and other appropriate transport bodies in the implementation of an agreed QBN programme and to provide an improved service delivery in the Meath area delivering more sustainable travel patterns at local and regional level.”*

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

### Roads Infrastructure

It is recommended that an additional statement be included at the end of INF POL 28 as follows:

*“A Transport and Traffic Impact Assessment and Road Safety Audit may be required as part of any development proposal which impacts on an existing junction/interchange of a National Route. Any additional works required as a result of the Transport and Traffic Impact Assessment shall be funded by the developer.*

*Transport Assessment shall be carried out to assess the predicted impacts of a development in accordance with the guidelines given in the joint Department of Environment, Heritage, and Local Government / Department of Transport / DTO publication ‘Traffic Management Guidelines’, Section 1.11”.*

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

To amend INF POL 23 as follows

*“To safeguard the capacity and safety of National Roads network by restricting further access onto National Primary roads and National Secondary roads outside of restricted speed limits which correspond with identified development boundaries in line with National Roads Authority policy”*

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

## **Interim Water Services Arrangements**

To amend Interim Arrangements in Section 4.6 Water Services – Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage to reflect the following;

The Planning Authority shall only consider such provision where capital funding to provide a permanent solution has been included in the Water Services Investment Programme or where the development is located in a settlement earmarked for significant population growth in the Settlement Strategy of this Development Plan subject to environmental considerations being respected.

This shall be reflected in the introduction to the section dealing with Interim Arrangements and the wordings of INF POL 38 and INF POL 41 shall be amended accordingly.

*Uncertain Interaction with SEOs; Uncertain Interaction with the status of the environment*

## **Water Services**

### **Flood Protection**

#### Recommendation

It is recommended to insert the following policy in relation to "Flood Protection"

*"Development should not itself be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding nor should it cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations. Development that is sensitive to the effects of flooding will generally not be permitted in flood prone or marginal areas."*

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

It is considered that the Development Assessment Criteria (Section 4.8.4) can be amended to include the recommendations of the OPW.

## Manager's Report Section 6 – Rural Development

### Gaeltacht Areas

#### Recommendation:

It is recommended that the context provided in Section 6.7.5 be updated to reflect a number of points made by Údarás na Gaeltachta.

To include an additional policy as follows:

In the preparation of the Local Area Plans for Baile Ghib and Rathcairn, that the following fundamental principles should be taken on board:

- To recognise the economic, social and cultural importance of the Irish language in Gaeltacht life
- To recognise developments that could damage the use, visibility and status of the Irish language in Meath and to reduce/prevent their impact.
- To identify methods whereby the Irish language can be preserved;
- To plan an efficient system whereby the aspects of the Gaeltacht environment can be assessed and protected as part of the planning process, including the use of language conditions.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

### Rural Settlement Strategy

#### Recommendation:

It is necessary to amend a number of policies and objectives in the Rural Development Strategy to reflect proposed amendments in the Settlement Strategy.

#### Areas Under Strong Urban Influence

RD OBJ 10	To facilitate the availability of an appropriate level of housing options in <b>Small Growth Towns</b> , on appropriately zoned lands, for persons from the adjoining rural catchment area or from the town or village itself or those who virtue of their employment require to live in the urban centre. In this regard, at least 50% of all housing options in multiple housing schemes (being developments of 4 houses or more) in Small Growth Towns shall be reserved for persons from the adjoining catchment. The Small Growth Towns are Athboy, Enfield, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, Duleek, Stamullen & Laytown – Bettystown – Mornington East. The adjoining Rural Catchment Area is 10km from the respective settlement or from the parish within which the settlement is located. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.
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*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

RD OBJ (New)	To facilitate the availability of all housing options in the <b>Key Villages and Villages</b> , on appropriately zoned lands, for persons from the adjoining rural catchment area or from the town or village itself. In this regard, all housing options in multiple housing schemes (being developments of 4 houses or more) in Key Villages and Villages shall be reserved for persons from the adjoining catchment. The Key Villages and Villages in this regard are Longwood, Summerhill, Gormonston, Julianstown, Mornington / Donacarney,
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Donore, Kilmessan, and Kilbride. The adjoining Rural Catchment Area is 10km from the respective settlement or from the parish within which the settlement is located. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

#### **Strong Urban Areas**

RD OBJ 11 To facilitate the availability of all housing options in the **Key Villages and Villages**, on appropriately zoned lands, for persons from the adjoining rural catchment area or from the town or village itself. In this regard, all housing options in multiple housing schemes (being developments of 4 houses or more) in Key Villages and Villages shall be reserved for persons from the adjoining catchment. The Key Villages and Villages in this regard are Slane, Rathmolyon, Ballivor, Clonard, Kildalkey and Drumcondrath. The adjoining Rural Catchment Area is 10km from the respective settlement or from the parish within which the settlement is located. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

#### **Low Development Pressure Areas**

RD OBJ 14 To facilitate the availability of an appropriate level (not less than 50%) of housing options in smaller villages, on appropriately zoned lands, for persons from the adjoining rural catchment area. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for. Smaller villages in this regard are Nobber, Carlanstown, Moynalty, Kilmainhamwood and Crossakiel. The adjoining Rural Catchment Area is 10km from the respective settlement or from the parish within which the settlement is located. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

To insert the following in **Low Development Pressure Areas**

#### Development Assessment Criteria

The considerations outlined above in **Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence** in assessing individual proposals for one off rural housing will also apply to this area type.

## Manager's Report Section 8 – Cultural, Heritage and Landscape Protection

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HER POL 63 'To employ the full extent of the statutory provisions of the Planning & Development Acts and Regulations and all other relevant legislation including the National Monuments Act to ensure the sustained protection of landscapes of exceptional value and sensitivity and in particular to protect the rural character, setting, amenity and archaeological heritage of Brú na Bóinne and the Hill of Tara, and of the surrounding areas including the area in the vicinity of the proposed M3 motorway and its related interchanges.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

HER POL 53 'To protect archaeological sites, monuments (including their setting), underwater archaeology and peatlands, and objects within the jurisdiction of Meath County Council, including those that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places or newly discovered sub-surface archaeological remains.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

HER POL 18 'To ensure that peatland areas which are designated (or proposed for designation) as NHAs or SACs are conserved and managed appropriately to conserve their ecological, archaeological, cultural and educational significance.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

HER POL 58 'To seek the preservation in situ (or at a minimum, preservation by record) of all designated archaeological sites or objects and their settings.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

HER POL 19 'Further to the designation of sites of geological and geomorphological interest within the County, it is the policy of the Council to protect and conserve such sites from inappropriate development that would detract from their heritage value and interpretation.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

HER POL 20 'To ensure that where development is permitted, its effect on future designated sites of geological and geomorphological interest is minimised through appropriate conditions and retention of a buffer zone.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

Insert new policy into Section 8.2.11 Hedgerows

'To recognise the archaeological importance of townland boundaries including hedgerows and promote their protection and retention.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

### The Coast

Insert new policy;

It is the policy of the Council to maintain its beaches along the East Coast to a high standard and develop recreational potential as a seaside amenity in co-operation with the relevant agencies, in order to bring them to a Blue Flag standard.

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*



### **Draft Landscape Character Types and Areas and Protected Views**

Revise the boundaries of the Boyne Valley LCA and associated boundaries to include the World Heritage Site in its entirety. Consequently, all maps contained within the Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix VI) will be amended.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

Add additional information to page three of the LCA describing the meaning of designations of International, National, Regional and Local Importance.

