County Meath

Local Economic and Community Plan

2016-2021

comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

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Section 1.Introduction

County Meath is situated in north Leinster, on the east coast of Ireland and in close proximity to Dublin. It is the second largest county in Leinster and is a vital component of the Greater Dublin Area.

The county benefits from a wealth of natural and man-made resources. It is supported by a well-developed road and rail infrastructure system which provides access to international transport networks at Dublin airport and Dublin port and the remainder of the country. The fertile soils provide the basis for a thriving agricultural and food sector. As a constituent of the GDA, it is part of the largest market in the country and at the center of Ireland's primary economic hub[iii].

The county has an exceptionally rich history and a unique cluster of nationally and internationally renowned historic sites, one of which, Brú na Bóinne, is deemed by the United Nations to be of 'outstanding universal value to humankind'. Heritage gives each town, village and rural area in Meath a character and local distinctiveness which contributes to a strong sense of place and an immense source of pride for its people and communities. It is acknowledged that there are significant economic benefits to promoting the value of the built heritage and investing in its protection, management and improvement. Meath is designated and marketed as the 'Heritage County' and has a large number of visitor attractions associated with heritage[iii].

The only Gaeltacht area on the east coast of the country is in County Meath and there is a rich tradition of Irish language and culture.

Over the recent past, Meath experienced rapid population growth, rising to 184,000 inhabitants, 4% of the State total and 10% of the Greater Dublin Area. This has resulted in a substantial increase in the cohort of working people resident in the county. This is an asset for potential employers and ensures a strong base for indigenous enterprise and the local economy. The large population growth also means that Meath is on the path towards achieving the critical mass that is sought by investors[iv].

Meath is a young county. Relatively speaking, there are high levels of young people and fewer older people in Meath. A total of 29% of the population in Meath is under 18 years, the highest rate in the country.

The labour force participation rate in Meath is 65.8%, the seventh highest labour force in the country. A total of 82% of those in the labour force are working, again higher than the average for the State and the Greater Dublin Area. The unemployment rate is correspondingly lower.

Its proximity to Dublin and Dublin's educational and transport infrastructure means that Meath has the potential to offer an excellent location which has all of the advantages of a capital city but with a significantly lower cost base[v].

However, there is no room for complacency. Rapid growth was not matched by the growth of a sustainable employment base within the county. As a result, Meath has a highly skilled and educated workforce, but many of these workers commute outside the county to work. Over 53% of workers commute outside the county to work and generally, people in Meath spend significantly more time commuting than average. The impact of this level of travel on the physical, mental health and wellbeing on commuters should not be underestimated. Nor should the effect it has on people's ability to participate in, and contribute to, community and social life in Meath.

Disadvantage is an issue across the County and has grown in recent years and there are particular concentrations of disadvantage, particularly in areas of north Meath and in the urban centers. Spatially,

disadvantage is concentrated in the Kells and Navan Municipal Districts, with the Ratoath and Ashbourne Municipal Districts considerably more affluent.

The concentration of those with third level education is striking, with the highest rates all in the east side of the country. The converse is also true, with the highest levels of low education in the Kells, Navan and Trim Municipal Districts. The highest unemployment rates were in Navan MD and Kells MD and the lowest were in Ratoath MD and Ashbourne MD.

Similar concentrations of groups/communities vulnerable to poverty exist. At Municipal District level, Navan MD has the highest rate of lone parent families at 23.6%, followed by the Kells MD at 21.1%. The lowest rates were in Ratoath MD (16.1%) and Ashbourne (17.1%). Approximately 65% of the Traveller population live in the Navan Municipal District and these MDs also had the highest proportions of people with a disability. The highest level of Old Age Dependency was also in the Kells Municipal District. Rural disadvantage is also a characteristic of the county.

Outside of the main commuter areas, public transport is an issue in Meath and issues of accessibility, affordability and availability were highlighted during the consultations for this LECP.

In addition, Meath has historically suffered from underfunding across a range of services and supports. In 2015, for example, Meath County Council made a submission for an increase in funding citing the fact that in 2015 local authority expenditure per person[5] in Meath was only 61% of local authority expenditure per person nationally, and stating that the ability of Meath County Council to provide an appropriate level of service is under severe pressure. *Working for Children,* the audit of services and needs analysis carried out for Meath Children's Services Committee, cites an unpublished report from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs that indicates that Meath was the second lowest recipient of funding from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs through local drugs task forces, special projects for youth and youth information centers.

