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*Fáilte chuig
Ráth Tó*

**WELCOME TO
RATOATH**

Meath

Ireland's Heritage Capital

SECTIONS IN THIS CHAPTER

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Scope of the Local Area Plan
- 1.3 Draft Ratoath Local Area Plan
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Local Area Plan

1.1 Introduction

This Local Area Plan relates to the town of Ratoath. Specific planning policy relating to Ratoath is currently contained in the Detailed Objectives, Written Statement and Urban Detail Map for the town which was prepared for the Meath County Development Plan 2001 and which has been transposed to the Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013 pending preparation of a new Local Area Plan. It is an objective of the Meath County Development Plan (2007- 2013) that all Local Area Plans will be prepared within the immediate two years following the adoption of the County Plan (March 2007).

This Plan consists of a written statement accompanied by a zoning and objectives map. It will guide development in the area for 6 years from the date of adoption by Meath County Council, or until the Plan is varied or a new Plan is made.

1.2 Scope of the Local Area Plan

This Local Area Plan is made in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006 and with the objectives of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. The Act requires that Local Area Plans consist of a written statement and a plan or plans indicating the objectives in such detail as may be determined by the Planning Authority for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which it applies including details of community facilities and amenities and on standards for the design of development and structures.

The challenge is to provide a Local Area Plan that will form the basis for a consensus between the Planning Authority, the public, landowners, developers and all interested parties, as to how development should proceed to achieve the objectives for Ratoath, in a manner which is physically, economically and socially sustainable.

A further challenge is to provide a document that is sufficiently prescriptive to achieve the objectives while allowing for flexibility to account for economic and social changes that may occur over the plan period and which facilitates the generation of a built environment which is attractive and distinctive and which creates a sense of place for those who will live and work in it as well as visit it.

1.3 Ratoath Local Area Plan

The Local Area Plan (LAP) is a statutory document, consistent with the objectives of Meath County Council, containing guidelines as to how the town and its environs should develop over the Plan period. The written statement contains analysis of statistics, projections and policy objectives. The Plan provides a framework for sustainability which preserves the natural and built heritage from damage caused by intensive development proposals. The Local Area Plan map illustrates a graphic representation of the proposals included in the Plan, indicating land-use and conservation designations together with various specific objectives. Survey maps may not always be entirely accurate, and in the case of conflicts between the map and the statement, the statement shall supersede the map.

The Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 forms the key contextual document used in the preparation of this LAP. Meath County Council adopted this County Development Plan (CDP) on the 2nd March 2007. The Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013 sets out a vision, policy framework and specific objectives for future development in County Meath for a period of 6 years. The policies and objectives of this Local Area Plan are consistent with those of the County Development Plan, being the primary planning policy document for the County.

A Local Area Plan (LAP) is a follow on of the County Development Plan at local level. The County Development Plan is the principal document and takes precedent over the LAP in the event of conflict arising between the contents of the two documents.

Ratoath is designated as a Small Growth Town in the County settlement hierarchy. The County Development Plan notes that Ratoath has experienced unparalleled growth in recent years and that the form of this growth is such that the town has developed almost as a suburb with no corresponding growth in employment generating uses other than small scale retail provision.

The role of Small Growth Towns is to largely facilitate local need. Their development will be supported by the growth of the adjacent Moderate or Large Growth Town, in terms of large scale employment uses and it is also anticipated that the development of Small Growth Towns will be more closely linked to local rather than to regional residential growth.

1.4 Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment

A Local Area Plan shall contain information on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the Plan. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not mandatory for Ratoath as it has a population of less than 10,000. A screening exercise was carried out to assess the likely impacts that the implementation of the draft Plan would have and the screening exercise indicated that a Strategic Environmental Assessment was not necessary. Screening for SEA was also carried out for the proposed amendments to the draft Local Area Plan. This indicated that an SEA was not necessary for the amendments.

The screening documents were sent to the relevant prescribed bodies, namely the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Having referred to the comments received from these prescribed bodies and having regard to the above, Meath County Council concluded that a Strategic Environmental Assessment was not required for this Local Area Plan (Refer to Appendix 1 for SEA Screening Reports).

DoEHLG Circular Letter SEA 1/08 and NPWS 1/08 relates to the requirement to screen land use plans for potential impacts on designated Natura 2000 sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs)). An assessment of the plan is required if necessary. The circular states that an appropriate assessment means an assessment, based on best scientific knowledge, by a person with ecological expertise, of the potential impacts of the plan on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site (including Natura 2000 sites not situated in the area encompassed by the draft plan or scheme) and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects. The potential impacts of policies outside Natura 2000 sites, but potentially impacting upon them (known as 'ex site' impacts) must also be included in the assessment according to the Circular. There are no SACs or SPAs in Ratoath or adjoining or in close proximity to the settlement. Appropriate Assessment screening was carried out both for the draft Plan and for the amendments to the draft Plan. It was not considered that the Local Area Plan would have any potential impacts on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site and as a result, it was considered that no further assessment of this type was required (Refer to Appendix 1 for AA Screening Reports).

1.5 Contents

The Local Area Plan is structured in a manner which takes account of all the contents required for an LAP in the template adopted by Meath County Council as well as in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and is set out in a sequential form dealing with Context, Strategic Policy and Housing, Economic Development, Social Strategy, Heritage and Phasing and Implementation.

1.6 Pre Draft Public Consultation

A period of pre draft consultation for the Ratoath Local Area Plan was held from 6th May 2008 to 1st July 2008, during which time submissions were invited from the public. A public meeting was also held in the Community Centre in Ratoath on 17th July 2008. A list of those persons who made submissions is included in Appendix 2. The details of the submission and the response of the Manager to them are included in the document 'Pre Draft Consultation Document Ratoath Local Area Plan 2009 – 2015.'

1.7 Draft Local Area Plan Public Consultation

The Ratoath Local Area Plan was placed on display from 4th February, 2009 to 18th March 2009 with submissions invited from the public during this period. The aim of the consultation process was to enable the public and interested parties to give their observations on the Draft Local Area Plan. A total of 92 written submissions were received. The details of these submissions and the response and recommendation of the County Manager can be found in the document 'Manager's report on submissions received in respect of the Draft Ratoath Local Area Plan 2009-2015' and 'Addendum to Manager's Report to the Members on submissions received in respect of the Draft Ratoath Local Area Plan 2009 – 2015'. A list of those persons who made submissions is included in Appendix 2.

1.8 Public Consultation Amendments to Draft Local Area Plan

Following a resolution by Meath County Council members, it was proposed to make amendments to the draft Plan. These were placed on public display from 11th May 2009 to 8th June. A total of 7 written submissions were received. A Manager's Report was again prepared on the submissions, summarising them and listing the Manager's response and recommendation to each. A list of those persons who made submissions is included in Appendix 2.

CHAPTER 2 RATOATH IN CONTEXT



SECTIONS IN THIS CHAPTER

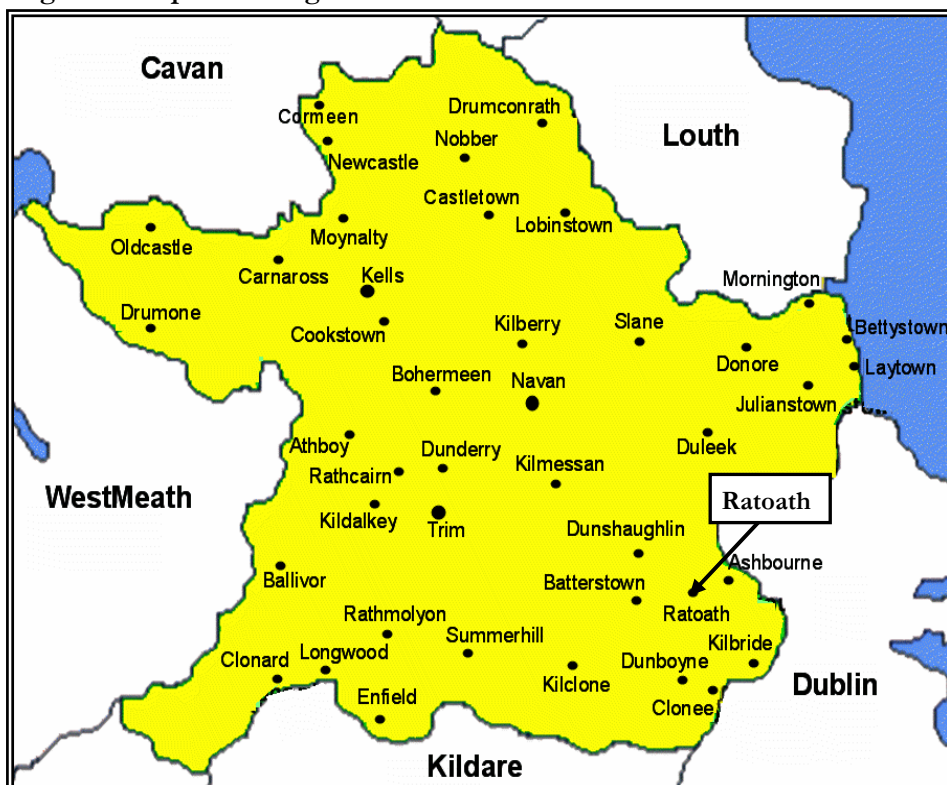
- 2.1 Location and Physical Context
- 2.2 Historical Context
- 2.3 Present Day Context
- 2.4 Urban Form
- 2.5 Population Context
- 2.6 SWOT Analysis
- 2.7 Vision

2.1 Location and Physical Context

Ratoath is situated in the south eastern corner of the county acting as a mid point between Dunshaughlin and Ashbourne, within the South Meath Fringe Corridor. It is located in the Ratoath Electoral Division which is within the Dunshaughlin Electoral Area. Ratoath forms part of the Ashbourne-Dunshaughlin-Ratoath Dynamic Cluster.

Ratoath gives its name to a town, a townland, a parish and a barony. The derivation or meaning of the word is uncertain. Gaelicised forms of the name are Rat-tógh and Rath-tachatacta. It comprises of a compact linear town centre surrounded by growing residential estates.

Figure 1: Map indicating the location of Ratoath in Co. Meath



(Source: www.goingout.ie/meath/meath.htm)

2.2 Historical Context

The origins of Ratoath date from early Christian times. The establishment of a Norman settlement is indicated by the striking presence of the Moat and Bailey in the centre of the town. The enclosures associated with this settlement have given the centre of Ratoath its uniquely curved road pattern with an intricate network of laneways, many overgrown or derelict, connecting the original enclosures with areas to the north on the Curragha Road and the south on the Fairyhouse Road.

This development area, by virtue of its proximity to the Metropolitan Area of the City, its good road access to same and its attractive rural environs has resulted in the town becoming under extreme pressure for development with an ever extending population.

2.3 Present Day Context

Ratoath's narrow winding Main Street, consistent with its Norman history contribute to the notable character of the town as it is today. In the late 20th and early 21st century the development has been mixed with substantial residential development in the suburbs leading to large

population growth. However such residential growth has not been accompanied by commercial/industrial growth, resulting in large proportions of the community forced to commute, contrary to sustainable development guidelines. By encouraging local based employment the Plan will aim to ensure that Ratoath becomes a more sustainable town in the future.

2.4 Urban Form

Ratoath is comprised of a relatively compact linear town centre surrounding by growing residential estates. The scale of the built environment is generally low, predominantly two storey structures dominated by older buildings such as the Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church and the Grotto. Recent development in the town has resulted in the introduction of modern architectural urban elements into the built environment, which complements the existing character of the town. The most notable new structures include the Corballis Shopping Centre and the Ratoath Community Centre.

The main areas of existing housing are located:

- To the northwest of the town between the Dunshaughlin Road and the Skreen Road.
- To the southwest of the town between the Dunshaughlin Road and the Fairyhouse Road.
- On lands adjoining both sides of the Curragha Road.
- To the south of the Fairyhouse Road.
- In the Jamestown area.

The scale of residential development in Ratoath is relatively low, consisting mainly of two storey semi detached and detached structures.



Corballis Shopping Centre

2.5 Population Context

The standard source for population statistics is the census information published every 4 years by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). During the last recorded block (2002-2006) Ratoath experienced significant population growth of 91.1%, with the population increasing from 3,794 persons to 7,249 persons. An Post Geodirectory data indicates that the current population of Ratoath is 8,335 persons.

The population of the Ratoath Electoral Division¹ is comparatively youthful when compared to the County and the State as a whole, with a greater proportion of the population being aged between 0 to 14 years and 30 to 44 years and lower proportion of the population aged over 50 years (see Table 1). Ratoath had the highest proportion of young people aged under 14 years in the country at 32% (the national average was recorded as 20.4%).²

Table 1: Population distribution of Ratoath, County Meath and the State

% of population	Ratoath	Meath	State
0-4 yrs	12.1	8.7	7.1
5-9 yrs	10.3	7.9	6.8
10-14 yrs	7.3	6.8	6.5
15-19 yrs	5	6.5	6.9
20-24 yrs	4.9	6.9	8.1
25-29 yrs	8.8	8.7	8.8
30-34 yrs	12	9.5	8.2
35-39 yrs	11.7	8.8	7.6
40-44 yrs	8.9	7.7	7.1
45-49 yrs	5.4	6.4	6.5
50-54 yrs	4	5.5	5.8
55-59 yrs	3.2	4.8	5.3
60-64 yrs	2.1	3.8	4.3
65-69 yrs	1.8	2.6	3.4
70-74 yrs	1	2	2.8
75-79 yrs	0.7	1.5	2.2
80-84 yrs	0.4	1.1	1.5
85 yrs & over	0.4	0.8	1.1

The Census data provides an indication as to the type and quantity of services that the contemporary community of Ratoath require.

While Ratoath experienced significant growth over the last number of years, it is not envisaged that the population will continue to grow at the same rate during the period of this Local Area Plan. It is hoped that this plan period will act as a time of consolidation, whereby it will be a primary objective of the Local Area Plan to develop employment opportunities. As well as trying to attract employment to the town itself, it is important to improve access to other employment centres such as Ashbourne and Dunshaughlin.

The Census 2006 found that the national average household size was 2.8 persons. The 2006 Census states that Meath County has 53,938 private households, with an average size of 3.0 persons, which is slightly above state average. The corresponding figure for the Ratoath Electoral Division is 3.1.

The Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 has set out a settlement strategy which will affect household formation in Ratoath up to 2013 (Table 6 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013 refers). The strategy conveys the household and population distribution framework for each settlement centre (see Chapter 3). Future household formation will conform to the population target set out in County Development Plan.