To provide an additional map within the Book of Maps accompanying Volume 1 showing existing views and prospects contained within the 2001 County Development Plan together with a list of those views and prospects.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

To include a new Policy in Section 8.4.2

'To protect from inappropriate development the views identified on the Landscape Character Map 05: Visual Amenity, and the views and prospects as indicated on Map X (to be included as an amendment) and listed below:'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

### **Tara-Skyrne (including Blundelstown Interchange)**

To amend Policy HER POL 63 to read;

'To employ the full extent of the statutory provisions of the Planning & Development Acts and Regulations and all other relevant legislation (including the National Monuments Act) to ensure the sustained protection of landscapes of exceptional value and sensitivity and in particular to protect the rural character, setting, amenity and archaeological heritage of Brú na Bóinne and the Hill of Tara, and of the surrounding areas including the area in the vicinity of the proposed M3 motorway and its related interchanges.'

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

To amend Policy INF POL 25;

'To facilitate the provision of Motorway Service Stations at appropriate Interchange locations in the County, with the exception of the Blundelstown Interchange having regard to the exceptional value and sensitivity of the Landscape surrounding the Hill of Tara.'

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [SEOs B2, S2]*



## Accepted Notices of Motion

Settlement Strategy SP3	In all small growth towns, <b>25% of all new multi-house developments</b> , being developments in excess of 4 houses, shall be reserved for persons who are <b>native to the County</b> or those who by virtue of their employment require to live in the urban centre. This will ensure that the development of Small Growth Towns is more closely linked to local rather than to regional residential growth. The Small Growth Towns are Athboy, Enfield, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, Duleek, Stamullen & Laytown – Bettystown – Mornington East. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.
Settlement Strategy SP4	In all key villages and villages, <b>30% of all new multi-house developments</b> , being developments in excess of 4 houses, shall be reserved for persons who are <b>native to the County</b> or those who by virtue of their employment require to live in the urban centre. This will ensure that all multiple house developments shall be provided for local growth only in accordance with the recommendations of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirements to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [A1, A3, A4]*

To amend Table 6 at page 191 of the Managers Report as follows;

Stamullen – Amend 337 (no. of units to meet household targets) to 650, and reduce other settlements in the Slane Electoral Area by 313 units

*Likely to conflict with the status of the environment [A1, A3, A4, P1]*

To amend Interim Arrangements in Section 4.6 Water Services – Water Supply, Sewerage and drainage to reflect the following:

The Planning Authority shall only consider such provision where capital funding to provide a permanent solution has been included in the Water Services Investment Programme or where in the opinion of the Planning Authority, such capital funding will be included in subsequent Water Services Investment Programme(s) within the life span of this County Development Plan, subject to environmental considerations being respected. Such temporary provision will only be considered in locations which accord with the Regional Planning Guidelines as outlined in the Settlement Strategy of this Development Plan.

Where capital funding to provide a permanent solution has not been included in the Water Services Investment Programme or in the opinion of the Planning Authority is unlikely to be included in subsequent Water Services Investment Programme(s) within the lifetime of this County Development Plan, the Planning Authority will consider proposals to provide permanent solutions. The consideration of such solutions will be restricted to where they facilitate significant population and/or commercial/industrial growth in accordance with the objectives of this County Development Plan and where the scale and location of such growth is such that high quality,

sustainable, permanent solutions can be feasibly and affordably delivered to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

In all instances,

- Developers to bear full cost of interim solutions;
- Area based rather than site based solutions preferred; and
- In relation to water supply solutions,
  - the adequacy and sustainability of proposed water source must be proved;
  - source protection required;
  - water produced must consistently meet the requirements of the Drinking Water Regulations,
  - provision for security of supply and fire fighting needs is essential,
  - Operational & Maintenance agreements, bonds etc. will be required.

To amend Interim Arrangements in Section 4.6 Water Services – Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage to reflect the following;

The Planning Authority shall only consider such provision where capital funding to provide a permanent solution has been included in the Water Services Investment Programme or where the development is located in a settlement earmarked for significant population growth in the Settlement Strategy of this Development Plan subject to environmental considerations being respected.

This shall be reflected in the introduction to the section dealing with Interim Arrangements and the wordings of INF POL 38 and INF POL 41 shall be amended accordingly.

*Uncertain Interaction with SEOs; Uncertain Interaction with the status of the environment. Should development proceed appropriate waste water treatment infrastructure then conflicts would be likely with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]*

Settlement Strategy SO 1 wording to be amended

"That Dunshaughlin shall be indicated as a Moderate Growth Town in the Settlement Strategy and elsewhere throughout the Draft County Meath Development Plan, and that the appropriate consequential changes shall be made in all relevant text (including the text of the Revised Settlement Strategy, including Settlement Strategy text relating to Strategies SP3 & SP7 including Tables 4.

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment as the number of housing units allocated to Dunshaughlin over the life of the Plan is unchanged. {However, as Dunshaughlin is primarily expanding in a dormitory nature an increase in the number of housing units allocated to Dunshaughlin over the life of the Plan would be likely to conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, B2, B4, S1, S2, A1, A3, A4, A4, M1, P1]}*

**To upgrade Carnaross to a Village and to allocate 40 units previously provided for Kells to Carnaross**

To add Ballinacree to the list of graigs in Appendix II of the Draft County Development Plan.

To add Coolronan to the list of graigs in Appendix II of the Draft County Development Plan.

**To add "Mullagh Lane", Kilmainham** to the list of graigs in Appendix II of the Draft County Development Plan.

*Likely to cumulatively conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]*

"No residential developments may take place in open green spaces that are the subject of a deed of dedication or identified in a planning application as open space."

"That areas designated open space/green area as a condition of planning be retained as such and be precluded from any further development to ensure the availability of community facilities for the residents of the area which is subject of the grant of planning permission".

*Positive Interaction with SEOs; Likely to improve the status of the environment*

It is recommended to include the following new policy in the Infrastructure Chapter of the County Development Plan.

'To require that the design of external lighting minimises the incidence of light spillage or pollution into the surrounding environment.'

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

#### No. 76

Insert new objective in Section 6.7.4 "Rural Villages & Graigs" to read

The Planning Authority will consider a limited amount of cluster type development in Rural Areas outside of designated graigs for persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community with strong familial, social and functional ties to the area as set out in Section 6.7.3 (One Off Housing in the Countryside). A cluster type development shall be defined as a maximum of 5 houses for which a local housing co-operative has been formed and subject to site suitability criteria as contained in the Draft Development Plan. Pending the satisfactory operation of a pilot cluster in each of the Electoral Areas, the Planning Authority may consent to the application of this policy on a more widespread basis.

*Likely to cumulatively conflict with the status of the environment [W1, W2, W4, B2, S1, S2, A4, M1]*

To insert a new policy in Section 7.4 "Community Infrastructure in Co. Meath"

"The Planning Authority will strive for meaningful consultation with community groups and youth agencies in the development of any significant public space that occurs with Large and Moderate Growth Towns and in particular in relation to the Local Authority's own development."

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

To insert a new policy in Section 7.4 "Community Infrastructure in Co. Meath"

"The Planning Authority shall seek the efficient delivery of community and social facilities commensurate with the needs of the resultant resident population and that these facilities are developed contemporaneously with residential development. The preparation of Local Area Plans and Framework Plans assisted by the Residential Estate Guidelines (when prepared) shall provide for the delivery of such facilities."

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

Insert new objective in Section 8.2.16 Public Rights of Way to read

"The Planning Authority shall engage with external bodies to seek to obtain internal and external resources to complete a list of existing public rights of way within two years of the adoption of this plan. This list will be accompanied by detailed mapping showing public rights of way and that appropriate signage will be put in place."

*No Likely Interaction with SEOs; No Likely Interaction with the status of the environment*

# SEA STATEMENT

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Of the

## Draft Meath County Development Plan 2007 - 2013

## Strategic Environmental Assessment

**For: Meath County Council**

County Hall  
Navan  
County Meath



**By: CAAS (Environmental Services) Limited**

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**JUNE 2007**

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# Section 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Terms of Reference

This is the SEA Statement to the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 (CDP) Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

## 1.2 Legislative Context

The SEA Directive<sup>1</sup> requires that after the adoption of the plan or programme, the plan or programme making authority is required to make certain information available to the public, the designated authorities and, where relevant, neighbouring countries.