The Meath Local Economic and Community Plan is the first integrated economic and community plan for the county. The LECP is built upon the understanding that economic, local and community development are mutually supportive in building sustainable communities with strong local economies. The plan promotes a collaborative leadership approach across a broad range of publically funded agencies and civil society stakeholders to achieve improved outcomes and impacts for citizens, businesses and communities. In the preparation of the LECP, the LCDC was conscious of the need to ensure that the process was inclusive, both in terms of input from the community and voluntary sector, as well as state agencies. To this end, a Good Practice Model for Meath was developed, encompassing an extensive consultation process and agency workshops.

The LECP does not bring with it any additional resources for implementing the Sustainable Community Objectives (SCOs) and the Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDOs) that have been identified. The strategy is to target resources including resources under the direct management of the LCDC (LEADER & SICAP), resources under the management of the LCDC partners and resources under the direct management of other public-funded local development agencies and bodies who may not be represented on LCDCs including for example, Children and Young Peoples Services Committees (CYPSCs), Traveller Interagency Groups (TIGs), Drugs Task Forces (DTFs), Family Resource Centers (FRCs), other Community Development Projects and bodies, etc.

Progress and the achievement of the targets will therefore require collaboration and partnership across agencies and sectors. In developing the LECP significant focus was placed on engaging with agencies, organisations, groups and communities to lay the foundations for this collaboration. The identification of a set of shared values, the development of the Human Rights and Equality Statement and the agreement of the vision and concepts underpinning the LECP will provide the framework for the implementation of the LECP over the next six years.

Background

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 provides for the establishment of Local Community Development Committees in each local authority area. One of the primary functions of the LCDCs is to develop, implement and monitor a six-year Local Economic and Community Plan for the local authority area.

The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) will set out the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of County Meath over the next six years. The Plan will serve as the primary strategy guiding development in County Meath.

Economic development and local and community development, while separate functions, which involve different challenges and approaches, are mutually supportive in creating strong communities and local economies. The LECP represents an integrated plan, and its implementation will require ongoing integration between the two components in order to ensure a coordinated delivery of actions for both economic and community development.

The LECP will enable a targeting of resources under the direct management of the LCDC, under the management of LCDC partners, and under the direct management of other publicly funded local development agencies and bodies not on the LCDC. It will be action focused and will be delivered through a combination of local authority programmes and the programmes of other stakeholders.

Policies, Strategies and Plans informing the LECP

The development of the LECP was informed by a range of international, national, regional and local policies, strategies and plans. These are detailed in the Action Plan in a way that links the Sustainable Community Objectives and the Sustainable Economic Development Objectives to the underpinning policy and/or strategy.

The overarching aim of economic development and employment pervades national policy initiatives, including the Medium-Term Economic Strategy 2014-2020, the Action Plan for Jobs and the public sector reform process, including Putting People First (2012) and the Local Government Reform Act 2014 which underpin the LECP process and have the aim of making local government more responsible for assisting economic development.

International

The development of the LECP was informed by Europe 2020, the European Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and by Ireland's (and therefore Meath's) obligations to achieve the targets set. Under the Irish National reform Programme, the following targets were established:

- *Employment* - to raise to 69-71% the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64, including through the greater participation of young people, older workers and low-skilled workers and the better integration of legal migrants.

- *Research and Development* - to raise combined public and private investment levels in this sector to 2.5% of GNP (approximately equivalent to 2.0% of GDP).

- *Climate Change* - to reduce emissions in the non-traded sector by 20% compared to 2005 levels; to increase the share of renewables in final energy consumption to 16%; and to move towards a 20% increase in energy efficiency.

- *Education* - to reduce the percentage of 18-24 year olds with, at most, lower secondary education and not in further education and training to 8%; and to increase the share of 30-34 year olds having completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 60%.
- *Poverty* - to reduce the number experiencing consistent poverty to 4% by 2016 (interim target) and to 2% or less by 2020, from the 2010 baseline rate of 6.3%, which will lift at least 200,000 people out of the risk of poverty and exclusion between 2012 and 2020.

It was also informed by the United Nations Global Goals (formerly the Sustainable Development Goals) that have established a total of 17 targets to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice and fix climate change, that Ireland was instrumental in developing and to which we are obliged to make progress.

The implementation of the LECP will also need to take cognisance of COP21 which will establish a legally binding and universal agreement on climate, with the aim of keeping global warming below 2°C.

National, Regional & Local

Though it is acknowledged that not all policies are in place yet, the planning hierarchy for the development of LECPs is set out below in Figure 1. The LECP must be consistent with the Regional Planning Guidelines and with their replacement, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSESs) to be prepared by the Regional Assemblies and a new National Planning Framework that will replace the National Spatial Strategy.