¹ Note that the Ratoath Electoral Division encompasses a wider area than the Local Area Plan Envelope.

² Source: Press statement Central Statistics Office 10th May 2007 accessed at www.cso.ie

2.6 SWOT Analysis

From the review of existing available data and literature, an assessment of the area and consultation with the public, representatives and the key shareholders, the following SWOT analysis has been undertaken.

Strengths:

- Proximity to Dublin
- Strong sense of community
- Historic core

Weaknesses:

- Parking
- Traffic congestion
- Traffic and pedestrian safety
- Scale of new residential development
- Inappropriate centrally located sites
- Lack of employment generating uses

Opportunities:

- Improve commercial and employment base
- Improve traffic calming and pedestrian safety
- Environmental enhancement
- Conserve and enhance the built heritage
- Provide physical and social infrastructure linked to development

Threats:

- Unrestrained growth
- Loss of town scale/character
- Incoherent growth of the town
- Reduced accessibility

2.7 Vision

Building upon the SWOT analysis, the overall vision for Ratoath is to consolidate and strengthen the town, provide for a defined town core and a small range of landuses to support the residential element of the town. Specific emphasis is placed on retaining the character of the town and encouraging compatible newer developments and landuses within the town while at the same time curbing ribbon development, improving local services and infrastructure and maintaining a clear and definite division between the town and countryside. The plan also aims to ensure the continued vitality and viability of the town and the protection and enhancement of its natural and built heritage.

The vision of Ratoath in the new Local Area Plan will be based on the following principles:

Sustainability:	To provide and accommodate the social, cultural and economic development of the town without compromising such aims for future generations.
Competitiveness:	To promote Ratoath as part of a dynamic economic cluster with Ashbourne and Dunshaughlin.
Quality of Life:	To promote social, cultural and educational facilities/amenities and encourage the development of a vibrant community spirit.

Quality of Environment:	To protect and promote areas of quality built and natural environment through education and investment.
Social Inclusion:	To seek to redress social inequalities and social polarization, and engage the public at all possible times to seek consensus on planning for the future.

CHAPTER 3: SETTLEMENT STRATEGY & HOUSING



SECTIONS IN THIS CHAPTER

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Settlement Policy
- 3.3 Settlement Strategy
- 3.4 Land Use Zoning Objectives
 - 3.4.1 Development Management Standards and Guidelines
 - 3.4.2 Framework Plans
- 3.5 Housing
 - 3.5.1 Introduction
 - 3.5.2 Residential Development – Key Principles
 - 3.5.3 Housing Strategy
 - 3.5.4 Extensions
 - 3.5.5 Family Flat Extensions

3.1 Introduction

This chapter of the Ratoath Local Area Plan sets out Meath County Council's strategic vision for the future development of Ratoath and includes the housing strategy for the plan period. Regard is had to the policies and objectives of the National Spatial Strategy, Regional Planning Guidelines and the Meath County Development Plan 2007.

3.2 Settlement Policy

The overall strategic settlement policy for Ratoath is governed by the approach of the Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013. Ratoath is designated as a Small Growth Town in the settlement hierarchy for the County set out in the Development Plan. It is also identified as forming part of a dynamic cluster with Ashbourne and Dunshaughlin. Small Growth Towns are to provide primarily residential roles with a strong commercial and industrial presence. Relatively small and locally financed businesses are expected to locate in Small Growth Towns however other economic development could be permitted. Retail is likely to be mainly in the convenience category. Small Growth Towns would be likely to contain facilities such as a primary and/or secondary school as well as a health clinic.

The future development of Small Growth Towns should be predicated more to local growth than to regional growth. In order to pursue this aim, it is a policy of the County Development Plan that 25% of units in multi house developments (i.e. in excess of 4 houses) in Small Growth Towns, shall be reserved for persons who are native to the County (i.e. persons who have lived in the County for at least 1 year) or those who by virtue of their employment require to live in the urban centre.

The County Development Plan states specifically in relation to Ratoath, that the further development of residential areas must be managed and that the Planning Authority shall desist from zoning additional significant areas of residential land unless under exceptional circumstances and where a reciprocal rebalancing of existing zoned lands has taken place elsewhere. 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 the County Development Plan (2007 – 2013). The land required to release this piece of critical infrastructure shall be prioritised over existing residentially zoned lands. This particularly relates to the lands identified in Framework Plan 1.

The policy of the County Development Plan is that 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.

As noted above, Ratoath is part of a dynamic cluster with Dunshaughlin and Ashbourne. There are five dynamic clusters identified in the County Development Plan and these are the locations into which development will be channelled in the first instance. A number of actions are identified to assist in reinforcing these centres as a dynamic cluster. Some of these specifically refer to Ratoath while the Local Area Plan process is specifically identified as a mechanism for delivery of a number of the actions, including:

- Zoning of sufficient lands for employment generating activities at suitable locations.
- Support provision of high quality business/office parks.
- Ensure adequate provision of incubator/start-up units.
- Identify and promote specific and unique roles for Ashbourne, Dunshaughlin and Ratoath and to assist in marketing, creating critical mass and avoid duplication of necessary infrastructure and services.

- Promote and provide for the preparation of an IFPLUT for Ashbourne, Dunshaughlin and Ratoath and a Thematic Spatial Strategy for the cluster as a constituent development centre.
- Support and provide for enhancement and diversification of existing equine and related industry in Ratoath.
- Enhance social infrastructure provision e.g. housing, health and schools.
- Improve physical and communication linkages between Ashbourne-Dunshaughlin and Ratoath.
- Create a self-sufficient critical mass ensuring adequate lands are zoned for a multiplicity of uses and that densities are appropriate to each location.

The Meath County Development Plan acknowledges that the bloodstock industry plays a vital role in the economic and recreational development in the County and Ratoath in particular. Through the policies of this Local Area Plan, the Planning Authority will continue to support the bloodstock industry, in particular, the facilities at Fairyhouse and Tattersalls. The Development Plan also states that the LAP shall ensure that adequate lands are identified for commercial and employment generating uses and for sports, recreational and leisure uses at appropriate. The scale of these lands shall reflect the position of Ratoath in the Settlement Hierarchy of the County and the implementation of the objectives for the Ashbourne-Dunshaughlin-Ratoath Dynamic Cluster.

3.3 Settlement Strategy

Table 6 of the Meath County Development Plan outlines the population distribution for the County over the lifetime of the Development Plan, including projected numbers of additional households for each urban centre. This references the quantity of existing residential zoned lands in each settlement and the available potential yield of units. An excerpt relating to Ratoath is included in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Projected households in Ratoath 2006 - 2013³

Urban Centre	Planning Permission Granted – No Construct. Started	Houses Under Construct.	Committed No. of Units	Projected Number of H'holds 2006 - 2009	Projected Number of H'holds 2010 - 2013	Total 2006 - 2013	No. of Units to Meet H'hold Targets	Remain. Undev. Resid. Zoned Land	Density per hectare	Yield of Remaining Undev. Resid. Zoned Land
Ratoath	59	248	307	450	200	650	343	35	25	869

In order to ensure that the release of residential zoned land in the urban centres, including Ratoath, conforms to the population and household targets in the Development Plan, it was the policy of the Development Plan to prepare an order of priority for the phased release of residential zoned land. This was prepared in the form of a variation to the County Development Plan - Variation No. 2 - which was adopted in February 2008. The Order of Priority will be subject to annual review.

Table 2 above details the yield from existing residential zoned land and the household targets for the town. The projected number of households for Ratoath during the period 2006 to 2013 is 650. Of these, 307 units had been committed to at the time of preparation of the County Development Plan (i.e. had been granted permission). Permission for a further 282 units had been granted by the time of preparation of the Order of Priority. Thus the remaining number of units required to meet the household targets are 61. Even allowing for the subtraction of the lands on which permission for the 282 units was granted (stated as being 15.45 hectares on

³ Taken from Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013

application form for Reg. Ref. DA/70037), there are still sufficient lands zoned to cater for the anticipated population growth of Ratoath for the local area plan period of 2009-2015.

The order of priority for Ratoath identifies the lands which are to be released for residential development during the lifetime of the Development Plan to 2013 and beyond. This Local Area Plan will conform to the Order of Priority and population and household projections set out in the County Development Plan.

It should be noted that as per Development Plan policy, development of existing town centre sites/in fill development within the town and the provision of Local Authority Housing does not affect the overall numbers provided for in the Order of Priority.

As noted previously, the County Development Plan states specifically in relation to Ratoath, that 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 the County Development Plan (2007 – 2013). In order to secure the delivery of the bypass, additional lands for mixed use development are identified to the southeast of the inner relief road linking the R125 and the R155 (see also Section 4.2). The development of these mixed use lands shall include for the construction of the bypass as part of the first phase of development.

Policies

In terms of the settlement strategy for the future growth of Ratoath, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

SS POL 1	To facilitate the continued development of Ratoath as a Small Growth Town.
SS POL 2	To promote the development of Ratoath so far as is practicable to be self sufficient incorporating employment activities, retail services and community facilities.
SS POL3	Residential development in Ratoath will only be permitted in accordance with the Order of Priority for the phased release of residentially zoned lands and as per Table 6 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013. The Order of Priority shall be subject to annual review by the Planning Authority.
SS POL 4	25% of all new multi-house developments, being developments in excess of 4 houses, shall be reserved for persons who are native to the County (being persons who have lived in the County for at least 1 year) or those who by virtue of their employment require to live in the urban centre. The Planning Authority will apply the same requirement to an overall development whereby planning permission is sought initially for site development works and individual applications below this threshold are subsequently applied for.

Objectives

In terms of settlement strategy, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

SS OBJ 1	To promote a more compact urban form in Ratoath and to prevent additional urban sprawl.
SS OBJ 2	To provide sufficient and appropriately located lands for employment, commercial and community facilities in Ratoath.
SS OBJ 3	To ensure the provision of adequate sanitary services and other urban infrastructure to cater for the growth in demand for such facilities.

SS OJB 4	The development of the lands immediately to the north of the by-pass zoned for mixed use development shall be on a phased basis. No commercial/residential development shall be provided on the B3 zoned lands prior to the delivery of the bypass (Please refer to zoning and objectives map).
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3.4 Land Use Zoning Objectives

The purpose of land-use zoning objectives is to indicate the Planning Authority's intentions for lands located within the development boundary of Ratoath. The land use zoning categories used in this LAP are the same as those contained in the Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013 with the exception of 'E6' and 'D2' zoning objectives. The categories in place in Ratoath are indicated below:

Table 3: Land Use Zoning Objectives

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.
B1	To protect and enhance the special physical and social character of existing town centre and village centres and to provide for new town centre facilities and uses.
B3	To protect, provide for and improve local and neighbourhood shopping facilities.
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.
D2	To provide for the continued development and expansion of equine related activities.
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 framework plans and the provision of necessary physical infrastructure.
E6	To provide for small and medium sized industries to develop in accordance with approved Framework Plan and subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure.
F1	To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities.
G1	To provide for necessary community, recreational and educational facilities.

Reference should be made to the Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013 for the matrix of uses set out for each zoning category and the explanatory notes for each category. A copy of the matrix is included in Appendix 3. The zoning matrix provides guidelines for assessing land-use compatibility. However, the suitability or not of individual proposals can only be evaluated on the basis of particular applications where the type, level and overall impacts of the scheme on the environment, residential amenity and traffic can adequately be assessed. However the zoning objectives do indicate the suitability in principle of definite uses in individual zones, and the unacceptability of others. Over a wide range of uses, the compatibility of the proposal to the zoning objective can only be assessed by the individual circumstances.

3.4.1 Development Management Standards and Guidelines

The development management standards and guidelines applicable to this Local Area Plan are those set out in the Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013, being the parent document to this plan. Over the lifetime of this Local Area Plan, the Planning Authority will seek a high standard of design for new development, which makes a positive contribution to the streetscape and urban realm and which will provide a high standard of amenity in residential developments. Meath County Council will encourage innovative and well designed development that relates sensitively to the existing character of the area and which generates a sense of place, distinctiveness and quality.

New development should be consistent with good architectural standards and should respect the character, scale and layout of existing development in the town. The bulk and massing of new development should be sympathetic to historic development, street patterns and plot widths in Ratoath. Existing established building lines should be respected. Continuous enclosure should be provided to the streetscape with frequent doors and window openings. Layouts which result in the backs of buildings facing onto public spaces will not be acceptable. Building materials used should be durable and should be specified to a high standard of quality and finish. Contemporary design will be encouraged where it has been demonstrated that the surroundings and site context have been satisfactorily taken into account in the design process.

New development should be based on sustainable principles including passive solar design, sustainable use of materials, conservation of energy and water e.g. rainwater harvesting. In the interest of sustainability, town centre buildings should also be designed to accommodate a mix of uses, for example, in terms of floor to ceiling height and floor plate layout.

Reference should also be made to other relevant sections of this Plan which refer to issues such as shopfronts and advertising and open space.

Policy

In terms of development management, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

DEV MAN POL 1	To seek a high standard of architectural design for new development in Ratoath.
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3.4.2 Framework Plans

There are three Framework Plan areas designated in this Local Area Plan (see zoning objectives map). The Planning Authority considers Framework Plans as an effective means of guiding new development and providing essential social and physical infrastructure in a phased and sustainable manner. 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.

Each Framework Plan shall consist of a written statement and a plan or series of plans indicating the objectives in such detail, as may be 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.
- To make provision, where appropriate, for educational facilities.

3.5 Housing

3.5.1 Introduction

The Planning Authorities have a statutory obligation to ensure that sufficient land is zoned for all types of housing to meet the town's projected housing requirements over the lifetime of the plan and to ensure that an undue shortage/excess does not arise. In order to ensure a sustainable pattern of development, the future of Ratoath needs to address various opportunities and constraints presented by: the traditional settlement pattern, the existing settlement pattern, the natural environment, infrastructure and service provision, the projected population change for the settlement and its environs and recent housing building performance. Regard must be given to the role of the town within the local context and its status as a Small Growth Town under the Regional Planning Guidelines and the Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013. The current Settlement Strategy through the order of priority will ensure that only the quantum and scale of projected residential development will take place to ensure that the Local Area Plan accords with the policy framework contained in the Regional Planning Guidelines and the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013.

As per the policy direction prescribed in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, it is imperative that the traditional character of Ratoath is respected and maintained. Ratoath is not considered suitable for high density apartment developments which would be out of character with the existing built form.