This information includes:

- a) the plan or programme as adopted;
- b) a statement which contains certain information, referred to in the Guidelines<sup>2</sup> as an 'SEA Statement' and to which this document relates, and;
- c) measures to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementing the plans and programmes and monitoring measure.

## 1.3 Content of the SEA Statement

In compliance with the legislation this SEA Statement includes a:

1. A summary of how environmental considerations and the Environmental Report were integrated into the CDP which highlights the main changes to the plan which resulted from consideration of environmental issues and the Environmental Report.
2. A summary of how submissions/consultations have been taken into account
3. Reasons for choosing the CDP as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives considered.

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<sup>1</sup> The SEA Directive is transposed into Irish legislation through the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004) and the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 435 of 2004)

<sup>2</sup> Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2004) *Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities* Dublin: Government of Ireland.

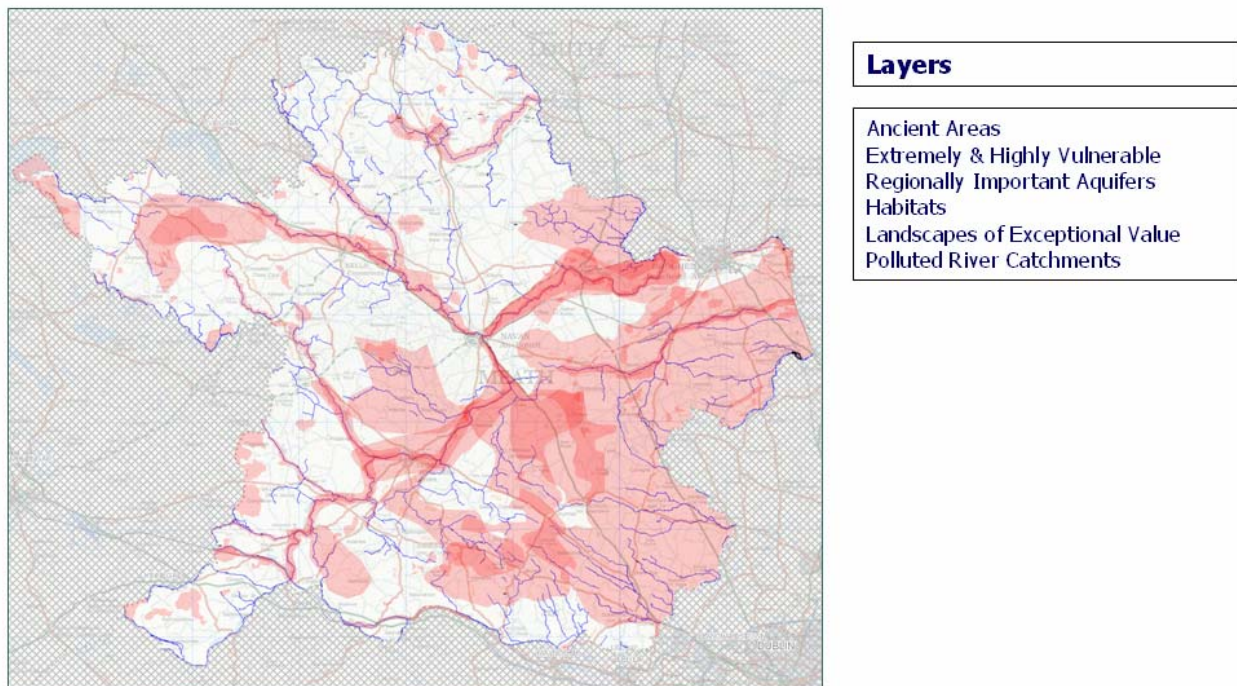
## Section 2 Integration of Environmental Considerations into the CDP

### 2.1 Introduction

The emerging Draft Plan was initially reviewed, followed by an iterative approach to the preparation of the SEA. It was accompanied by a presentation to the Elected Members which outlined the range of environmental issues and objectives that needed to be considered when reviewing the possible alternatives. This was carried out prior to the public display and consideration of the Draft County Development Plan. The purpose was to provide Members with a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the future planning of the County.

### 2.2 Identification of Potential Effects at the Earliest Stage Possible

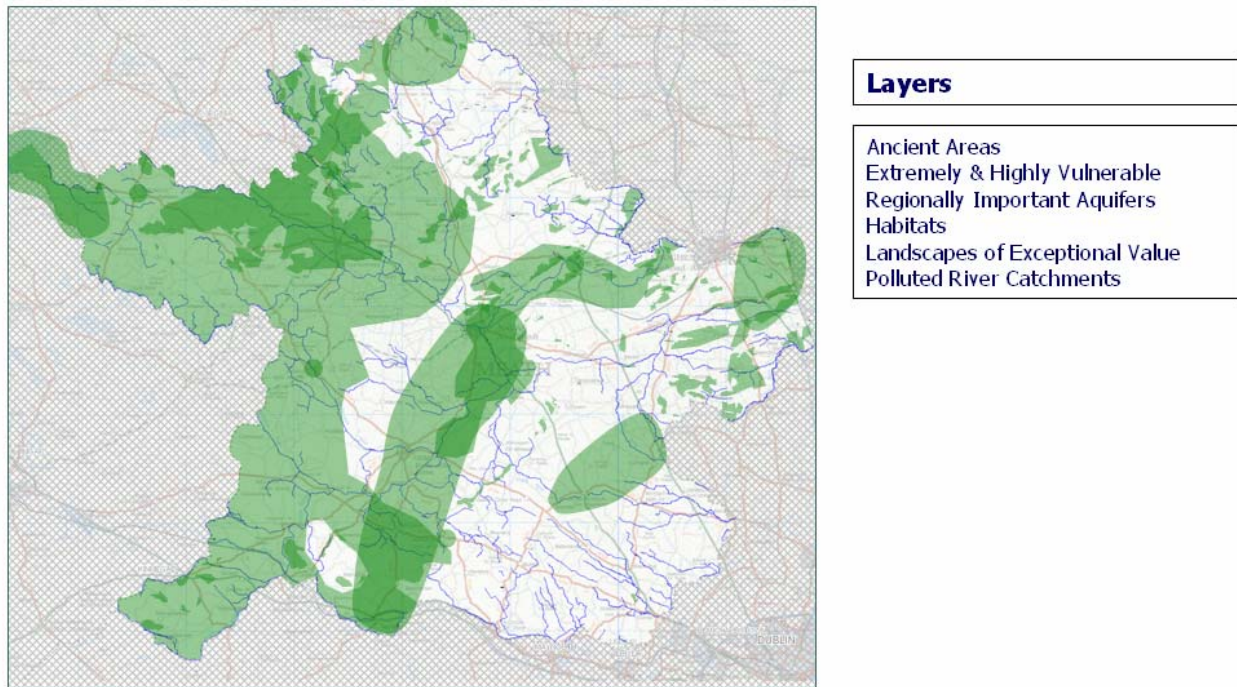
The environmental report made much use of mapping. Environmental constraints (see Figure 2.1) were mapped in order to identify which areas of the County would be most sensitive to development and would suffer the most adverse effects if growth was to be accommodated in those areas. Environmental constraints in County Meath included: extremely and highly vulnerable regionally important aquifers; landscapes of exceptional value; polluted river catchments; sensitive habitats as well as ancient areas. By mapping the layers of each constraint on the same map, areas with the most limited carrying capacity were identified and this facilitated a recommendation to divert growth away from these areas.



**Figure 2.1 Environmental Constraints**

Environmental Assets which were determined as being most likely to be potentially impacted upon by the plan were also mapped as per Figure 2.2.