Figure 1. Planning Policy Hierarchy

IRELAND PLANNING POLICY HEIRARCHY 2016+

Map 1. Regional Assemblies
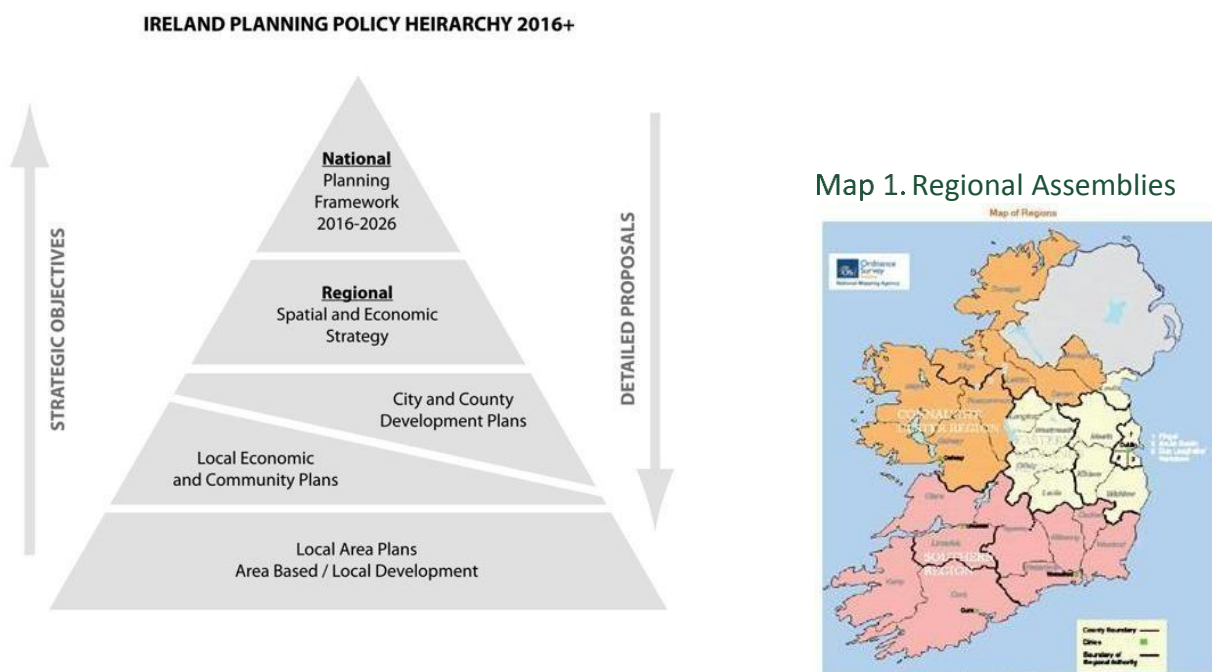
Regional Planning Guidelines

At a regional level, County Meath comes under the authority of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly[vivii]. It has twelve constituent local authorities split into three Strategic Planning Areas:

Dublin	Fingal, Dublin City, South Dublin, Dún Laoghaire, Rathdown
Eastern	Louth, Kildare, Meath, Wicklow
Midlands	Longford, Laois, Offaly, Westmeath

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly are in the process of formulating a Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) that will replace the existing Regional Planning Guidelines. The current regional planning guidelines are the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 that cover the former Dublin Regional Authority and the Mid-East Regional Authority areas. The vision for the RPGs is:

RPG Vision
The GDA by 2022 is an economically vibrant, active and sustainable international Gateway Region, with strong connectivity across the GDA Region, nationally and worldwide; a region which fosters communities living in attractive, accessible places well supported by community infrastructure and enjoying high quality leisure facilities; and promotes and protects across the GDA green corridors, active agricultural lands and protected natural areas.

Delivering this vision within the RPGs is achieved through the integrated two mutually supporting strategies of the RPGs, the Settlement Strategy and the Economic Strategy, integrated with the Physical Infrastructure, Green Infrastructure, Social Infrastructure and Rural Development Policies and Recommendations, all of which are considered and responsive to the needs of the Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Strategic Flood Risk Appraisal. The RPGs recognise the interrelationships which exist between different topics and have harmonised strategies, policies and recommendations to reflect these linkages[7].

The Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019

Meath County Development Plan Vision
Meath to be a county that fosters sustainability throughout its vibrant communities, dynamic economy and unique cultural and natural heritage.

The County Development Plan is the statutory framework which sets out the overall land use strategy, policies and objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the county, and other objectives of the local authority, in accordance with relevant legislation.

The Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 sets out a vision and an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County for a six-year period. The Vision statement captures the three themes that Meath County Council has identified as the pillars of its sustainable development strategy - community, economy and heritage. There is an accepted interdependence among the pillars but the interdependence is not straightforward. For example, the successful implementation of the policies and the realisation of the objectives of the CDP will require Meath County Council to be mindful of the county's special heritage tradition whilst at the same time seeking to enhance enterprise and employment growth, by both indigenous and foreign-owned companies, within the county.