3.5.2 Residential Development – Key Principles

The key principle which directs the housing policies in this plan is the delivery of high quality living environment in neighbourhoods with a range of housing types and sufficient community facilities to serve the needs of residents. Generally the objective will be to provide a range of residential units, which vary in both size and type, and an overall scheme design which can accommodate a broad population profile including single person households, couples, households with children, older people and people with a disability. The Planning Authority notes the provision of independent living units as part of the Steeplechase development and will encourage and support similar mixed forms of housing in developments, in the interests of

creating mixed communities. The design and layout of overall schemes and individual units should aim to meet the requirements of lifelong living and at the design stage should take into account the need to ensure that units can be extended and/or adapted in the future.

The Council will require the provision of neighbourhoods rather than traditional housing estates. The neighbourhood concept is based on the principle that people should be able to find many of the requirements for daily living within easy reach of their home. It ensures that new housing and service provision, in the form of schools, shops, community and recreation facilities, are mutually supportive and provide for sustainable and pleasant living environments. There will therefore be a strong emphasis on a mix of uses, house types and layouts that facilitate streetscapes and open spaces that have natural supervision. The Council will require estate designers to use innovative scheme designs which contribute to the aesthetic value of Ratoath. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government have produced guidelines on residential development in urban areas. These guidelines include 'Design Standards for New Apartments', 'Best Practice Urban Design Manual' and the guidelines 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas'. The Planning Authority will have regard to the contents of these documents (or their replacements) in the assessment of applications for residential development. These documents set out, in many cases, minimum standards. In the interest of providing a high standard of residential development, Meath County Council will seek developments which exceed these minimum standards. A development which relies solely on only achieving the minimum stated standard will not be considered acceptable.

Well designed schemes can help to deliver more sustainable development through a more efficient use of land – a non-renewable resource, provision of a variety of housing choices and improved accessibility to local facilities and public transport. The fundamentals of good design are discussed in Chapter 10 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, 'Development Management Guidelines and Standards' and are applicable to Ratoath.

Open space for amenity purposes is a key component in residential schemes, contributing towards the recreational requirements of residents and enhancing the quality of the environment. Private gardens will be necessary for housing and communal private open space for town houses, duplexes and apartments. Private balconies would also be necessary for all apartments. A suitable children's play space will be a requirement for those residential developments which are primarily family orientated.



3.5.3 Housing Strategy

A Housing Strategy prepared under Part V of the Planning & Development Acts, 2000 to 2007 is incorporated into Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 (Chapter 5 refers). The Housing Strategy is a county wide strategy and therefore its contents are applicable to Ratoath.

Section 96 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2007 provides that the objectives of the Housing Strategy in relation to social and affordable housing shall be implemented by means of

conditions attached to planning permissions for residential development. All residential developments in excess of 4 housing units or any site for residential development in excess of 0.1 hectares on lands zoned for either residential use or mixed development including residential use is to be subject to the provision of “Social/Affordable” housing at a maximum requirement of 20%. As per the County Housing Strategy, a ratio of 3% social housing and 17% affordable housing applies in Ratoath.

3.5.4 Extensions

In assessing an application for a house extension, the Planning Authority will have regard to the following:-

- The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (1999) publication on ‘Residential Density – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ in considering the existing site density and remaining private open space.
- High quality designs for extensions will be required that respect and integrate with the existing dwelling in terms of character, height, scale, materials used, finishes, window proportions etc.
- Pitched roofs will be required except on some single storey rear extensions. Flat roof extensions visible from public areas will not normally be permitted.
- Impact on amenities of adjacent residents, in terms of light and privacy. Care should be taken to ensure that the extension does not overshadow windows, yards or gardens or have windows in the flank walls which would reduce a neighbour’s privacy.
- Effect on front building line - extensions will not generally be allowed to break the existing front building line. However a porch extension which does not significantly break the front building line will normally be permitted. In terrace and semi-detached situations, extensions which significantly protrude beyond the front building line and/or along the full front of the house will not be permitted.
- In the case of single storey extension to the side of a house, the extension should be set back at least 150mm from the front wall of the existing house to give a more satisfactory external appearance.
- In some circumstances a gap of 1m to be retained between the extension and the neighbouring dwellings so as to prevent dwellings which were intended to be detached from becoming a terrace.
- Dormer extensions should not obscure the main features of the existing roof, i.e. should not break the ridge or eaves lines of the roof. Box dormers should be avoided.
- Front dormers should normally be set back at least three-tile courses from the eaves line and should be clad in a material matching the existing roof.
- Proposed side extensions must retain side access to the rear of the property where possible.
- Ability to provide adequate car parking within the curtilage of the dwelling house.

3.5.5 Family Flat Extensions

The creation of a family flat, generically referred to as a granny flat, to be occupied by a member of the occupant family is generally acceptable, provided it is not a separate detached unit, and it is possible to provide direct access to the remainder of the house. There shall be no permanent sub division of the garden/private amenity space. The flat shall not be let or sold, other than as part of the overall property and shall revert to being part of the original house when no longer occupied by the family member. The design should ensure that the flat forms an integral part of the main dwelling unit capable of reintegration for single family use.

Policies

In terms of Residential Development, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

RES POL 1	To provide for the integration of new housing into the natural and built environment in a manner that makes a positive contribution to the overall environment in the locality.
RES POL 2	To encourage the development of mixed and balanced communities to avoid areas of social exclusion.
RES POL 3	To achieve a mix of housing types and sizes in the consideration of individual planning applications for residential development and in development of the Councils own housing stock.
RES POL 4	To ensure that the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are provided for in the design of layouts in residential areas.
RES POL 5	To promote energy efficiency both during the construction phase and during the lifetime of residential development by sensitive design and layout taking into account topography, orientation and surrounding features.
RES POL 6	To have regard to the “Social Housing Design Guidelines” (DoEHLG 1999).
RES POL 7	To integrate new social housing into the existing social and urban fabric of Ratoath.
RES POL 8	To support the concept of independent living for older people and people with disabilities and ensure where possible that housing for such groups is integrated with mainstream housing in their existing communities.
RES POL 9	To encourage the provision of adequate small, self contained living units within a complex of facilities for persons with special needs to maintain privacy and independence whilst having the protection of a more sheltered environment.
RES POL 10	To support proposals for day centres for people with special needs within, or close to, the town and neighbourhood centres, subject to normal planning requirements.
RES POL 11	To permit the suitable extension of existing dwellings to accommodate the elderly or people with a disability in the family home, subject to normal planning requirements.
RES POL 12	To require that 20% of land zoned for residential development or for a mix of residential and other uses, shall be made available for the provision of social and affordable housing. This figure may be modified in line with any revision to the Housing Strategy carried out during the period of the County Development Plan. Social and affordable housing units shall be indistinguishable from other units by virtue of design.
RES POL 13	To require that developers comply with Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, through the following options. For conventional housing development, the options available to satisfy the requirements of the Housing Strategy are: (a) The direct provision of the required number of housing units on the site

which is the subject of the planning application to the Council on completion as determined in accordance with the Strategy, integrated as part of the overall development of a site;

(b) The transfer of a portion of the site which is the subject of the planning application to the Council enabling the Council to provide the appropriate number of units thereon in satisfaction of the requirements of the Strategy;

(c) The disposal of a number of fully or partially serviced sites within the site which is the subject of the planning application to the Council which will enable the Council to provide the appropriate number of units thereon in satisfaction of the requirements of the Strategy or

(d) A combination of the doing of 2 or more of the options referred to in paragraphs (a) to (c) above.

The other options provided for under the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2002 will only be accepted for apartments that do not have ground floor own door access and under exceptional circumstances for conventional housing developments at the request and prior written agreement of the Planning Authority. Where the transfer of land, serviced or partially serviced sites or of completed houses at a location other than where the scheme which is being developed, the location of same should be within the Dunshaughlin Electoral Area.

Objectives

In terms of residential development, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

RES OBJ 1	To ensure that future residential development complies with Table 6 and the Order of Priority in the Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013.
RES OBJ 2	To ensure a holistic approach is taken in the design and planning of new residential areas, which incorporates the provision of essential and appropriate facilities, amenities and services so that viable communities emerge and grow.
RES OBJ 3	To achieve a better and more appropriate mixes of dwelling size, type tenure and accessibility in all new residential development.
RES OBJ 4	To continue to implement the “Meath Local Authorities Action Plan Social and Affordable Housing 2004 - 2008” and any subsequent Action Plan adopted during the life of this Development Plan.

CHAPTER 4: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



SECTIONS IN THIS CHAPTER

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Employment Context
- 4.3 Economic Development
- 4.4 Tourism
- 4.5 Retail and Commercial Development
 - 4.5.1 Retail Warehousing
 - 4.5.2 Petrol Filling Stations
 - 4.5.3 Fast Food Outlets/Takeaways
 - 4.5.4 Non Retail Uses
 - 4.5.5 Shopfronts and Advertising
- 4.6 Derelict and Obsolete Land and Buildings

4.1 Introduction

The County Development Plan designates Ratoath as a Small Growth Town, which gives it the primary economic aim of facilitating local needs, thus building sustainable environments. Sustainable development requires local job creation which will improve the quality of life of the residential population of Ratoath. Notwithstanding the success of the bloodstock industry, as with other centres in County Meath, employment generating development has not kept pace with the level of residential development in the town. A key issue to be addressed in Ratoath is the creation of a sustainable settlement in accordance with the County Development Plan, i.e. a balance of residential and other uses including employment generating uses.

4.2 Employment Context

Over the past decade Ratoath has expanded its small scale retail provision which has helped to create minor employment growth. The introduction of the Corballis Shopping Centre which currently contains a varied mix of services (Shabby Chic, Lilly's pharmacy, La Bucca restaurant, Bank of Ireland and Spar) as well as neighbourhood centres such as The Centre Point (Ratoath Books, Silk Ginger, Lyk Nu, Home 2 Home Design and Coyotes Spa) have helped to create local employment. The Planning Authority acknowledge and support the work of the Ratoath Chamber of Commerce who have introduced the "Ratoath Is Alive Campaign" which promotes awareness of businesses in Ratoath and simultaneously helps these businesses to build a loyal customer base. The bloodstock industry is a major asset for the Ratoath area and it will be an objective of the Planning Authority to support the existing facilities at Fairyhouse and Tattersalls. The Plan also aims to ensure that adequate lands are made available for commercial and employment generating uses.

Table 4 below indicates the population of the Ratoath Electoral Division according to principal economic status. 71.5% of the population were classified as being at work with 1.9% being unemployed having lost or given up their previous job. Commence and trade is the predominant industry that inhabitants of the Ratoath Electoral Division are engaged in (see Table 5).

Table 4: Population of Ratoath aged 15 years and over according to principal economic status

	% of population
At work	71.5
Looking for first regular job	0.4
Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	1.9
Student	7.8
Looking after home/family	12.1
Retired	4.6
Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability	1.5
Other	0.2
Total aged 15 years and over	100

Table 5: Population of Ratoath according to industry

	% of persons at work according to industry
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1.7
Building and Construction	10.1
Manufacturing industries	13.1
Commerce and trade	34.1
Transport and communications	9.3
Public administration	6.8
Professional services	14.2
Other	10.7

Census data reveals that significant numbers of people in the Ratoath Electoral Division are travelling more than 15km to work, school and college in comparison to County Meath and the State as a whole (see Table 6). Data on the mode of transport to work, school and college illustrates the reliance on the private car for travel to work, school and college and given the high percentage in the category of car driver, suggests a particular usage of the private car for travel to work. The Census information suggests that the employment base in Ratoath needs strengthening to reduce the need for residents to travel significant distances for employment purposes.

Table 6: Distance travelled to work, school and college

Distance travelled (% of population)	0 km	1 km	2 to 4 km	5 to 9 km	10 to 14 km	15 to 24 km	25 to 49 km	50 km and over	Not stated
Ratoath	0.8	11	9.2	9.2	8.3	26.2	21.6	1.7	12
Meath	1	9	13.8	11.1	8.8	13.1	17.5	8.9	16.8
State	1	10.8	19.4	15.8	10.3	10.4	7.9	3.9	20.5

Table 7: Means of travel to work, school and college

Means of Travel	% On foot	% Bicycle	% Bus, minibus or coach	% Train, DART or LUAS	% Motorcycle or scooter	% Car driver	% Car passenger	% Other	% Not stated
Ratoath	12.55	0.45	12.16	0.22	0.67	53.33	13.07	7.18	0.37

4.3 Economic Development

It will be a primary aim of the Planning Authority to attract sustainable forms of employment to Ratoath to stimulate economic growth locally and to counter existing unsustainable commuting patterns. The economic development of Ratoath will be promoted in order to create a more sustainable community whereby people can reside close to where they are employed. Sufficient lands will be zoned for employment generating development and the adequacy of employment generating land supply will be closely monitored throughout the Plan period.

This Local Area Plan clearly identifies the supply of land for employment generating industrial, enterprise and commercial development which will assist in generating the requisite level of job creation needed for Ratoath's growing population. It is important that a range of sites are identified to meet the practical needs of users and encourage diversification of the local economy and thereby ensure that it is more resistant to adverse changes in the structure of employment activity. The Planning Authority will also support the re-location of non-compatible town centre uses to other more suitable sites, which would result in increasing the availability of lands within the town centre for more appropriate uses. In this regard, the Planning Authority will particularly

encourage the re-location of the existing Suzuki garage and petrol station on the Main Street. (see also Section 4.5.2, Objective PET STAT 1)

Lands for industrial use have been identified on the Fairyhouse Road. It is envisaged that a mix of employment uses would be provided on these lands and that they would also facilitate the re-location of non-compatible commercial uses in the town centre. Park and ride facilities should also be provided on these lands as part of their development.

A second area of industrial zoned lands (E2 zoning) has been identified on the Ashbourne Road. It is intended that that a mix of uses would be provided on these lands, to include start-up and incubator units. It is an objective that the development of these lands would include the re-alignment of the R125 in the vicinity of the site and the provision of public lighting, footpaths and cycleways along the road frontage of these lands.