**Figure 2.2 Environmental Assets**

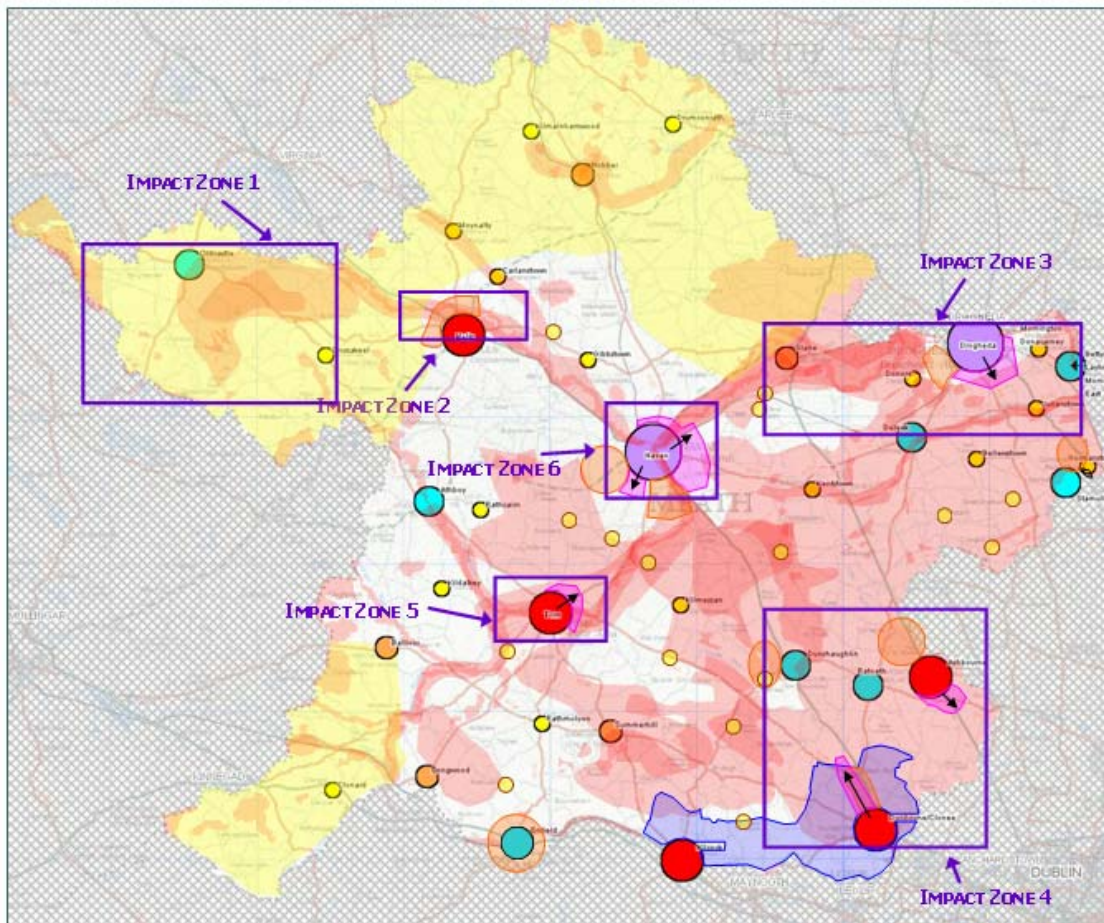
County Development Plan objectives with a spatial element were also mapped in order to determine what locations - and thus what environmental constraints and objectives - would be affected by implementation of the plan.

By mapping the Development Plan objectives alongside the environmental factors the principal environmental effects associated with the accommodation of growth were identified at the earliest stage possible. This allowed planners to anticipate and avoid areas in which growth could not be accommodated. By directing development towards compatible land uses and robust receiving environments certain adverse environmental effects of implementing the plan were avoided.

## 2.3 Mitigation through the Identification of Impact Zones

Mapping also facilitated the identification of Impact Zones - areas where Development Plan objectives conflicted with environmental constraints. The SEA integrated the requirement to prepare Spatial Strategies for each of these Impact Zones in order to help mitigate against these effects.





**Figure 2.3 Likely Future Development, Constraints and Resultant Impact Zones in County Meath**

The mapping of the Environmental Constraints in County Meath alongside the spatially specific provision of the County Development Plan provided a graphically explicit decision-making tool which helped the decision-makers by providing them with certainty and confidence with regard to the effects of the County Development Plan. The slide from one of the presentations overleaf clearly showed the Elected members that if a sprawl scenario was to be adopted then most growth would occur in areas corresponding to those in which there are most environmental effects.

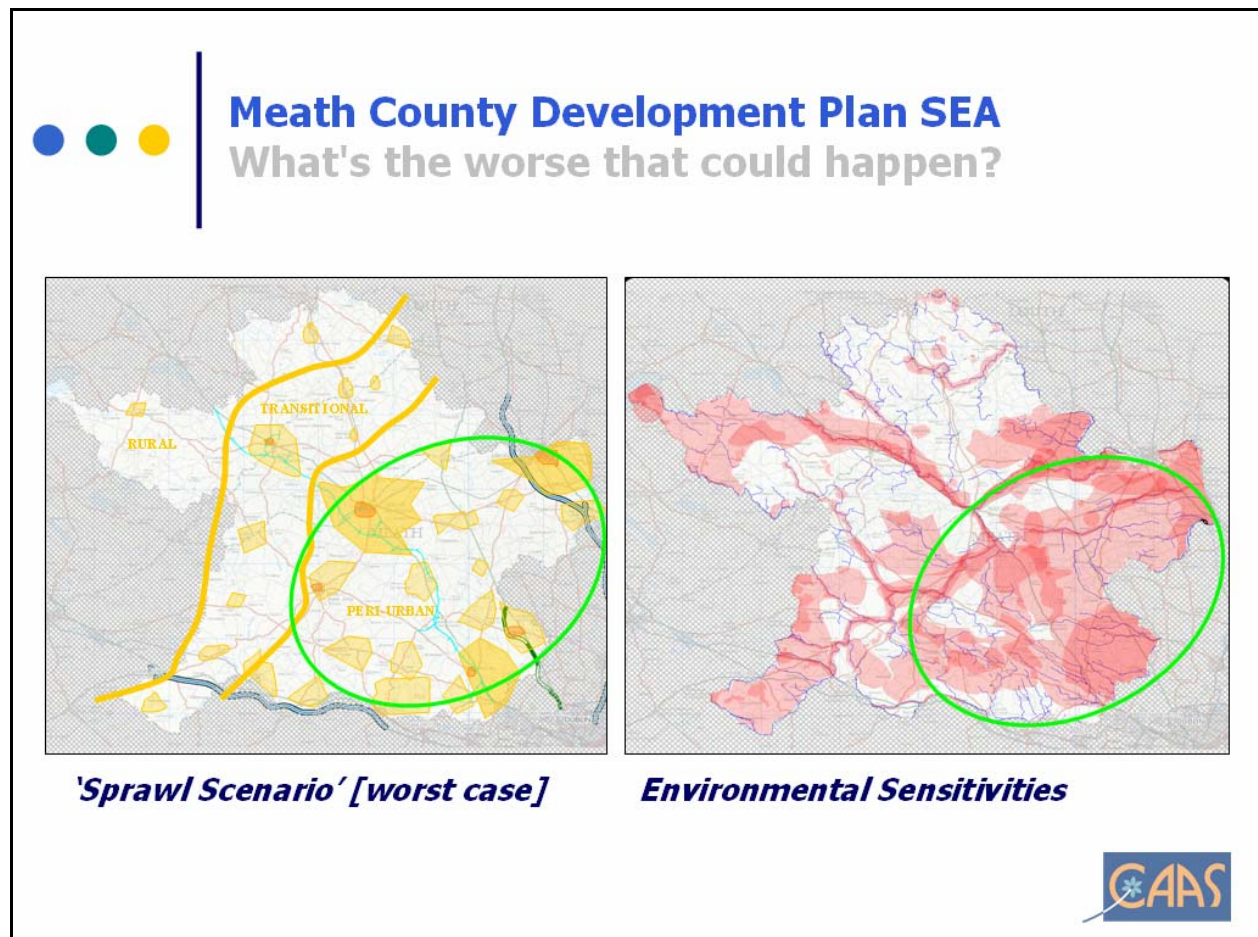


Figure 2.4 'What's the Worst that could happen?' - Slide from presentation to the Elected Members of Meath County Council

## 2.4 Other Mitigation Measures

### 2.4.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires information to be given on mitigation measures- the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme. Mitigation involves ameliorating significant negative effects and enhancing positive ones. Locations which are likely to need mitigation measures in order to further reduce the impacts of accommodating growth in County Meath were identified by the SEA process and are shown on Figure 2.3, alongside environmental constraints.