Lands for commercial purposes have been identified on the Ashbourne Road (B3 zoning, Framework Plan Area 1). The Planning Authority will require that a framework plan accompanies any planning application made for development on these lands detailing the overall site and building layout, building height and design principles, phasing, mix of uses for the site, traffic impact assessment and management proposals and service arrangements (see also Section 3.3.3). Public lighting, footpaths and cycleways shall be provided on all roadways provided as part of the development of the lands. It is intended that the area will provide for a mix of commercial and local retail services and to include the development of an enterprise centre (of appropriate design). Given the prominent location of these lands on a key approach to the town, it is considered that this site should accommodate a landmark building. However, the design of such a landmark building should taken cognisance of the nature and characteristics of the urban form in Ratoath and should be suitably designed for a town of its nature and function in the settlement hierarchy for the County. The release of these lands for development shall be linked to the delivery of the proposed by-pass linking the R125 and the R155. The first phase of development on the B3 zoned lands shall include for the construction of the by-pass adjacent to these lands.

Lands for employment generating uses have been identified on the R125 Ashbourne Road (E6 zoning, Framework Plan Area 2 refers) at Raystown. It is intended that the area will provide for small and medium sized industries and also include the provision of a civic amenity site. The Planning Authority will require that a framework plan accompanies any planning application made for development on these lands detailing the overall site and building layout, building height and design principles, landscaping, phasing, mix of uses for the site, traffic impact assessment and management proposals and service arrangements. Public lighting, footpaths and cycleways shall be provided on all roadways provided as part of the development of the lands.

Further lands have been reserved for employment generating uses off the Fairyhouse Road (E2 zoning, Framework Plan Area 3 refers and also includes the adjoining community 'G1' zoned lands). It is intended that the area will provide for light industrial development and also include the reservation of lands for a swimming pool and include the re-alignment of the Fairyhouse Road and provision of footpaths, cycleway and public lighting along the road frontage of the site. The Planning Authority will require that a framework plan accompanies any planning application made for development on these lands detailing the overall site and building layout, building height and design principles, landscaping, phasing, mix of uses for the site, traffic impact assessment and management proposals and service arrangements. Public lighting, footpaths and cycleways shall be provided on all roadways provided as part of the development of the lands.

Policies

In terms of Economic Development, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

ECON DEV POL 1	To ensure that an adequate quantity and quality of zoned and serviced lands for employment generating uses are available to serve the local population.
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ECON DEV POL 2	To encourage local/small scale offices in neighbourhood centres.
ECON DEV POL 3	In the case of the development of industrial sites adjacent to residential areas and community facilities, buffer zones shall be provided as part of any development as well as adequate screening in the form of planting, landscaping and mounding as appropriate.
ECON DEV POL 4	To apply a flexible approach in the assessment of entrepreneurial start up businesses and small scale industrial and employment generating activities, where it can be demonstrated that the proposed use would have minimal impact on adjoining uses, primarily residential property.

Objectives

In terms of Economic Development, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

ECON DEV OBJ 1	To support the activities of agencies involved in the promotion of employment generating opportunities in Ratoath including the Meath County Enterprise Board, Enterprise Ireland and the Industrial Development Agency (IDA Ireland).
ECON DEV OBJ 2	To support the Fairyhouse Racecourse complex as a key contributor to the economic sector in Ratoath and to facilitate and support it's continued expansion.
ECON DEV OBJ 3	To support the Tattersalls complex as a key contributor to the economic sector in Ratoath and to facilitate and support its continued expansion.
ECON DEV OBJ 4	Encourage environmental improvements in the town centre area which will assist in generating a "feel good factor" in the town thus creating a positive impact on potential employers/employees locating in Ratoath.
ECON DEV OBJ 5	Continue to improve the piped infrastructure serving the town.
ECON DEV OBJ 6	To facilitate the development of new enterprise centre/incubation units to provide local based employment uses in the site zoned for E2 Light Industrial Use.
ECON DEV OBJ 7	To consolidate the centre of Ratoath as the focal point of the town for cultural, social and retail facilities and to encourage the provision of new retail uses subject to adequate access, car parking and environmental improvements in the town centre.
ECON DEV OBJ 8	To provide lands for the relocation of non compatible town centre commercial uses in a site zoned for E1 Industrial Use (see Zoning Objectives Map).
ECON DEV OBJ 9	To identify lands for industrial purposes including start up and incubator units on the Ashbourne Road. The development of these lands shall include the re-alignment of the R125 and provision of footpaths, cycleway and public lighting along the road frontage of the site.
ECON DEV OBJ 10	To identify lands for commercial purposes on the R125 Ashbourne Road (Framework Plan Area 1). This area shall provide for a mix of commercial and local retail services and include the reservation of a 1

	acre site for an enterprise centre (of appropriate design) to be developed by Meath County Enterprise Board. Any planning application made for development on these lands shall be accompanied by a framework plan detailing development proposals for the full extent of the lands. This shall include details of the overall site and building layout for the lands, building height and design principles, mix of uses for the site, traffic impact assessment and management proposals and service arrangements. The first phase of development with the exception of the residentially zoned lands shall include the construction of the adjoining section of the bypass. Notwithstanding the zoning matrix an enterprise centre and car sales/repair uses shall be permitted in principle, subject to compliance with relevant planning criteria, on the subject lands i.e. B3 zoned lands.
ECON DEV OBJ 11	To support the provision of broadband telecommunications in Ratoath in order to facilitate working from home.
ECON DEV OBJ 12	To identify lands at Raystown for industrial purposes to provide for small and medium sized industries to develop in accordance with an approved Framework Plan and subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure (Framework Plan Area 2 - E6 zoning applies). This area shall also include the reservation of a 1 acre site for the provision of a civic amenity site. Any planning application made for development on these lands shall be accompanied by a framework plan detailing development proposals for the full extent of the lands. This shall include details of the overall site and building layout for the lands, building height and design principles, landscaping, mix of uses for the site, traffic impact assessment and management proposals and service arrangements. The development of these lands shall be on a phased basis with the reservation of the civic amenity site forming part of the first phase.
ECON DEV OBJ 13	To identify lands off the Fairyhouse Road to provide for employment generating uses in accordance with an approved Framework Plan and subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure (Framework Plan Area 3 - E2 zoning applies). The development of these lands shall also provide for reservation of a 4 acre site for the provision of a swimming pool site and include the re-alignment of the Fairyhouse Road and provision of footpaths, cycleway and public lighting along the road frontage of the site. Any planning application made for development on these lands shall be accompanied by a framework plan detailing development proposals for the full extent of the lands. This shall include details of the overall site and building layout for the lands, building height and design principles, landscaping, mix of uses for the site, traffic impact assessment and management proposals and service arrangements. The development of these lands shall be on a phased basis with the reservation of the swimming pool site forming part of the first phase.

4.4 Tourism

The Planning Authority acknowledges the important contribution to the economy that income derived from tourist activity holds. Tourism benefits the local community in terms of job creation and improved facilities which are also available to locals. Ratoath has a range of tourism assets including the Fairyhouse Cookery School, Tattersalls International Bloodstock and the Venue Theatre. It is also an historic town with strong Anglo-Norman links resulting in a wealth

of richness in terms of the built and natural heritage. Located just outside the town is one of Ireland's most famous horse racing tracks, Fairyhouse racecourse, where the Irish Grand National is held annually in Easter.

The Meath County tourism strategy entitled "Ireland Heritage Capital, Marketing Tourism in Meath, 2005-2010" identifies heritage as the County's Unique Selling Proposition (USP). Heritage was adopted into the Meath Tourism brand. As outlined in Chapter 5 Ratoath has unique heritage assets which add to the tourism product. The Planning Authority will seek to improve the appearance of the town, by carrying out environmental improvements and ensuring appropriate management of new development, in order to strengthen and improve the character of Ratoath.

It is the opinion of the Planning Authority that there is scope for Ratoath to increase promotion of its unique tourism assets and the Planning Authority will support the development of the town's tourism potential. The Planning Authority especially envisages the provision of tourist accommodation in the revitalisation of Ratoath. The general appearance of the town continues to be improved; however an impediment to the growth of the town as a tourist centre includes the limited retail offer which affects the town's attractiveness as a tourist destination.

The Planning Authority will also have due regard to the impact of tourism on the environment and on local communities. Tourism can damage and destroy the assets it seeks to exploit, in particular through excessive visitor numbers, inappropriate development and pollution. New development in the tourism sector should respect the existing character of the town and its surroundings. This will enable tourism facilities to be provided in appropriate locations that will not have a detrimental impact on the town and its residents. The Planning Authority aims to ensure that the relationship between tourism and the environment must be managed in a way that tourism continues to support local community and remains viable in the long term.

Policy

In terms of tourism, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

TOU POL 1	To promote, encourage and facilitate the development of the tourism industry through sustainable means, including the conservation, protection and enhancement of the built and natural heritage and the protection of cultural and community environments in order to maximise upon the economic benefits arising from the industry.
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Objectives

In terms of tourism, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

TOU OBJ 1	To encourage the development of a park/walkway at land adjoining the Church (currently in private ownership, although a right of way is present).
TOU OBJ 2	To support the expansion of the retail offer in Ratoath in order to enhance the attractiveness of the town as a tourist destination.
TOU OBJ 3	To support the Tattersalls complex as a key contributor to the tourism sector in Ratoath.
TOU OBJ 4	To support the Fairyhouse Racecourse complex as a key contributor to the tourism sector in Ratoath.
TOU OBJ 5	To promote the development of high quality hotel and ancillary facilities, especially those facilities which provide conference and leisure facilities on lands at Newtown to the south of Ratoath.

4.5 Retail and Commercial Development

The Retail Planning Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2005) require that Planning Authorities incorporate policies for retail development in Development Plans. The objective of the guidelines is to ensure that the optimum location for new retail development is established which is accessible to all sections of society and is of scale which allows the continued prosperity of traditional town centres and existing retail centres.

The Meath County Retail Strategy (2003) was prepared in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines and is incorporated in the Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013. Ratoath is designated as a Tier 1 Level 4 Small Town Centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. The strategy identifies that Ratoath is poorly serviced by convenience floorspace, emphasising the need to enhance same. The strategy directs that additional convenience floorspace should be located to infill sites and buildings along the Main Street, as a means of addressing the vacancy levels in the town. It also states that new retail development should aim to address the local needs of the town, thus reducing leakage to nearby settlements. Issues of land ownership constraints and site assembly in the town centre should be addressed with the wider needs of the town in mind.

Policy ED POL 38 of the Meath County Development Plan states that it is a policy of the Planning Authority to facilitate and encourage the provision of shops and services that consolidate the strength of Tier 1 Level 4 Small Town Centres to meet the needs of the existing and expanding population. Policy ED OBJ 14 notes that the Planning Authority should aim to create a greater awareness in the market, specifically the convenience sector, of the significant size and potential of the majority of the Council's small town centres through the Local Area Plan process. ED OBJ 15 states that the Planning Authority shall aim to identify within expanding new residential areas locations for neighbourhood and district centres to enable convenience needs to be better met locally and thus reduce the need to travel to the town centre for the majority of shopping needs.



In recent years the outskirts of the town have become submerged in residential development. This unsustainable development also occurred in many instances with the absence of local shopping facilities. Such facilities should take the form of a local/corner shop.

Every applicant must demonstrate that any retail proposal complies with the policy direction of the Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013 and Meath Retail Strategy. All applications for significant retail developments should be assessed against the range of criteria specific in the County Retail Strategy. The County Retail Strategy defines significant as 1,000 sq.m gross floor area for convenience development and 2,000 sq.m gross of comparison development.

The central area of Ratoath is constrained in terms of availability of specific sites to expand the retail and commercial functions of the town. In order to facilitate further development of these sectors, and to particularly encourage additional commercial development such as to strengthen the employment base of the town, the Planning Authority proposes to zone additional lands for B3 purposes, i.e. local and neighbourhood shopping facilities, on the Ashbourne Road to the southeast of the Ballybin Road roundabout (see also Section 4.2). It is intended that the area will provide for a mix of commercial and local retail services.

Policies

In terms of retail development, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

RET DEV POL 1	To promote and enhance the vitality of Ratoath Town Centre and promote this area as the main commercial core where an appropriate mix of commercial, retail, recreational, civic, cultural and residential uses are provided.
RET DEV POL 2	To encourage and support proposals for the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and vacant properties in the town centre with due cognisance to the sequential approach
RET DEV POL 3	To encourage the development of retail facilities of a local nature in residential areas (subject to the protection of residential amenity) and therefore reduce the need to travel to the town centre for basic convenience requirements.
RET DEV POL 4	<p>To support proposals for new retail and other mixed use development in the town where the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is compliant with the sequential approach to retailing; • Is well located, convenient, attractive with safe pedestrian linkages; • Provides or is in close proximity to adequate parking (including cycle parking); • Provides adequate facilities for the recycling of waste packaging generated by the proposal, including a bring centre where required; • Has negligible impact on existing urban residents; • Has due regard to the designation that the town holds.

Objectives

In terms of retail development, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

RET DEV OBJ 1	To examine alternative options for the provision of car parking other than surface car-parking and to ensure provision is made for cycle parking in retail developments.
RET DEV OBJ 2	To seek the removal of inappropriate and unauthorised advertising signs, sandwich boards, satellite dishes and shop front shutters from buildings within the town centre.

4.5.1 Retail Warehousing

Retail warehousing trades in bulky goods such as carpets, furniture, electoral goods, garden products and DIY items. Ratoath currently does not have any retail warehousing parks. As per the Retail Planning Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area and the Meath County Retail Strategy, Ratoath is not designated a suitable location for retail warehousing units as this type of development is not of the appropriate scale for the needs and size of Ratoath.

4.5.2 Petrol Filling Stations

Petrol filling stations are a growing sector in retail in Ireland as the retail offer and some forecourt shops have expanded extensively in the recent past. Retail guidance indicates that the retail use of a site as a petrol filling station, depending on the scale of each convenience store, can adversely impact on the traditional retail outlets such as the local corner shop.

The Retail Planning Guidelines state that the size of a shop associated with any petrol filling station should take account of the following:

- Large stores tend to attract additional custom which can lead to additional car borne trips primarily for shopping purposes;
- Large numbers of parked cars in station forecourts can cause disruption and queuing for those simply wishing to use the petrol pumps, and;
- The preferred location for retailing is in town centres, not isolated sites outside these preferred locations.

Notwithstanding the above, a shop of up to 100m² (net) retail floorspace is considered acceptable when associated with a petrol filling station. Above this threshold, the sequential test approach will be applied. Reference should be made to Chapter 10 (Development Management Guidelines and Standards) of the Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013 in relation to guidelines for the design of petrol stations. Such developments are also subject to the provision of the Dangerous Substances (Retail and Private Petroleum Stores) Regulations 1979 to 2006, as may be amended.

There is currently a petrol station/car sales showroom (Suzuki premises) located in Ratoath town centre. As stated previously, the Planning Authority supports the re-location of non-compatible town centre uses to other more suitable sites, which would result in increasing the availability of lands within the town centre for more appropriate uses. In this regard, the Planning Authority will particularly encourage the re-location of the existing garage and petrol station on the Main Street.

Objective

In terms of petrol filling stations, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

PET STAT 1 To facilitate the relocation of the existing Suzuki garage on the Main Street to a more appropriate zoned site for such use.

4.5.3 Fast Food Outlets/Takeaways

‘Take-aways’ can create noise, odour, litter and are often an area where youths choose to gather, thus resulting in general disturbance to nearby residents, particular late at night. The following factors will be considered in the assessment of development proposals for fast food/takeaways outlets:

- The need to retain, protect and strengthen the retail and general variety and multi-use function of the area;
- The adequacy of existing facilities for the sale of hot food consumption off the premises in the locality;
- The cumulative effect of the proposed development on the amenities of the area, and;
- The effect of the proposed development on the existing mix of land uses and activities in the area.

Policy

In terms of take away outlets, the following is the policy of Meath County Council:

RET DEV POL 5 Take away outlets will generally be facilitated in the town centre locations subject to the following:

- The design including shop front, signage and lighting contributes to and complements the existing building in the town centre;
- Proposal for 'take away' food as part of a sit down restaurant will be considered against the likely impact on local amenity, litter generation and noise. Opening hours of these premises shall be strictly controlled.

4.5.4 Non Retail Uses

In order to protect the retail viability of Ratoath Town Centre and to maintain the visual character of its streets it is necessary to control the amount of non-retail floorspace at ground level.

Policy

In terms of non retail uses, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

RET DEV POL 6 To strengthen the shopping function of Ratoath, non-retail uses at ground floor within the town centre will not be encouraged in order to protect the vitality and viability of the primary retail area.

4.5.5 Shopfronts and Advertising

Shopfronts make a major contribution to the visual amenities of a town and many have strong heritage value which should be preserved. New shopfront design must respect the scale and proportions of the streetscape by maintaining the existing grain of development along the street and respecting the appropriate plot width. Generally, individually mounted lettering or hand lettering is required. Letter design should be simple and legible. If shop lights are used, the arms should be short and the hoods of the lights treated to match with the background. Shopfront design for new buildings should be of a contemporary nature. The colour schemes used should be simple and should not conflict with adjoining buildings. The choice of materials should complement the character of the building and integrate with the overall visual unity of the street scheme. Timber window frames are appropriate in traditional context and also work well when combined with stone. External roller shutters will not normally be permitted with the town centre and will normally only be considered in industrial type settings.

Inappropriate advertising signage can detract from a streetscape and from the character of the area. The Planning Authority will require a high standard of design in signage applications. Signage design should reflect the scale and façade of the building on which it is located.

While the Planning Authority is cognisant of the desire of retail and commercial multiples to adopt a standard approach to shop fronts and signage design, in the interests of promoting a high quality urban realm, the Planning Authority will encourage a site specific design for same.

Policy

In terms of shopfronts and advertising, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

SHOP POL 1 To require the use of quality advertising signage to compliment the existing character of the town. There will be a presumption against the use of plastic illuminated signage.

SHOP POL 2	To encourage the use of hand painted fascia lettering and logos in a style and colour that harmonises with the shop and helps portray it's use.
SHOP POL 3	To encourage the use of roller shutters located behind the line of glazing of shopfronts.

4.6 Derelict and Obsolete Land and Buildings

The Planning Authorities will examine joint public/private commercial ventures that facilitate the development or refurbishment of derelict or obsolete sites, including the use of the Derelict Sites Act, 1990 as amended by the Planning and Development Act 2000. Meath County Council has also appointed a derelict site officer whose primary goal will be to assess and manage derelict sites throughout the county.

Policies

In terms of derelict and obsolete land and buildings, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

DER POL 1	To implement the provisions of the Derelict Sites Act, 1990 (as amended) and regulations made there under to prevent or remove injury to amenity arising from dereliction.
DER POL 2	To identify and secure the redevelopment of obsolete areas, including areas of backland, derelict sites and incidental open space.

CHAPTER 5: BUILT & NATURAL HERITAGE



SECTIONS IN THIS CHAPTER

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Built Heritage: Architectural Conservation Areas, Protected Structures
- 5.3 Protected Views and Prospects
- 5.4 Natural Heritage
- 5.5 Archaeological Heritage
 - 5.5.1 Recorded Monuments

5.1 Introduction

Both natural and built heritage form an important part of our cultural identity. The physical survivals of our past are to be valued and protected as a central part of our common heritage. Their presence adds to the quality of our lives, by enhancing the familiar and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness, which is an important aspect of the character and appearance of our towns, villages and countryside. The Planning Authority considers it desirable that buildings and features of historic, architectural, archaeological, social or cultural importance are protected for the enjoyment and benefit of current and future generations.

5.2 Built Heritage: Architectural Conservation Areas, Protected Structures

Built heritage refers to all manmade features in the environment including buildings and other structures such as bridges, wells, archaeological sites, field boundaries and pumps. The built heritage of Ratoath adds strongly to the character of the streetscape, therefore it is very important that it is protected. Ratoath is not currently designated as an Architectural Conservation Area. However, there are 11 structures in Ratoath which are registered as protected structures in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 and these act as focal points for the town. The Protected Structures are listed below:

Table 8: Protected Structures in Ratoath

REF. NO.	STRUCTURE	BUILDING TYPE	DESCRIPTION
MH044-300	Detached House	House (detached)	Detached five-bay single-storey house, built c. 1800, with gabled central porch. Hipped corrugated fibre cement roof with a red brick chimneystack. Roughcast rendered walls, rendered to porch. Timber sash windows.
MH044-301	Park House	House	Detached three-bay two storey house, built c. 1900, with flat-roofed central porch. Hipped slate roof with red brick chimneystacks. Modern extension to rear. Red brick outbuildings to rear.
MH044-302	Detached House	House (detached)	Detached three bay two storey Tudor style house, built c. 1890, with gabled breakfront bay to the north-west. Pitched slate roof with rendered chimneystacks. Roughcast rendered walls.
MH044-303	Holy Trinity Parochial House	Parochial House	Detached three-bay two storey parochial house, built c. 1869. Hipped slate roof with cresting and red brick chimneystacks. Roughcast rendered walls with red brick string courses.
MH044-304	Holy Trinity Parochial House Outbuildings	Outbuildings	Detached six-bay two storey outbuilding, built c.1870. Hipped slate roof. Squared stone walls. Timber sash with yellow brick dressings and granite sills. Timber battened doors with yellow brick dressings.
MH044-305	Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church	Church (R.C.)	Detached church, commenced c. 1820, remodelled and rebuilt c. 1868 and c. 1874.
MH044-306	Grotto	Grotto	Freestanding Marian grotto, built c. 1955. Comprising of niche with a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary with canopy above, set against mosaic screen wall, set on mosaic platform and steps, bounded by wrought-iron railings.
MH044-307	Ratoath Church of Ireland	Church (C of I)	Detached square-profile three-stage castellated and pinnacled Church of Ireland church tower, built c. 1817, with the ruins of the church walls to the east.
MH044-308	Water pump	Water pump	Cast-iron water pump, c. 1870, with foundry mark, banded shaft, fluted neck, cap and spout, and curved pumping handle.

MH044-309	Ratoath Glebe House	House (detached)	Detached five-bay two-storey over basement former rectory, built c. 1813, with flat-roofed central porch. Multiple-bay two-storey outbuildings to south.
MH044-310	Ratoath Manor	Nursing Home	Detached seven bay two storey former house, built c.1780, with two –bay full height bow to rear elevation. The former seat of J.I. Corballis.



5.3 Protected Views and Prospects

There are no protected views or prospects which affect the plan area.

5.4 Natural Heritage

Natural heritage is composed of native plants, animals and their habitats, geology, landscape, seascapes and inland waterways. The Broadmeadow River which flows through the town is an important natural heritage asset to Ratoath. The group of preserved trees on the Main Street helps to create a unique setting emphasising the town's rural background.

It is noteworthy that the study lands do not include any areas designated as Natura 2000 sites. There are no Natural Heritage Area(s), Special Area(s) of Conservation, Candidate Special Areas of Conservation(s) or Special Protection Area(s) in the study lands.

5.5 Archaeological Heritage

Archaeological heritage includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, movable objects, monuments of other kinds as well as their contexts where in land or underwater. County Meath has an abundance of archaeological heritage. The origins of Ratoath date from early Christian times. The establishment of a Norman settlement is indicated by the striking presence of the Moat and Bailey in the centre of the town. The enclosures associated with these settlements have given the centre of Ratoath its unique curved road pattern with an intricate network of laneways, many overgrown or derelict, connecting the original enclosures with areas to the north on the Curragha Road and to the south on the Fairyrhouse Road.

5.5.1 Recorded Monuments

There are 4 historical site/monuments in the area as identified in the Sites and Monument's Record for County Meath as detailed below:

Table 9: Recorded Monuments in Ratoath

Monument Number	National Grid Reference	Classification	Description
ME044-005	30192/25188	Cross Site	Market cross damaged in 1922; in 1932 cross commemorating Eucharistic congress was erected on site, which was removed c.1972.
ME044-006	30222/25202	Church Site	“Holy Trinity Church”. Dopping’s Visitation Book 1682-5 refers to church. Nineteenth century church remains on site. Late thirteenth or early fourteenth-century effigy and seventeenth-century cross in graveyard.
ME044-00701	30212/25186	Motte and Bailey	Flat-topped earthen mound (diam. of top 20m, diam. of base 62m, H11m) with remains of fosse and rectangular bailey to SE. Fragments of font (1572) outside nearby RC church.
ME044-034	30197/25193	Town/Font	Octagonal font (diam.0.44m, H0.2m) with biconical stem outside RC church and close to motte (1657).

The town core forms part of an area of Archaeological Interest.

Polices

In terms of heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

HER POL 1	To seek the protection of all structures (or where indicated parts of structures) which are included in the Record of Protected Structures.
HER POL 2	To safeguard the character and setting of protected structures through the control of design of new development in the vicinity, by the control of the change of use of adjacent land to ensure that there is no material impact and by the preservation of trees and other features where appropriate.
HER POL 3	To resist the unnecessary alterations of protected structures.
HER POL 4	To ensure that proposals to extend, alter, refurbish or change the use of a protected structure are sympathetic to its essential character and in accordance with good conservation practice.
HER POL 5	To encourage the retention of existing natural features in development proposals.
HER POL 6	To protect from damage archaeological sites and monuments located in the Plan area in consultation with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
HER POL 7	To secure the preservation of archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 and of sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally.
HER POL 8	To preserve and maintain the existing archaeological monuments within the study area and to safeguard the integrity of their setting.

HER POL 9	To ensure that all developments in the vicinity of archaeological sites and monuments are sympathetic with, and do not detract from, specified sites of archaeological significance.
HER POL 10	To ensure when undertaking or permitting development, that loss or damage to existing trees is minimised.
HER POL 11	To protect, preserve and ensure the effective management of trees and groups of trees, considered to be of special amenity value as indicated on the Zoning Map for Ratoath.

Objectives

In terms of heritage, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

HER OBJ 1	To ensure that all development proposals affecting sites specified in the Record of Monuments and Places, Zones of Archaeological Potential and Protected Structures are referred to the Prescribed Bodies (as set out in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2007 as amended) and to have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Prescribed Bodies in relation to undertaking, approving or authorising development.
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CHAPTER 6: SOCIAL STRATEGY



SECTIONS IN THIS CHAPTER

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Educational Facilities
- 6.3 Childcare Facilities
- 6.4 Healthcare Facilities
- 6.5 Recreational, Sport and Leisure Facilities
- 6.6 Open Space
- 6.6.1 Open Space Standards in Residential Areas
- 6.7 Library Facilities
- 6.8 Arts and Culture
- 6.9 Burial Grounds

6.1 Introduction

It is accepted that social infrastructure forms an indispensable element of quality development. Meath County Council fully concur with the Regional Authorities viewpoint on this issue and recognise the vital role that community infrastructure plays in the life of every town. The primary role of the Planning Authorities in terms of social infrastructure is on the reservation of sufficient lands to accommodate social, community and recreational facilities. These facilities should be accessible where possible by sustainable modes of transport. The provision of multi-functional open/recreational spaces and community facilities is the approach recommended by the Planning Authorities as facilities in this manner can fulfil the various needs of the different sectors of the population. It is an aim of the Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013 that adequate lands are identified for sports, recreational and leisure uses at appropriate locations in Ratoath. More generally, the social strategy of the County Development Plan supports the provision and even distribution of social infrastructure facilities to meet the needs of the County's population in liaison with other statutory, voluntary and community groups. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Department of Education and Science published a code of practice for the delivery of schools in the planning system in 2008 entitled 'The Provision of schools and the Planning System: A Code of Practice For Planning Authorities, the Department of Education and Science and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.' The document sets out best practice approaches that should be followed by planning authorities in ensuring that the planning system plays its full part in facilitating the timely and cost-effective roll-out of school facilities by the Department of Education and Science and in line with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. The contents of this document will influence the Ratoath Local Area Plan 2009 – 2015.

6.2 Educational Facilities

The Meath County Development Board stress the importance of education and training to society in "Le Chéile – An Integrated Strategy for Meath to 2012" where they state "Meath's future success depends on all elements of the educational system from pre-school through to Primary and Second Level to Third Level and continuing education. The upskilling of the County's workforce will be vital to economic success". Meath County Council fully concurs with this statement and will endeavour to facilitate the provision and enhancement of educational facilities in Ratoath. However it should be noted that the physical delivery of educational facilities falls outside the remit of the Planning Authority; it is the responsibility of central government and the Department of Education and Science in particular.



There are currently 2 primary schools operating in Ratoath, namely Ratoath Junior and Senior Schools and St. Paul's. Ratoath Senior NS is currently operating at full capacity housing 522

pupils. There is considerable room in St. Paul's with the enrolment figure for the 2007-2008 school year at 260 while the full capacity figure is 500. There is 1 secondary school located in Ratoath – Ratoath College. Their current enrolment figure is 312, however it is noted that by 2012 they expect to be at full capacity which is 850 students. The Department of Education and Science have advised that an additional primary school site should be reserved in Ratoath to cater for expected growth in student numbers. Lands adjacent to the existing secondary school are identified for this purpose. The Planning Authority will also facilitate the provision of a Secondary Gael Scoil to serve both Ratoath and Ashbourne. This is likely to be provided in Ashbourne where there is a bigger catchment area.