The final iteration of the CDP incorporates policies that have evolved to anticipate and avoid potentially adverse impacts on the environment. Remaining potentially adverse conflicts or impacts may be characterised as 'residual impacts'. These are unavoidable potential impacts that remain after all mitigation measures have been put in place. The majority of these are potential impacts – which are likely to be capable of further mitigation through careful, detailed implementation of Local Area Plans, Local Spatial Strategies and Thematic Spatial Strategies.

### 2.4.2 Local Spatial Strategies

Arising from an analysis of the likely interactions between a mapping of the Settlement Strategy and a mapping of the environmental issues in the County, the environmental report proposed to prepare a Spatial Strategy for each of the impact zones identified on Figure 3.2. This proposal was adopted by the CDP as follows:

## **SS OBJ 5**

"To prepare a Spatial Strategy for each of the following centres or areas to assist in the preparation of future development plans or local area plans. These strategies will identify the location, significance and sensitivity of the range of environmental assets and constraints that occur within these particularly sensitive areas that are likely to comprise higher than average intensities of development:

1. Navan
2. Trim
3. Kells
4. Dynamic Clusters 2 & 3 – Area including Dunboyne / Clonee / Pace Corridor, Dunshaughlin, Ashbourne & Ratoath
5. Boyne Valley – Area including Slane, Duleek, Donore, Drogheda and the East Meath urban centres
6. Oldcastle / Loughcrew / Sliabh na Calliagh

### **2.4.3 Thematic Spatial Strategies**

In addition to these six specific areas, the environmental report recommended Thematic Spatial Strategies are prepared and assessed as follows:

- Spatial Strategy for Rural Development & Agricultural Restructuring

Meath has a very wide range of land use capability that will result in different parts of the County having very different futures under the onset of the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. It is likely that areas with marginal agriculture – particularly in the north-west are likely to experience increasing levels of afforestation, alternative enterprises and rural settlement as a result. If these occur in an integrated and coordinated manner then there are likely to be benefits for all - in addition to increased protection for environmental assets such as groundwater, surface water quality, landscape and cultural heritage. A Thematic Spatial Strategy for Agricultural Restructuring will supply this address this need.

- A Spatial Strategy for Industry and Enterprise

Meath is developing significant clusters of power, road, water and gas in parts of the south-east of the County. If properly coordinated these areas could be harnessed to become nationally significant zones to support and accommodate very large-scale, value adding employment centres. A Spatial Strategy for Industry and Enterprise would identify these and reserve them for these uses while avoiding potential for future environmental and planning conflicts.

- A Spatial Strategy for Forestry

A number of social, economic and agricultural forces may combine to see the beginning of a marked increase in lowland afforestation within Meath. If properly harnessed such forestry can positively facilitate many other land-uses – including often difficult land-use types such as aquifer and surface-water protection, tourism, rural housing, mineral extraction, industry, and the provision of infrastructure location.

- A Spatial Strategy for infrastructure

Meath's growing population and its location near Dublin will mean that major infrastructure projects – such as power, rail, water, waste and road – will continue to be sited within the County. To minimise the potential for conflict A Spatial Strategy for infrastructure should be drawn up to identify and protect corridors for major critical infrastructure in the County.

These proposals were adopted by the CDP as follows:

**RD OBJ 1**

To prepare a Thematic Spatial Strategy for rural development and agricultural restructuring. This strategy will examine the likely effects of the Common Agricultural Policy reform on marginal agricultural areas which are likely to experience increasing levels of afforestation, alternative enterprises and rural settlement as a result. The Strategy will attempt to plan such changes in an integrated and coordinated manner which will prove beneficial for all in addition to providing increased protection for environmental assets such as groundwater and surface water quality, landscape and cultural heritage.

**ECON DEVT SO 1**

To prepare a Thematic Spatial Strategy for industrial development and enterprise which would identify and support the development of areas where significant clusters of power, roads, water and gas could be harnessed to become nationally important areas to accommodate very large scale value added employment while avoiding potential for future environmental and planning conflicts. This process will include the assessment of existing industrial / employment centres outside of established urban areas and consultation with key stakeholders in the area. In the first instance, the east and south east of the County will be examined.

**RD OBJ 2**

To prepare a Thematic Spatial Strategy for forestry which, if properly harnessed, can positively facilitate many other land uses including often difficult land use types and objectives such as aquifer and surface water protection, tourism, rural housing, mineral extraction, industry and the provision of infrastructure location.

**INFRA SO 1**

To prepare a Thematic Spatial Strategy for Infrastructure which will identify and protect corridors for major critical infrastructure in the County such as power, rail, road, water and waste.

## **Section 3 How consultations have been taken into account**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In compliance with the SEA Regulations consultations were made in order to determine the scope of the SEA with: the EPA; the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG); the Department of Communications, the Marine and Natural Resources (DCMNR), and; a number of departments at Meath County Council. A scoping issues paper was prepared in order to help determine the scope and facilitate consultation with the aforementioned prescribed environmental authorities.

### **3.2 Scoping Consultations**

#### **3.2.1 DCMNR (made by Michael O'Mahony, 16 December 2005)**

##### **3.2.1.1 Key Issues**

The DCMNR:

- identified a referencing issue in the scoping issues paper;
- stated that they were concerned about the over exploitation of the River Boyne for abstraction purposes to the detriment of the aquatic ecosystem;
- noted concern with regard to the fact that the policies of the CDP are restricted by the national Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, and;
- stated that development should be accompanied by the appropriate waste water treatment infrastructure.

The DCMNR's submission included the ERFB's recommendations that:

- Road development should not impact upon aquatic habitats either through water pollution or interference with migratory fish species or spawning grounds;
- development should be accompanied by the appropriate waste water treatment infrastructure and that rural development should not pollute aquatic environments
- the aquatic environment be protected by controlling pollution and by preventing the culverting of ecologically viable watercourses

##### **3.2.1.2 Taking into account**

The environmental report notes that:

- there is a significant abstraction from the major water courses in County Meath, in particular the River Boyne. The relationship between flow rates, abstraction rates, assimilative capacity, and consequent impact on environmental factors into the future is an ongoing concern';
- 'the Draft County Development Plan must comply with the national and regional policy framework in which it is situated, translating key strategic decisions made at national and regional level to the local county level';
- 'Waste water disposal is acting as significant constraint to development and that the quality of water bodies in County Meath is suffering damage from inadequacy in the capacity of both private and local authority systems and the assimilative capacity of receiving waters';
- 'Rural housing developments, which individually would not necessarily have significant adverse effect on groundwater, have had cumulative adverse effects as ground water can be permanently polluted by a proliferation of inadequate waste water treatment systems';

The CDP includes policies relating to the protection of water quality and aquatic habitats and biodiversity and which require compliance with national standards and EPA Guidelines with regard to septic tanks and proprietary treatment systems, or other waste water treatment and storage systems.



In addition, the environmental report includes a mitigation measure to prepare a 'Thematic Spatial Strategy for Infrastructure' which will identify and protect corridors for major critical infrastructure in the County such as power, rail, road, water and waste while helping to avoid potential for future environmental and planning conflicts.

### **3.2.2 DEHLG (made by Teresa Halloran, 21 December 2005)**

#### **3.2.2.1 Key Issues**

The DEHLG recommended that the environmental report should take into account:

- The known archaeological heritage of the area and the potential for unknown subsurface archaeological remains;
- the integration of wildlife corridors into a Strategic Environmental Objective (SEO), and;
- the integration of nature conservation and biodiversity into an indicator.

The DEHLG also recommended that the National Parks and Wildlife Service be involved in the development of a Coastal Zone Management Plan.

#### **3.2.2.2 Taking into account**

The environmental baseline description of the County and the evaluation of the environmental effects of implementing the CDP took account of archaeological heritage, including that which is unknown, through the concept of 'ancient areas'.

The concept of ecological corridors are supported by a number of Strategic Environmental Objectives including SEO B1 - B4 and SEO S2.

Nature conservation and biodiversity have been integrated into indicators B1, B2 and B3 (see monitoring programme).

### **3.2.3 Environmental Protection Agency**

Consultation with regard to scoping was provided by the EPA through a series of meetings during which guidance and recommendations with regard to the description of the environmental baseline, the development of alternatives, the evaluation of these alternatives, mitigation and monitoring was provided. This guidance was taken into account during the carrying out of the SEA.

## **3.3 Submissions**

Submissions/Observations made after public display were responded to by CAAS through a 'Report on Submissions'. This report responded to submissions recommending that the Environmental Report be altered where appropriate. Any changes to the Environmental Report as a result of submissions are detailed below.

### **3.3.1 Submission by Irish Concrete Federation (Mr. Liam Smyth)**

To replace, in Section 5.1.6: *The appropriate utilisation of the county's mineral resources is an important element of the sustainable development of the County.* With: *The appropriate utilisation of the county's mineral resources is an important element of the sustainable development of the County and indeed the Greater Dublin Region.*

To replace, in Section 6.1: *Mineral resources are also an important natural resource. A detailed crushed rock and aggregate potential mapping project was completed by the Geological Survey of Ireland on behalf of Meath County Council in January 2004. Rock Aggregate Potential & Rock Granular Potential has been taken from this data in order to compile Map 6.1. All environmental assets are shown together on Map 6.4. Concentrations of environmental assets are shown by a darker green colour.* With: *Mineral resources are also an important natural resource. A detailed crushed rock and aggregate potential mapping project was completed by the Geological Survey of Ireland on behalf of Meath County Council in*

*January 2004. Rock Aggregate Potential & Rock Granular Potential has been taken from this data in order to compile Map 6.1. It is noted that mineral resources may be identified in additional locations in the future. Environmental assets are shown together on Map 6.4. Concentrations of environmental assets are shown by a darker green colour.*

To replace, in Section 7.6.0: *A detailed crushed rock and aggregate potential mapping project was completed by the Geological Survey of Ireland on behalf of Meath County Council in January 2004. Rock Aggregate Potential & Rock Granular Potential has been taken from this data in order to compile Map 6.1.*  
With: *A detailed crushed rock and aggregate potential mapping project was completed by the Geological Survey of Ireland on behalf of Meath County Council in January 2004. Rock Aggregate Potential & Rock Granular Potential has been taken from this data in order to compile Map 6.1. It is noted that mineral resources may be identified in additional locations in the future.*

### **3.3.2 Submission by Eastern Regional Fisheries Board Irish (Mr. Noel McGloin)**

To replace Section 5.1.5: *Meath has a large number of watercourses to which effluent is discharged by Meath County Council from its municipal waste water treatment plants and privately by license issued by the Environment Section of Meath County Council. The assimilative capacities of these watercourses represent a significant asset to facilitate development within the county.* With: *Meath has a large number of watercourses to which effluent is discharged by Meath County Council from its municipal waste water treatment plants and privately by license issued by the Environment Section of Meath County Council. The unpolluted status and assimilative capacity of a number of these watercourses represent a significant asset to facilitate development within the county. Such development should not compromise Meath County Council's ability to achieve its obligations under the Water Framework Directive.*

## Section 4 The Preferred Alternative

### 4.1 Introduction

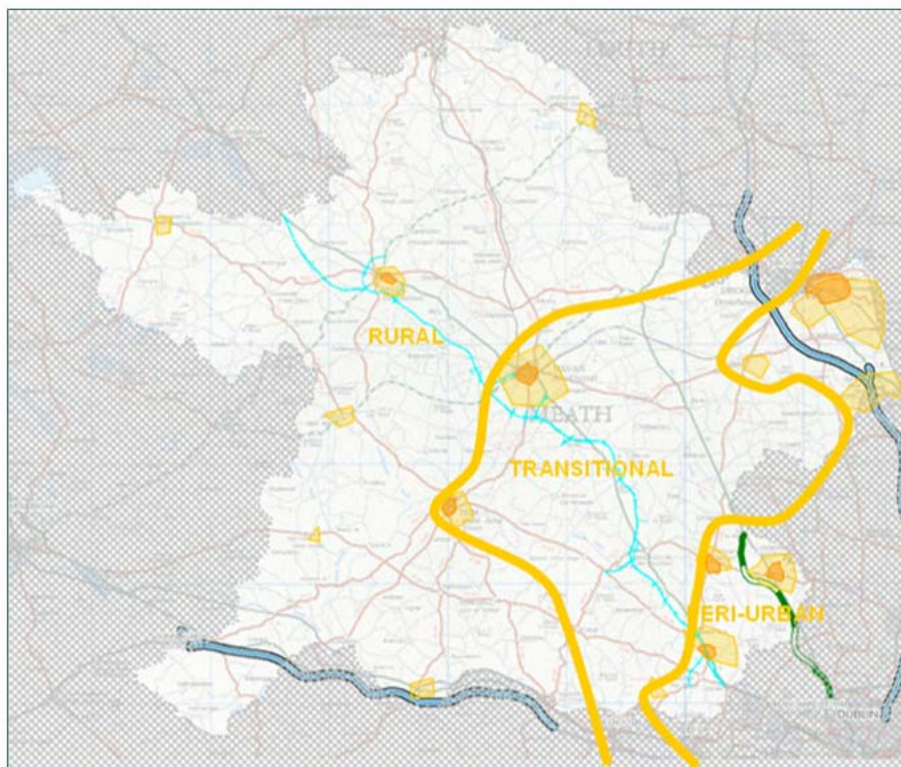
Article 5 of the SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to consider “reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme” and the significant environmental effects of the alternatives selected. Alternatives were required to be realistic and capable of implementation, representative of a wide range of different approaches within the statutory and operational requirements of the County Development Plan.

The strategic options available to the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan were limited as a result of higher level strategic actions.

### 4.2 The Alternatives and The Preferred Alternative

The SEA examined four development scenarios:

- Scenario 1 ‘Current Situation’ (Figure 4.1)
- Scenario 2 ‘Unplanned Trend Growth’ (Figure 4.2)
- Scenario 3A ‘Sprawl’ (Figure 4.4)
- Scenario 3B ‘Planned Growth’ (Figure 4.4).