Policies

In terms of educational facilities, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

SOC POL 1	To ensure the provision of community, educational, cultural, recreational and amenity facilities in tandem with residential, commercial and other development.
SOC POL 2	To co-operate with the Department of Education and Science and School Management Boards in the provision of school places.
SOC POL 3	To implement the Code of Practice for 'The Provision of Schools and the Planning System' prepared by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Department of Education and Science in order to facilitate the timely and cost effective roll-out of school facilities by the Department of Education and Science and in line with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

Objectives

In terms of educational facilities, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

SOC OBJ 1	To zone sufficient lands at appropriate locations to cater for the needs of primary and post primary schools and education facilities in Ratoath.
SOC OBJ 2	To investigate, in co-operation with relevant agencies, the possibility of maximising the shared use of existing educational and community facilities for community and non-school purposes, where possible, to promote sustainable use of such infrastructure and community cohesion.
SOC OBJ 3	To facilitate the provision of a site for a Secondary Gael Scoil to accommodate both the Ratoath and Ashbourne areas.
SOC OBJ 4	To facilitate the Department of Education and Science on the provision of a primary school in the residential suburbs of Ratoath by making provision for such a site at Glascarn Lane adjacent to Ratoath College.

6.3 Childcare Facilities

The provision of childcare facilities in various forms is recognised as a key piece of social infrastructure required to enable people to participate more fully in society, particularly in accessing employment, education and social networks. Childcare facilities also provide valuable employment opportunities and can act as an important focal point for communities. In addition, and most importantly, early years childcare and education through formal childcare provision plays a crucial role in the holistic development of the child in terms of early education, socialisation and development of practical life-skills.

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government published Childcare Facilities, Guidelines for Planning Authorities in June 2001. The Planning Authority is obliged to have regard to these guidelines in the performance of its functions including the development management process.



Policies

In terms of childcare facilities, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

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| SOC POL 4 | To encourage and promote the provision of childcare facilities in Ratoath in accordance with national policy and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government document 'Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities.' |
| SOC POL 5 | To seek to realise the objectives of the "Meath County Childcare Committee Strategic Plan 2007-2010" as pertinent to Ratoath, to ensure the balanced provision of quality childcare facilities throughout the town. |
| SOC POL 6 | To consider childcare needs in future framework plans and all residential planning applications. |
| SOC POL 7 | To permit childcare facilities in existing residential areas provided that they do not have a significant impact on the character or amenities of an area, particularly with regard to car parking, traffic generation and noise disturbance. Where proposed facilities relate to properties which have been designed and built as dwellings and are surrounded by other houses, a significant residential element should be retained. |

Objectives

In terms of childcare facilities, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

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| SOC OBJ 5 | To encourage the provision of additional full day care childcare places, drop in facilities and work place crèches. |
| SOC OBJ 6 | 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 provide purpose built facilities and to consult with the Meath County Childcare Committee on how best to meet the childcare needs of the area. |

6.4 Healthcare Facilities

Acute hospital services for Ratoath are currently provided within County Meath at Our Lady's Hospital, Navan. Patients are also referred to specialist services in the various Dublin hospitals. There are a number of private medical and care services operating in the town as well as a nursing home. The Planning Authority acknowledges that the Health Service Executive (HSE) is progressing plans for a major new regional hospital in the North East, with Navan being identified as the preferred location.

Having regard to the existing and projected future population and having regard to the limited health services currently available in Ratoath, there is a growing need for new and expanded health care facilities, particularly primary health care services in Ratoath. The HSE have 2.5 acres of lands in their ownership on the Ashbourne Road in Ratoath which can accommodate future health care services. The Planning Authorities will co-operate with the HSE and other agencies in facilitating the provision of health care services. It is a stated objective in the Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013 to co-operate with the Health Service Executive and other statutory and voluntary agencies in the provision of appropriate health care facilities and to ensure that adequate lands and services are available for the improvement, establishment and expansion of health services.

Policies

In terms of healthcare facilities, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

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| SOC POL 8 | To facilitate the provision of health services in suitable locations and in accordance with the zoning matrix. Such health services should provide safe links for pedestrian movement, good access and adequate planning facilities. |
| SOC POL 9 | To co-operate with the Health Service Executive (North East) and other statutory and voluntary agencies in the provision of adequate health care facilities for all members of the public. |

Objectives

In terms of healthcare facilities, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

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| SOC OBJ 7 | To encourage the upgrading and expansion of existing health services available in Ratoath to cater for the current and projected population needs. |
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6.5 Recreational, Sport and Leisure Facilities

Access to recreational facilities is essential to maintain a healthy lifestyle and enjoy a good quality of life. Developing strong, inclusive communities is a key element in achieving sustainable development objectives. Communities require opportunities to meet, interact and form bonds, essential prerequisites to the development of a sense of place and belonging. Ratoath is reasonably well provided for in terms of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, for example the pitch and putt course, athletics grounds, the GAA and soccer grounds.

With regards to indoor facilities, the recently opened community centre is well utilised at all times of the day hosting various events and classes. The Venue Theatre is another asset Ratoath has to offer. It presents music, dance, puppetry, multimedia, clowning and comedy ranging from amateur to professional. However, taking account of the population growth of the town, further development of recreational facilities will be encouraged.

There is a growing need in Ratoath and residential areas in particular for multi purpose type buildings which can be used by community groups/residential associations etc. This can be

accommodated in a multifunctional manner sharing a building with perhaps a childcare facility. The existing Ratoath Community Centre is a prime example of this type of facility.

There are a number of existing children's playgrounds in Ratoath, e.g. in the Steeplechase residential development. As the town continues to develop, there will be a need to provide additional facilities of this nature. It is an objective to promote the development of an additional playground as part of a riverside park along the Broadmeadow River.

Meath Local Authorities have produced a play policy for 2008 – 2012 which provides a comprehensive framework for the development of children's play in the County. The Vision outlined in the Policy is "to provide quality, accessible, age appropriate and safe play opportunities and to ensure the play needs of every child in Meath are met". Although Ratoath was not specifically identified as a settlement with a gap in the provision of playgrounds, the continued provision of play facilities will be encouraged, particularly in new residential areas which are geared towards families with children.

The GAA lands, soccer grounds and pitch putt club benefit from existing land use zoning. It is considered that current access arrangements to the soccer grounds and pitch and putt club would benefit from improvements and it is therefore proposed to include a specific objective for upgrading of the access. The rugby club is located on lands situated to the north of the town. It is proposed to zone these lands for recreational activity in acknowledgement of their established use. In order to improve accessibility for pedestrians to these lands, it will be an objective of this Plan to provide footpaths and public lighting from these lands to the built up area of Ratoath. In addition, it is an objective to upgrade the entrance to the Rugby Club by re-locating it further to the south of the existing entrance. Additional lands for community facilities have been identified on the Fairhouse Road, adjoining the existing development boundary for the town.

Policy

In terms of recreational, sport and leisure facilities, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

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|------------|---|
| SOC POL 10 | To support and encourage local sports and community groups in the provision, expansion and development of outdoor and indoor community facilities and where appropriate encourage the input of a third party. |
| SOC POL 11 | To encourage and support the work of community groups in Ratoath. |
| SOC POL 12 | To ensure that provision is made for such community facilities as is deemed appropriate in consultation with local interested parties and to assist in the provision of community and resource centres by identification and reservation of suitable sites. |
| SOC POL 13 | To encourage the development of children's playgrounds in proximity to existing and proposed residential areas. |
| SOC POL 14 | To encourage and support the provision of additional youth facilities in Ratoath. |

Objective

In terms of recreational, sport and leisure facilities, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

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|------------|---|
| SOC OBJ 8 | To promote the use of existing recreational facilities in Ratoath. |
| SOC OBJ 9 | To investigate the provision of new recreational facilities and to identify additional lands to facilitate the expansion of existing recreational facilities. |
| SOC OBJ 10 | To support the provision of public lighting and footpaths between the rugby club grounds on the R155 as far as the built up area of Ratoath. |

SOC OBJ 11	To support the provision of improved access arrangements to Ratoath pitch and putt and soccer grounds.
SOC OBJ 12	To provide for passive and active recreational spaces in the vicinity of the Broadmeadow River.
SOC OBJ 13	To develop additional recreational facilities for teenagers and in this regard to explore the provision of a skateboard park and graffiti wall.
SOC OBJ 14	To reserve lands (4 acres) off the Fairyhouse Road for the provision of a swimming pool as part of FP 3.

6.6 Open Space

The availability of appropriate amounts of high-quality open space is essential for building sustainable communities. Such areas provide active recreational areas as well as contributing to the local environment by accommodating biodiversity and wildlife features. Public open space must be carefully designed as an integral part of the layout including assess points which should be addressed at initial design stages. Public open space is ideally provided in the form of a hierarchy of spaces, ranging from town parks to smaller spaces serving residential areas. Ratoath benefits from the presence of the River Broadmeadow which has the potential to act as an attractive amenity feature in the centre of the town. There is an existing walkway alongside part of the river. The objectives of this Local Area Plan will seek to protect this walkway and further enhance its quality.

Private open space acts as recreational and living space for children and pets respectively as well as providing a safe, enclosed area for the resident's personal enjoyment and relaxation.



Ratoath Rugby Club



Ratoath Soccer Club

6.6.1 Open Space Standards in Residential Areas

Public open space within residential developments should be designed so as to complement the residential layout and be informally supervised by residents. The spaces should be visually and functionally accessible to the maximum number of dwellings. The landscape design of open spaces, including the retention of existing features such as an important stand of trees, stream or rock outcrop, must be incorporated into the initial design process. Where such features are being retained, they should be situated in open space to ensure their visual setting and protection. The design and layout of the network of public open spaces should take into account, and make provision for, the need for level areas of sufficient size to accommodate informal sports activities for children. Narrow tracts of open space, which are difficult to manage, are not acceptable.

Public open space shall be provided for in residential development at a minimum rate of 15% of total site area. A variety of types and sizes of open spaces should be provided to cater for the

active and passive recreational needs of children and adults of all ages. A minimum of 400 sq.m. of children's play area is required for a development of 40 dwellings or more (based on average occupancy of 2.9 persons per house). No account will be taken of incidental open space such as grass margins, left over areas, nor any area due to its nature (e.g. marshy) or topography (slope) which is deemed unsuitable.

The location, siting and design of the open space will have regard to the following:

- Be well designed and of a high visual standard so that it is functional and accessible to all.
- Provide for the retention of existing natural features.
- Include proposals for drainage and landscaping of the public open space.
- Houses shall not be permitted to back onto open spaces.
- Provide high levels of natural surveillance and overlooking by as many houses as possible.
- Be provided with a boundary fence / wall where such open space is adjacent to a main access road or Local Distributor Road.

The use of hard landscaping elements such as paving, cobbled areas, etc. should play an increasingly important role in the design and presentation of open space concepts. Hard play areas such as all weather surfaces should also be taken into account when designing new proposals.



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

All houses should have an area of private open space, exclusive of car parking, to the rear of the building line. Minimum rear garden size shall conform to the recommendations of the Residential Density Guidelines for Local Authorities (or as otherwise updated by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government). Private open space to apartments should be as per the standards outlined in the document 'Design Standards for New Apartments' (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government).

Policies

In terms of open space, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

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| SOC POL 15 | To ensure that high quality open space is provided to serve the active and passive recreational needs of the population of Ratoath. |
| SOC POL 16 | No residential development shall be permitted on lands that are subject of a deed of dedication or identified in a planning application as open space to |

ensure the availability of community and recreational facilities for the residents of the area.

Objectives

In terms of open space facilities, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

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| SOC OBJ 15 | To investigate the provision of riverside and pedestrian walkways in Ratoath. |
| SOC OBJ 16 | To promote the development of a playground in the vicinity of the River Broadmeadow. |
| SOC OBJ 17 | To provide and encourage further improvements along the banks of the River Broadmeadow. |
| SOC OBJ 18 | To develop a system of linear parks and waterfront amenity areas with walkways and cycleways, subject to the availability of resources, along the banks of the River Broadmeadow. |

6.7 Library Facilities

The Planning Authority recognise the vital role that library facilities play in enabling people to participate fully in society as well as underpinning cultural and educational activities. The main County Meath Library and headquarters is at Railway Street, Navan. There are eleven other libraries located throughout the county and these offer a wide range of services, however there is currently none in Ratoath. Library services are available in Dunshaughlin and Ashbourne, with the library in Ashbourne having a strong membership base from Ratoath. The Ashbourne library offers the full range of library services including adult and children's fiction and non fiction books, foreign language books, internet access, exhibition space and meeting rooms which are host to book clubs and are available for community use.

Policy

In terms of library facilities, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

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| SOC POL 17 | To recognise the important role that the library service plays in the community and to facilitate the library service in enhancing its service delivery to the public, subject to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. |
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6.8 Arts and Culture

The role of arts and cultural facilities is very important to the artistic, social and general quality of life of residents, contributing to personal and community development but also to employment and tourism as they attract visitors and investment to the area. Arts and cultural facilities can include community and arts centre, museums, theatres and music venues and often libraries.

The Arts Development Plan for County Meath sets out measures to further formalise support structures and create opportunities for the arts. It aims to increase access to all sectors of the community, encourage and increase awareness and interest in the arts as well as increasing participation.

Ratoath benefits significantly from the presence of the Venue Theatre in the town. The Theatre provides a wide variety of events, including comedy shows, drama, pantomime, and musical concerts. A number of cultural based activities are available in Ratoath and run from the Community Centre, and include the 'Four Forks' drama group and the 'Ratoath Musical Society'.



Policies

In terms of the arts and culture, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

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|------------|---|
| SOC POL 18 | To continue to enhance and support the range and quality of arts provision in Ratoath. |
| SOC POL 19 | To liaise with the County Arts Officer on any development proposal that is likely to have a significant impact on the arts. |

Objective

In terms of the arts and culture, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

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|------------|--|
| SOC OBJ 19 | To continue to support the Venue Theatre and to encourage the existing level of high maintenance and use of the multi-functional Ratoath Community Centre. |
|------------|--|

6.9 Burial Grounds

Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to provide for burial facilities, although the majority are provided by religious bodies. However changes in society have resulted in Local Authorities providing multi-denominational graveyards in their jurisdiction. It is also important from a planning point of view that graveyards are protected for their heritage and cultural merits. There is an existing burial ground in Ratoath which has capacity.

Policies

In terms of burial grounds, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

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|------------|---|
| SOC POL 20 | To facilitate the provision of new (non-denominational) burial grounds and the extension of existing cemeteries as appropriate to cater for the needs of Ratoath. |
| SOC POL 21 | To protect the cultural heritage of graveyards and encourage their management and maintenance in accordance with conservation principles. |
| SOC POL 22 | To encourage local community groups to develop, manage and maintain new burial facilities. |

CHAPTER 7 INFRASTRUCTURE



SECTIONS IN THIS CHAPTER

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Transport
 - 7.2.1 Regional Roads
 - 7.2.2 Distributor and Local Roads
 - 7.2.3 New Road Schemes and Proposed Works
 - 7.2.4 Pedestrians and Cyclists
 - 7.2.5 Public Transport
 - 7.2.6 Parking and Loading
- 7.3 Street Furniture and Lighting
- 7.4 Keeping the Streets Clean
- 7.5 Water Supply
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- 7.7 Surface Water Management
- 7.8 Flooding
- 7.9 Telecommunications
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- 7.11 Solid Waste Collection and Disposal
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7.1 Introduction

The suitable provision of a full range of infrastructural services, including transport, water, waste water, telecommunications, waste disposal and energy is critical to support the continuing development of Ratoath and in particular, to make the town an attractive location for economic development. The policies and objectives of this Local Area Plan will seek to facilitate the timely provision of such services to the town.

7.2 Transport

The location of Ratoath at the junction of the R155 and R125 regional roads and the increasing use of this road network as an outer orbital route for Dublin City, has resulted in significantly increased traffic and particular HGV traffic passing through the centre of the town. In lines with trends for increasing car ownership and economic development, it is anticipated that these levels will rise. In addition increasing traffic levels between the R155 and Ashbourne using the Ballybin Road and connecting Ratoath with Ashbourne has recently created a new traffic “desire line”.

The growth in population and especially the increase in the number of vehicles on the roads is resulting in pressure on road infrastructure. The pivotal location of Ratoath within the County and its proximity to Dublin means that improvements to the existing road network are of critical importance to the economic development of Ratoath and the quality of life for its inhabitants.



The Planning Authority recognises that the current trends in transportation are unsustainable, in particular the relentless increase in private car traffic. The Planning Authority is strongly committed to the promotion of sustainable means of travel including public transport, walking and cycling, and the encouragement of modal change from private car use to these means. Through planning for transport development, the Council will ensure that the needs of people with differing abilities are taken into account. The integration of land use and transportation policies underpins the transportation strategy as outlined below.

7.2.1 Regional Roads

Ratoath has an advantageous location in respect of the regional and national road network. As previously stated, it is situated at the junction of the R125 and R155 regional roads, which link to Ashbourne and Dunshaughlin and put the town within easy reach of the N2 and N3 National Primary Routes. While in the recent past, these transport links have served to enhance the town as a commuter destination, it is hoped that over the lifetime of the plan, they can be used to enhance the town's attractiveness as a location for economic development.

The traffic patterns outlined in Section 7.2 have resulted in significant volumes of vehicles passing through the town. This can have a negative impact on the attractiveness of the town

centre and the degree to which it is pedestrian and cycle friendly. It is an objective of the Planning Authority to put in place mechanisms which will relieve the historic central area of Ratoath from these pressures.

Over the previous plan period, works have been carried out to the Regional Roads around Ratoath. These include realignment and upgrading of the R125 from the town as far as the GAA football pitch to include provision of roundabouts which serve residential areas. A new link roundabout has also been constructed at the junction of the R155 to Ratoath and R154 (to Trim) with the N3.

The County Development Plan identifies upgrading works which will help to improve the links between Ratoath and adjoining settlements. This includes works to the R155 from Curragha school to Robinson's Cross and to the R125 from Ninemilestone to Kilrue Lane which will improve the links from the N2 and Ashbourne to Ratoath and works to the R125 from Lagore Cross to Bonestown which will improve the link between Ratoath and Dunshaughlin.

7.2.2 Distributor and Local Roads

Local roads also pass through Ratoath with distributor roads serving the internal fabric of the town. Over the previous plan period, a number of schemes have been carried out on this network. This includes the provision of roundabouts on the Fairyhouse Road. The Skreen Road, from the town as far as the Steeplechase development, has been upgraded with improvements carried out to the carriageway, public lighting and provision of footpaths and cycleway. The R125 between the Ballybin Road and the town has been realigned and upgraded.

During the last plan period, a link road has been constructed between the Dunshaughlin Road and the Skreen Road. When opened, this road will help to alleviate traffic congestion in the town centre. The Planning Authority will be supportive of similar, appropriate schemes given the contribution they can make to reducing traffic flows through the town, creating a more pleasant and attractive town centre.

In addition, during the last plan period, a link road has been constructed between the R125 Ashbourne Road and the R155 Fairyhouse Road. The Ballybin Road roundabout, where this link road connects the R125, has been upgraded and traffic signals have been put in place at the junction of the link road at Meadowbank with the R155.

Works have been carried out to the junction of Glascarn Lane with the R155. The R155 from Glascarn Lane to the town has also been upgraded to include footpaths and lighting however some elements remain to be finalised, including the junction of St. Oliver's Park with the R155. It will be an objective of this Local Area Plan to complete this scheme.

7.2.3 New Road Schemes and Proposed Works

There are a number of objectives in this Local Area Plan to improve the local road network in Ratoath. These include to reserve and protect from development the bypass corridor from the R155 Fairyhouse Road to the R125 Ashbourne Road, with the aim of securing a southern bypass of the town between these roads.

It is also an objective to upgrade the junction between the R155 and R125 in the town to include for carriageway narrowing, provision of dedicated and priority marked turning lanes and integration of pedestrian crossing needs.

As stated in Section 6.5, it is an objective to upgrade the existing access to the Harps football club and pitch and putt course on the Skryne Road and to provide public lighting and footpaths between the rugby club grounds on the R155 into the town.

A further objective of this Local Area Plan will seek to provide traffic calming measures along the R125/Main Street to control traffic speed, particularly along curved sections of the road network. In terms of road improvements, it is an objective of the Planning Authority to improve the R125 between the Ballybin Road and the Kilbride Road, including the Kilbride junction and to realign the junction of the R125 and the Inner Relief Road and provide access to the backlands.

The objectives relating to roads are illustrated on the zoning map accompanying this plan.



Roundabout in Ratoath

Policies

In terms of transport, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

INF POL 1	To support major road improvements by reserving the corridors of any such proposed routes free of development which could interfere with the provision of such proposals.
INF POL 2	To regulate, control and improve signage throughout the town.
INF POL 3	To provide for the future transportation needs of Ratoath and environs in a sustainable manner.
INF POL 4	To integrate land use planning and transportation planning.
INF POL 5	To construct and complete the local distributor road network and ensure its integration into the urban fabric.
INF POL 6	To establish a clear road hierarchy, in which each of the road links has a function and where the mixing of national, regional and local traffic is reduced to the minimum possible.
INF POL 7	To provide additional road capacity, subject to environmental and conservation considerations, in order to remove the volume of through traffic from the Main Street and to improve circulation throughout the town.
INF POL 8	Following the publication of the Traffic Management Guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government/Department of Transport/Dublin Transportation Office, it shall be part of the standard requirement for planning applications that Transport Assessments, undertaken by and at the expense of the developer, shall be carried out to assess the impacts of developments in accordance with guidelines given in the "Traffic Management Guidelines", Section 1.11. Table 1.4 lists thresholds above which a Transport Assessment is mandatory. The Transport Assessment will be assessed

by the Planning Authority and any additional works required as a result of the Transport Assessment shall be funded by the developer.

Objectives

In terms of transport, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

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|------------|---|
| INF OBJ 1 | To improve the accesses to the Harps football club and the pitch and putt course on the Skryne Road. (SOC POL OBJ 11) |
| INF OBJ 2 | To reserve and protect from development the bypass corridor from the R155 Fairyhouse Road to the R125 Ashbourne Road. |
| INF OBJ 3 | To proceed with detailed design and construction of the junction between the R155 and R125 roads at Ryans shop providing for carriageway narrowing, provision of dedicated and propriety marked turning lanes and integration of pedestrian crossing needs. |
| INF OBJ 4 | To provide traffic calming measures along the R125/Main Street to control traffic speeds particularly along curved sections of the road network. |
| INF OBJ 5 | To realign and upgrade the entrance to St. Oliver's Park. |
| INF OBJ 6 | To improve the R125 between the Ballybin Road and the Kilbride Road, including the Kilbride junction. |
| INF OBJ 7 | To realign the junction of the R125 and the Inner Relief Road and provide access to the backlands. |
| INFO OBJ 8 | To prepare a traffic management plan for Ratoath taking account of mobility impaired parking, cycling facilities, long stay and general car parking requirements. |

7.2.4 Pedestrians and Cyclists

The European Charter of Pedestrian Rights states that: "The pedestrian has the right to live in a healthy environment and to freely enjoy the amenities offered by public areas under conditions that adequately safeguard both physical and psychological well-being." In order to achieve sustainability, walking and cycling must be encouraged. The compact nature of the historic core of Ratoath means that improvements to pedestrian facilities in this area to make the town centre a safer and more pleasant place in which to walk, would in turn increase the number of people who would rather walk than drive.



Existing pedestrian and cyclist facilities are very limited forcing such people to share road space with other road users. This has the effect of discouraging cycling and walking as modes of transport as it poses an increased road safety hazard to both the pedestrian and the cyclist. It is considered that retro fitting cycle ways into a town with an existing streetscape character such as Ratoath would be problematic due to the narrowness of the older streets however where this is deemed feasible it shall be investigated further. There is also a lack of bicycle parking facilities in Ratoath. The Council shall ensure that cycle parking facilities are provided for in new developments along with cycle lanes in any new access roads.

Policies

In terms of pedestrians and cyclists, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

INF POL 9	To promote and facilitate the development of cycling and walking facilities in Ratoath.
INF POL 10	To require that all new significant developments provide pedestrian and cycle facilities including secure parking for bicycles.
INF POL 11	To provide cycle ways, where appropriate, as part of all road improvement/redesign schemes.
INF POL 12	To prioritise the movement of pedestrian and cyclists in proximity to public transport nodes.
INF POL 13	To promote an attractive public realm of pedestrian footpaths/cycleways, street furniture and quality public lighting.

Objectives

In terms of pedestrians and cyclists, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

INF OBJ 9	To ensure the development of cycling and walking facilities at strategically located points throughout the town.
INF OBJ 10	To provide public lighting and footpaths between the rugby club grounds on the R155 as far as the built up area of Ratoath (SOC OBJ 10).

7.2.5 Public Transport

The main type of public transport operating to and from Ratoath is Bus Éireann services to Ashbourne–Ratoath–Blanchardstown Shopping Centre, operating mostly every two hours. A more frequent service operates to and from Ratoath into Dublin city at very regular intervals. There is also a Dublin–Dunshaughlin–Navan Nightrider in operation, also at regular times.

The Planning Authority acknowledge that there will be an increased demand for external bus trips during the lifetime of this Local Area Plan, primarily to Dublin. The provision of park and ride facilities will also be encouraged at exact locations on the outskirts of the town. Additional parking will also be investigated in close proximity to bus stops to ensure that these services are used to their full capacity.

Ratoath is not served by an operational rail link. However consideration should be given to increased bus provision to the nearest station, which will be at Pace, and provision should be made for additional park and ride facilities which will encourage increased use of rail services by commuters to Dublin. In this regard, the Planning Authority has identified sites at the GAA grounds on the R125 and on the Fairyhouse Road for park and ride facilities.

Policies

In terms of public transport, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

- INF POL 14 To co-operate with relevant transport bodies and authorities to support and encourage the provision of safe and suitable locations for bus services including bus shelter provision at bus stops.

Objectives

In terms of public transport, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

- INF OBJ 11 To promote the provision of a Park and Ride facility and long stay car parking in Ratoath on the identified industrial zoned lands on the Fairyhouse Road and at the site of the GAA grounds on the R125.
- INF OBJ 12 To liaise with Bus Éireann and individual landowners to establish a bus bay and shelter/passenger information point on the Main Street, Fairyhouse Road and Ashbourne Road.
- INF OBJ 13 To liaise with Bus Éireann and/or private bus operators to seek the provision of a bus service from Ratoath to the Pace rail station.
- INF OBJ 14 To support and encourage the provision of safe and suitable locations for bus and taxi services.

7.2.6 Parking and Loading

Parking facilities in Ratoath have become a serious problem in recent times. It is the intention of Meath Council to adopt a strict parking and loading policy for all new developments in Ratoath, the former being in accordance with current standards in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. Due to the lack of existing surface space within the town centre, the option of underground car parking will be investigated during the life time of this plan. Additional car parking spaces adjoining bus stops will also be sought as well as the option of park and ride facilities as mentioned previously. There is currently no park and ride facility serving the town. The provision of a park and ride facility will be encouraged in the town. A specific objective in this regard is included in the public transport section above.

Policies

In terms of parking and loading, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

- INF POL 15 To apply the car parking standards as included in the Development Management Guidelines and Standards section of Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013.
- INF POL 16 To promote where feasible and appropriate alternative options to surface car parking.
- INF POL 17 To facilitate the needs of mobility impaired persons through the provision of adequate suitable parking.

Objectives

In terms of parking and loading, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

- INF OBJ 15 To promote, where feasible and appropriate, alternative options to surface car parking.

INF OBJ 16	To promote the development of a public car park to the rear of the Catholic Church and to upgrade pedestrian lanes and integration of pedestrian lanes between this and the central part of Ratoath to provide pedestrian access.
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7.3 Street Furniture and Lighting

Street furniture can include refuse bins, seats, signage posts, bollards, flower pots and telephone booths. Both existing and new furniture and lighting should complement the character and form of the streetscape, by means of an appropriate design style. Achieving this can enhance and add to the town's tourism potential and the urban environment in general.

7.4 Keeping the Streets Clean

The Planning Authority believes that litter greatly reduces the appeal of a town and discourages people from making return trips. If necessary, private enterprises shall place public litter bins outside their premises and any such litter bins shall be in keeping with the character of the area by means of appropriate design and styling to be agreed with the Planning Authority.

Policies

In terms of litter control, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

INF POL 18	To encourage the people of Ratoath to enjoy a litter free environment through a partnership approach for the benefit of all who live, work and visit Ratoath.
INF POL 19	To require the provision of public litter bins where there is a risk in the opinion of the Planning Authority that a development would result in increased levels of litter on the public road or street.