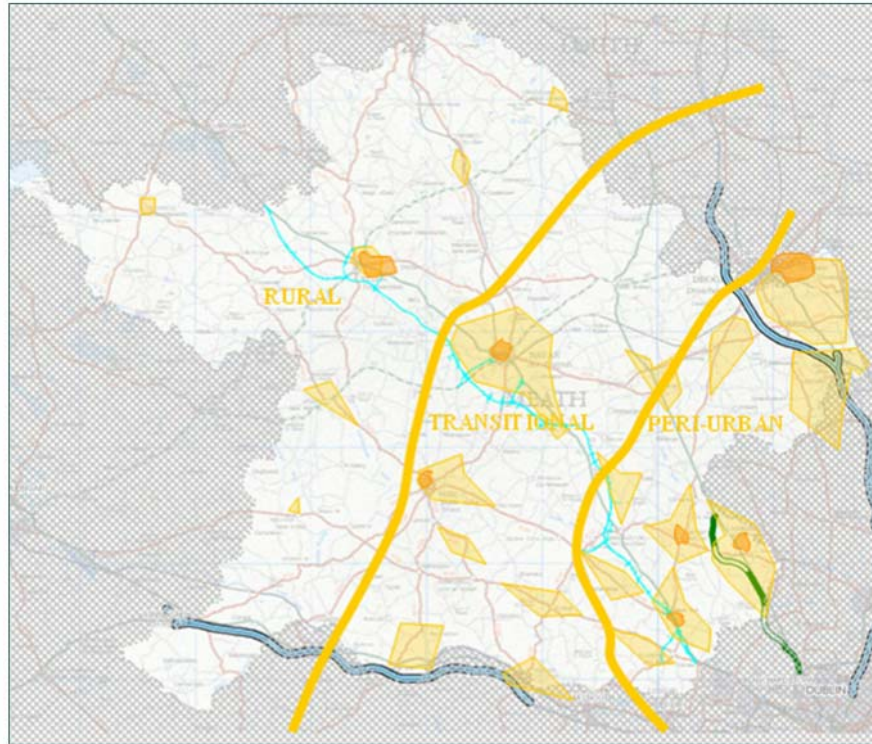


**Figure 4.1 Current Scenario**

Scenario 1 ‘Current Situation’ shows the existing growth in County Meath which is divided into three zones. The Peri-Urban Zone covers the two areas of the highest growth in County Meath which are located in the east and south east of the county. The eastern part of the Peri-Urban Zone includes the growth area around Drogheda, growth along the coast including Bettystown, Laytown and Mornington East, and growth inland at Gormanstown and Duleek. The south eastern part of the Peri-Urban Zone includes the moderate growth towns of Ashbourne, Dunboyne/Clonee and Kilcock and the smaller growth town of Rathoath. The current situation shows that a Rural Zone exists in the north and east of the county which includes the County’s areas of least growth as well as growth areas including Kells, Athboy



and Oldcastle. A Transitional Zone, sandwiched between the Rural and Peri-Urban Zones stretches from the north east to the south of the county and includes the large growth centres of Navan and Trim.



**Figure 4.2 Unplanned Trend Growth Scenario**

Scenario 2 'Unplanned Trend Growth' sets out to accommodate growth by not zoning appropriate lands and by dealing with planning applications on an ad hoc basis. This would be likely to result in increased growth around all existing urban areas in the County as well as increases in the number of one-off housing in the countryside. Under this scenario development would not be directed towards properly serviced, robust receiving environments, rather development would be dealt with through the planning system as it occurs. An increased development in the countryside would result in significant cumulative adverse effects across the County on environmental components such as biodiversity, water quality and landscapes.

Scenario 3A 'Sprawl' results of the expansion of the existing urban areas, gauges and around cross roads. Increased sprawl would also result in significant effects on environmental components such as habitats, water quality and landscapes. Sprawl would also decrease the economic viability of providing services and infrastructure to the County's population which would be spread out over wide areas.

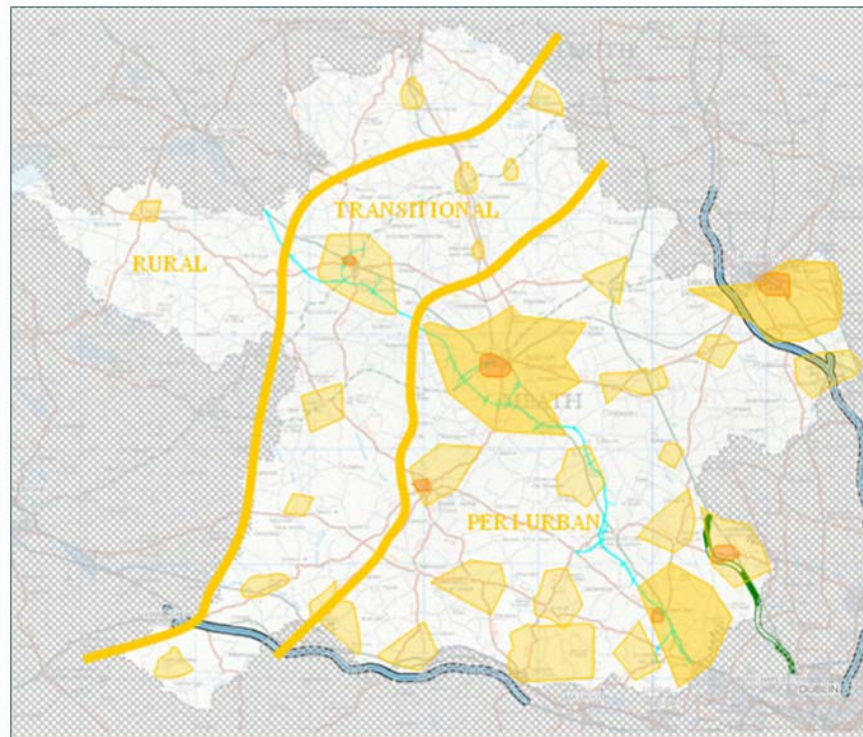


Figure 4.3 Sprawl Scenario

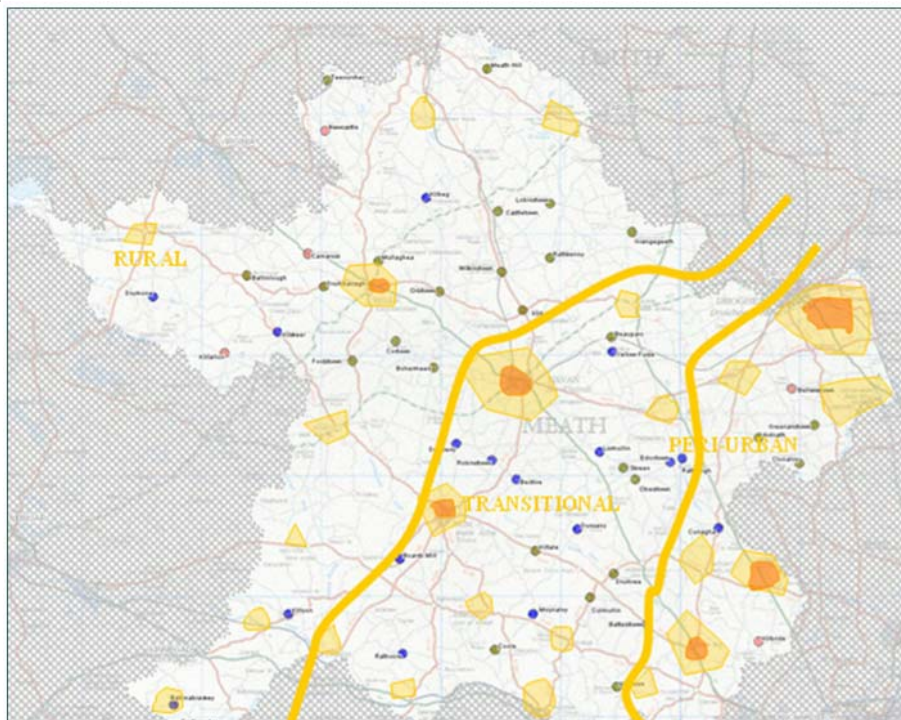


Figure 4.4 Planned Growth Scenario

**Scenario 3B - 'Planned Growth'** was the chosen scenario for the CDP as this scenario has the **lowest environmental impacts - providing that the mitigation measures proposed are adopted**. Scenario 3B summarises the general objectives that underlie the Preferred Option. This option incorporates relevant National & Regional Strategies while also providing a structured vision that will realistically accommodate continued urban and per-urban growth in the east as well as providing a viable future to stabilise and revitalise rural areas in the west of the County.

# MONITORING PROGRAMME

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## for the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2007 - 2013

**For: Meath County Council**

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**JUNE 2007**

## **Monitoring Programme for the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013**

The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. The Managers Progress Report which is required to be prepared 2 years after the adoption of the County Development Plan under Section 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 is required under the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 to 'include information in relation to progress on, and the results of monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the development plan.'

Monitoring enables, at an early stage, the identification of unforeseen adverse effects and the undertaking of appropriate remedial action. In addition to this, monitoring can also play an important role in assessing whether the County Development Plan (CDP) is achieving Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) required by environmental protection and other related legislation. The measurement of trends and progress over time relating to these SEOs - used in the evaluation of the environmental effects of implementing the CDP - is provided through the use of indicators - generally quantitative measures that can be used to simplify complex interrelationships and provide information on environmental issues, which is relatively easy to understand.

The Environmental Report of the Meath County Development Plan puts forward an indicative list of indicators for discussion purposes. The table below outlines indicators, targets - which have been identified with regard to relevant environmental protection legislation and the CDP can help work towards - and monitoring sources which have been selected for use and which are to be monitored over the lifetime of the CDP. It is anticipated that the indicators will be presented in the context of the 2 year plan review.

Measurements for the indicators come from existing monitoring sources and no new monitoring should be required to take place. Existing monitoring sources include those maintained by Meath County Council and other relevant authorities such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Eastern Region Fisheries Board. Focus is given to indicators which are relevant to the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the CDP. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the relevant targets.

It is noted that this monitoring programme may be used as a template for or may contribute information towards any monitoring requirements which may arise as a result of implementation of other land use plans in County Meath such as individual Development Plans for Navan, Kells and Trim, and Local Area Plans for settlements throughout the County.

Monitoring Programme for the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013

Environmental Component	Selected Indicator(s)	Selected Target(s)	Source (s)
<b>Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</b>	<p>B1 (Ecological Sites): Percentage of relevant habitat or species lost in designated ecological sites</p> <p>B2 (Ecological Sites): Number of significant adverse impacts, including direct, cumulative and indirect impacts, to relevant habitats and species in designated ecological sites by development within or adjacent to these sites</p> <p>B3 (Ecological Connectivity and Local Biodiversity): Percentage of ecological networks or parts thereof which provide significant connectivity between areas of local biodiversity of high importance.</p>	<p>B1: No losses of relevant habitat. Species or their sustaining resources in designated ecological sites during the lifespan of the CDP</p> <p>B2: No significant adverse impacts, including direct, cumulative and indirect impacts, to relevant habitats, species or their sustaining resources in designated ecological sites by development within or adjacent to these sites</p> <p>B3: No ecological networks or parts thereof which provide significant connectivity between areas of local biodiversity of high importance to be lost without remediation.</p>	<p>Meath County Council/ National Parks and Wildlife Service</p> <p>Meath County Council/ National Parks and Wildlife Service</p> <p>Meath County Council/ National Parks and Wildlife Service</p>
<b>Population and Human Health</b>	HH1: Occurrence [any] of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health	HH1: No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors.	Meath County Council/ Environmental Protection Agency/ Health and Safety Authority/ HSE NE
<b>Soil</b>	<p>S1 (Brownfield Development): Area of brownfield land available</p> <p>S2 (Extraction Industry): Proportion of excavated area returned to productive use.</p>	<p>S1: A significant reduction in brownfield land to be available (subject to availability on the open market and demand for such land) at the end of the CDP lifespan.</p> <p>S2: To seek the preparation of progressive rehabilitation programmes for all approved and licensed extraction sites with agreed rehabilitation targets.</p>	<p>Meath County Council</p> <p>Meath County Council</p>
<b>Water</b>	W1 (Rivers): Biotic Quality Rating (Q Value)	<p>W1i: To maintain a biotic quality rating of Q4, in line with the requirement to achieve good water status under the Water Framework Directive, by 2015</p> <p>W1ii: To improve biotic quality ratings, where possible, to Q5</p>	Meath County Council/ EPA/ Eastern River Basin District/ Shannon River Basin District/ North South Share River Basin District



## Monitoring Programme for the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013

<b>Water (continued)</b>	W2 (Lakes): Trophic Status	W2i: To maintain a trophic status of mesotrophic, in line with the requirement to achieve good water status under the Water Framework Directive, by 2015  W2ii: To improve trophic status, where possible, to oligotrophic	EPA/ Eastern River Basin District/ Shannon River Basin District/ North South Share River Basin District  EPA/ Eastern River Basin District/ Shannon River Basin District/ North South Share River Basin District
	W3 (Groundwater used for drinking): Faecal Coliform Counts per 100ml of groundwater used for drinking water	W3: 0 Faecal Coliform Counts per 100ml of groundwater	Meath County Council/ HSE NE
	W4 (Coastal/ Transitional Waters): Trophic Status (as used by EPA's Assessment of Trophic Status of Estuaries and Bays in Ireland)	W4: To maintain or to improve trophic status, where relevant, to unpolluted in line with the requirement to achieve good water status under the Water Framework Directive, by 2015	EPA/ Eastern River Basin District
	W5a (Bathing Water): Total Coliform Counts per 100ml of bathing water	W5a: ≤ 5,000 Total Coliform Counts per 100ml of bathing water	Meath County Council/ EPA/ Eastern River Basin District
	W5b(Bathing Water): Faecal Coliform Counts per 100ml of bathing water	W5b: ≤ 1,000 Faecal Coliform Counts per 100ml of bathing water	
<b>Material Assets</b>	M1 (Waste Water): Number of new developments granted permission which cannot be adequately served by a public waste water treatment plant over the lifetime of the CDP	M1 (Waste Water): No new developments granted permission which cannot be adequately served by a public waste water treatment plant over the lifetime of the CDP	Meath County Council

<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	<p>CH1 (Archaeological Heritage): Number of unauthorised developments permitted over the lifespan of the CDP which result in full or partial loss of: archaeology listed on the Record of Monuments and Places; areas identified as being of archaeological potential and significance; sites identified as being major sites of archaeological importance, and; the context of the above within the surrounding landscape where relevant.</p> <p>CH2 (Architectural Heritage): Number of unauthorised developments permitted over the lifespan of the CDP which result in physical loss or loss to the context in the surrounding landscape or streetscape of RPSs</p>	<p>CH1: No unauthorised developments permitted over the lifespan of the CDP which result in full or partial loss of: archaeology listed on the Record of Monuments and Places; areas identified as being of archaeological potential and significance; sites identified as being major sites of archaeological importance, and; the context of the above within the surrounding landscape where relevant.</p> <p>CH2: No unauthorised developments permitted over the lifespan of the CDP which result in physical loss or loss to the context in the surrounding landscape or streetscape of RPSs</p>	Meath County Council
<b>Landscape</b>	<p>L1 (Sensitive Landscapes): Number of unauthorised conspicuous developments located within sensitive landscapes</p> <p>L2 (Vulnerable Features): Number of unauthorised conspicuous developments adversely impacting upon vulnerable landscape features</p>	<p>L1: No unauthorised developments to be conspicuously located within sensitive landscapes</p> <p>L2: No unauthorised developments to adversely impact upon vulnerable landscape features</p>	Meath County Council