Objective

In terms of litter control, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

INF OBJ 17	To implement the current Meath County Council, Litter Management Plan 2006-2009 and subsequent Litter Management Plans.
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7.5 Water Supply

Ratoath is currently served by the East Meath Regional Water Supply Scheme. The River Boyne at Roughgrange is the main source for the East Meath RWSS. The water is then treated at Staleen waterworks and is distributed to the Ratoath area via Windmill Hill reservoir. The scheme is augmented from a groundwater source at Curraghera. Currently the bulk of this groundwater is fed towards the Ashbourne area. There is currently limited available capacity in the scheme particularly in the Ratoath area.

In the future, Ratoath will continue to be served from the upgraded East Meath Regional Water Supply Scheme and will continue to form an integral part of that scheme. A new regional scheme to serve East Meath, Drogheda and South Louth is currently at an advanced stage of planning. This scheme, which is included in the Water Services Investment Programme 2007-2009, is designed to meet the water supply needs of this area to the year 2026. However depending on Department approvals and funding, it will be 2015 by the time all proposed phases of the scheme are realised and the full East Meath, Drogheda and South Louth area is comfortable from a water supply point of view. However, as each phase is realised, significant improvements are expected for all areas.

A number of other water supply schemes in the wider area will benefit the water supply service to Ratoath. An advance works contract for a new groundwater source at Rath, Ashbourne has

recently been commissioned. This scheme was designed to provide an additional 500 cu.m/day to the Ashbourne area, however a knock-on effect will be that additional water will now be made available to Ratoath from the East Meath regional scheme. The Dunshaughlin Water Supply Scheme is currently under construction and is due for completion in 2010-2011. When the Dunshaughlin scheme is complete, a further 400 cu.m/day will be available to the Ratoath area from the East Meath regional scheme. The new tower as part of the Dunshaughlin Water Supply Scheme will be high enough and the plant will have sufficient capacity to feed water to Ratoath.

Policies

In terms of water supply, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

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| INF POL 20 | To continue the development and upgrading of the water supply system so as to ensure that an adequate, sustainable and economic supply of piped water of suitable quality is available for domestic, commercial, industrial, fire safety and other uses for the sustainable development of the town in accordance with the sustainable structure identified in this Plan and as finances permit. |
| INF POL 21 | To promote public awareness and involvement in water conservation measures by households, businesses and industries. |
| INF POL 22 | To implement the Water Conservation Programme, in order to conserve valuable resources by reducing wastage. |
| INF POL 23 | To utilise the existing water supply in an efficient and fair manner and in the best interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. |
| INF POL 24 | To ensure that all drinking water complies with the European Union Drinking Water Directive 98/83/EC as given effect in Irish law by the European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2007, as may be amended. |

Objective

In terms of water supply, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

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| INF OBJ 18 | To implement the Water Services Investment Programme 2007-2009. |
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7.6 Sewerage Treatment and Disposal

The waste water treatment plant in Ratoath is currently operating at full capacity with the existing loading from the town being 5,700 P.E. Construction of the Ashbourne/Ratoath/Kilbride Sewerage Scheme - Stage 2 is currently underway. The objective of the scheme is to improve the overall wastewater collection and transfer facilities for Ashbourne, Ratoath, Kilbride and environs with due regard to the future physical development strategy for the area. The Scheme has been designed to provide a modern, efficient and effective wastewater collection and transfer system for the immediate and long-term requirements of the development areas of Ashbourne, Ratoath and Kilbride.

In addition to the new trunk sewers, the elimination of surface water and infiltration from the foul sewer network is an essential element of the proposed new scheme. The elimination of surcharges and overflows from the sewer networks will assist in improving the water quality in the Broadmeadow River thereby enhancing the amenity value of the river as it flows through Ratoath and Ashbourne. The elimination of the surface water and the control of the storm water flow provides additional capacity in the existing foul sewer network to cater for further development in the region while the absence of surface water from the foul sewer system will lead to more efficient and more economical operation of the pumping stations on the scheme. The reduction in the hydraulic load will greatly reduce the ultimate treatment cost.

Policies

In terms of sewage treatment and disposal, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

- INF POL 25 To continue the development and upgrading of the waste water system servicing Ratoath to ensure that an adequate treatment capacity is available for the sustainable development of Ratoath as finances permit.
- INF POL 27 To ensure that all new developments have and are provided with satisfactory drainage systems in the interest of public health and to avoid the pollution of ground and surface waters.

Objective

In terms of sewage treatment and disposal, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

- INFO OBJ 19 To provide for the screening of the existing sewerage treatment plant through landscaping proposals.

7.7 Surface Water Management

Rainfall on a greenfield site is either absorbed into the ground or runs off slowly to the nearest watercourse. With development, much of the area becomes impermeable with runoff being piped to the nearest watercourse or storm drain. Thus both the volume and the rate of runoff can dramatically increase, which may lead to flooding or increased overflows from combined sewers, neither of which is acceptable. It is the policy of the Council to prevent flooding caused by poorly drained runoff. In order to do this, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be incorporated into developments in order to reduce and ultimately prevent flooding. SuDS are effective technologies which aim to reduce flood risk, improve water quality and enhance biodiversity and amenity. It is proposed to continue this policy of requiring SuDS proposals to accompany all large-scale developments in Ratoath.

Policy

In terms of surface water management, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

- INF POL 28 To ensure that all new developments have and are provided with satisfactory drainage systems in the interest of public health and to avoid the pollution of ground and surface waters.

Objectives

In terms of surface water management, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

- INF OBJ 20 To require all large scale developments to provide “Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems” (SuDS) as part of their development proposals.

7.8 Flooding

The First Schedule of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 indicates that development plans can include objectives regulating, restricting or controlling development in areas at risk of flooding (whether inland or coastal), erosion and other natural hazards. The OPW is charged at a national/central government level to monitor and address situations pertaining to flooding.

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has recently produced draft guidelines on “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management.” The Guidelines set out a sequential approach to managing flood hazard and potential risk. The key principles of this are:

1. Avoid development in areas at risk of flooding;

2. If this is not possible, consider substituting a land use that is less vulnerable to flooding.
3. Only when both avoidance and substitution cannot take place should consideration be given to mitigation and management of risks.

The Guidelines state that inappropriate types of development that would create unacceptable risks from flooding should not be planned for or permitted. Exceptions to the restriction of development due to potential flood risks are provided for through the use of a Justification Test, where the planning need and the sustainable management of flood risk to an acceptable level can be demonstrated.

It is the intention of Meath County Council to adhere to the principles outlined in the draft Guidelines pending publication of finalised guidelines.

Flood mapping as provided by OPW on the website www.floodmaps.ie has been reviewed. No flooding incidents within the Local Area Plan development boundary are recorded on the website.

Policies

In terms of flooding, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

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| INF POL 29 | To require that new development should not itself be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding nor should it cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations. |
| INF POL 30 | To control development in the natural flood plain of rivers and to take account of any guidelines regarding flooding issued by the DoEHLG or OPW in the assessment of planning applications. |

Objective

In terms of flooding, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

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| INF OBJ 21 | To require all significant developments impacting on flood risk areas to provide a Flood Impact Assessment, to identify potential loss of flood plain storage and how it would be offset in order to minimize impact on the river flood regime and to show that the development would not give rise to flooding on the application site or any surrounding lands. |
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7.9 Telecommunications

Satellite dishes and telecommunications apparatus, if badly sited, can be visually obtrusive and affect the character and appearance of historic buildings and townscapes. Therefore, it is important in the interest of townscape to ensure that future telecommunications and related development does not have a detrimental impact on the appearance or character of the town. The erection of domestic antennae and satellite dishes is restricted by the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001. However, exemptions exist under certain circumstances.

Objective

In terms of telecommunications structures, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

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| INF OBJ 22 | To have regard to the following in considering proposals for the development of telecommunications masts, antennae and ancillary equipment: |
| (a) | The visual impact of the proposed equipment on the natural, built and historic environment. |
| (b) | The removal or modification of features of architectural / archaeological importance. |

- (c) The impact any such development may have on protected structures or their setting.
- (d) The potential for co-location of equipment on existing masts.
- (e) The Department of the Environment and Local Government “Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures, Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (July 1996).

7.10 Broadband

High speed broadband is an important asset in order to attract inward investment into Ireland. As the private sector was failing to invest at the level necessary to keep pace with the demand for broadband, the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources regional broadband programme was put in place. One element of the programme is addressing the telecommunications infrastructure deficit by building high speed, open space broadband networks, in association with the local and regional authorities, in major towns and cities.

The success of the first phase of the Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) programme has led to a second phase of projects, for broadband provision in over 90 towns with a population in excess of 1,500 people. Ratoath is one such town. MANs are completed or under construction in 66 additional towns under Phase II of the Programme. The construction of the networks in these 66 towns will be complete by mid 2008. Construction of MANs in the remaining 28 towns is currently under review pending the outcome of a value for money review of phase 1 of the programme and the outcome of the consultation on the Next Generation Broadband policy paper.

It is the intention of the Planning Authority to encourage the roll out of broadband services in the County and in this regard, it shall be an objective that all planning applications for significant new development shall provide for the delivery of broadband infrastructure in line with each phase of development.

Policy

In terms of broadband, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

- INF POL 31 To implement the broadband strategy for Meath County Council as it relates to Ratoath by supporting the roll out of broadband infrastructure in Ratoath to serve the needs of business and residents.

Objective

In terms of broadband, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

- INF OBJ 23 To require that all planning applications for significant new development provide for the delivery of broadband infrastructure in tandem with each phase of development.

7.11 Solid Waste Collection and Disposal

Development will generate demand for domestic and commercial waste disposal and collection services. The construction phases of developments will also produce significant volumes of waste. Developers are obliged to submit a construction and waste management plan prior to the commencement of any proposed construction activities. All waste material generated during both the construction and operational phases of development must only be collected by appropriately licensed waste contractors and disposed of in licensed waste facilities.

Meath County Council recognises the importance of providing bring bank and civic amenity sites at accessible locations. In particular, there is a recognised need for such facilities in the Dunshaughlin area. It is a policy of this Local Area Plan to support the provision of facilities to address this need.

Policies

In terms of waste management, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

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| INF POL 32 | To promote education and awareness on all issues associated with waste management, both at industry and community level. This will include the promotion of waste reduction by encouraging the minimization, re-use, recycling and recovery of waste within the country. |
| INF POL 33 | To implement the policies and objectives of the Waste Management Plan for the North East Region. |
| INF POL 34 | To require the provision of bring banks, bottle banks or other appropriate recycling facilities as part of the overall development in the case of new and extended shopping centre developments and commercial neighbourhood centres, educational, sports, and recreational facilities. The sites shall be made available to the Local Authority at the developer's own expense and will be maintained by the local authority or its agents. |
| INF POL 35 | To promote and encourage the recycling of construction and demolition waste in accordance with approved construction and demolition waste management plan. |
| INF POL 36 | To support the provision of a civic amenity site to serve Ratoath. |

Objectives

In terms of waste management, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

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| INF OBJ 24 | To reserve lands (1 acre) off the Ashbourne Road for the development of a civic amenity site as part of FP 2. |
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7.12 Energy

The Planning Authority support national and international initiatives for limiting emissions of greenhouse gases and encouraging the development of renewable energy sources. New technologies have enabled the development of sustainable energy sources. These include wind, biomass and waste, solar, hydro, combined heat and power, geothermal heat transfer, etc.

The Planning and Development Regulations 2007 and 2008 exempted a range of micro renewable technologies from the need to apply for planning permission. On top of this the Council will seek to promote all appropriate technologies through the development management process. Developments should strive to attain high standards of energy efficiency and environmental sustainability, including bioclimatic site design, water conservation, ventilation, energy efficient strategies for housing design, daylight analysis and high insulation standards.

Policies

In terms of energy, it is the policy of Meath County Council:

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| INF POL 37 | To promote energy efficient solutions to fulfil the energy requirements of development. In deciding applications of medium to large scale residential, commercial and industrial development the Councils will require that all benign energy technologies are explored towards the achievement of increased sustainable energy use. |
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INF POL 38	To support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity supplies and associated networks to serve the existing and projected residential, commercial, industrial and social needs for Ratoath.
INF POL 39	To locate service cables, wires and piping, including electricity, telephone and television underground, where possible, and that existing overhead cables and associated equipment should be progressively be located underground with future capacity considered and appropriate ducting put in place.

CHAPTER 8 IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING



SECTIONS IN THIS CHAPTER

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Phasing
- 8.3 Contributions
- 8.4 Monitoring and Review

8.1 Introduction

The function of this Local Area Plan is to guide development in Ratoath over the next six years. The Council have a key role in ensuring that policies and objectives contained in the Local Area Plan are achieved. However the achievement of these is dependent on the financial and human resources of the Council and in many circumstances is also reliant on co-operation and provision of services and facilities from other state bodies and the private sector. While Meath County Council will make every effort in facilitating the provision of social, community and transport infrastructure and facilities, it is not in all instances the direct provider of such services. Meath County Council will require developers to incorporate the objectives of this plan, including those relating to the provision of physical and social infrastructure, into their individual development proposals. Other objectives, particular key physical infrastructural elements will require government funding and support.

It is the nature of Local Area Plans that no budget is agreed in advance and therefore no funding of projects or implementation of all objectives contained within the plan is guaranteed in advance. However, the Local Authority intends to exercise all their legal powers to ensure that objectives are implemented. This includes using compulsory acquisition powers where necessary to facilitate site assembly or to secure the realisation of objectives contained in this Local Area Plan.

8.2 Phasing

It is an objective of the Planning Authority to promote the implementation of the Local Area Plan in a rational and sequential approach that is in keeping with the proposed development strategy, and to ensure that essential facilities (such as water, road infrastructure, sewerage etc) are secured and in place concurrent with proposed development projects. The Local Authority reserves the right to refuse development on the grounds of inadequate infrastructure provision.

8.3 Contributions

It is considered reasonable that contributions be paid towards Local Authority investment in the provision of infrastructure and services, by developers who benefit from such provision. A development contributions scheme for the County has been prepared and adopted by Meath County Council and will be applied in respect of applications for development in this area.

8.4 Monitoring and Review

In order to ensure that the development strategy outlined in the Local Area Plan is being pursued, the Council through the day-to-day activity of its development management function will monitor the implementation and phasing of the Local Area Plan. A review will assist in assessing whether the objectives detailed in the Plan are being met.