The Meath CDP 2013-2019 sets out a number of sustainable economic development objectives, including:

- Hierarchy of economic centers to enable high quality enterprise clusters – Navan, Drogheda (Southern Environs), Ashbourne, Dunboyne and Kells;
- The promotion of economic opportunities in the Dublin-Belfast Corridor, which includes East/Coastal Meath in the catchment area of the strategically important Meath environs of Drogheda, where a number of important Irish-owned and foreign-owned enterprises currently providing high quality employment in the area were facilitated to the area by Meath County Council and plans are underway to further develop employment in this important part of the county, which enjoys multi- model transport infrastructure and favourable access to national and international markets *via* proximity to Dublin Port and Dublin Airport;
- Encouraging mixed used development through the co-location of employment and residential development in proximity to each other, so that sustainable development can occur;
- Promotion of sustainable tourism as a key driver of the Meath economy, including the Boyne Valley, now a signature product of Fáilte Ireland and promoted in partnership with Louth County Council (both county councils have also successfully cooperated in regard to the provision of water and waste water services in Drogheda); and
- To promote the economic growth of smaller towns, villages and graigs to provide greater sustainability of communities in the more rural parts of the county.

The vision is supported by 12 core principles:

Core Principle 1	To develop Meath's critical role in the Dublin and Mid-East Region and its role as part of the Dublin City National Economic Gateway maximising on its proximity to Dublin Airport.
Core Principle 2	To facilitate the development of sustainable and socially inclusive communities which generate pride, a sense of place, and a healthy lifestyle; are safe, well connected, well served, environmentally sensitive, thriving and well designed.
Core Principle 3	To promote sustainable economic development to support the population of County Meath.
Core Principle 4	To support the sustainable heritage of the County by safeguarding the cultural, natural and built heritage and natural resources, including biodiversity, of the County
Core Principle 5	To encourage mixed use settlement forms and sustainable centers, in which employment, housing and community services are located in close proximity to each other and to strategic public transport corridors.
Core Principle 6	To support the creation of a compact urban form in all settlements in Meath.
Core Principle 7	To protect and support rural areas though careful management of physical and environmental resources and appropriate, sustainable development.
Core Principle 8	To support agriculture and agricultural related development in Meath and strengthen the county as a hub for the vibrant agricultural and food sectors. Meath to be a county that fosters sustainability throughout its vibrant communities, dynamic economy and unique cultural and natural heritage.
Core Principle 9	To consolidate population growth and employment in areas best served by public transport and a range of transport modes.
Core Principle 10	To promote and support the integration of land use and transport and a modal shift to greater use of sustainable modes of transport, including public transport, walking and cycling
Core Principle 11	To integrate climate change considerations into the policies and objectives of Meath County Council and its key stakeholders.
Core Principle 12	To ensure that future development patterns in Meath accord with the sustainable management of water resources.

It also sets out guiding policies and objectives for the development of the County in terms of physical growth and renewal, the protection, conservation and enhancement of Meath's natural and cultural heritage, economic, social and cultural activity, and environmental protection and enhancement.

Meath Economic Development Strategy 2014-2022

The Meath Economic Development Strategy 2014-2022 is a comprehensive document that provides detailed empirical evidence on the strengths and weaknesses of the local economy of Meath together with specification of high-level actions aimed at transforming the local economy to make it more attractive as an investment location and to broaden the economic base so as to provide more work opportunities for its residents (including the large cohort of commuters living in the county), thereby helping people to work closer to where they live and in turn contributing to the overall vision of the Meath CDP, namely to support sustainable and vibrant communities.

The Economic Development Strategy formulates an *Economic Vision* for County Meath at 2022, the tenets of which are tabulated below.

Tenets of the Economic Vision for County Meath 2022
1. A flourishing, innovative and cost-competitive location in the heart of the National Gateway that is recognised locally, nationally and internationally as a highly attractive and distinctive center in which to conduct business.
2. Seamless access to skills, infrastructure and services, and markets (international and national).
3. An exceptional environment for starting and growing enterprises, with clusters of FDI and indigenous companies in vibrant economic centers around the county proactively supported by Meath County Council working in collaboration with other economic support agencies, local and national.
4. A pro-sustainable development county, Meath is characterised by a large number and varied range of serviced sites and property solutions to suit the needs of large and small businesses in all sectors, including agri-food processing, other manufacturing and various services.
5. Home to one of Ireland's leading visitor destinations – the Boyne Valley – County Meath provides visitors with a large and varied choice of attractions, accommodation and eateries, leisure and entertainment facilities, and events throughout the year.
6. Meath's award-winning market towns offer attractive and competitive shopping locations, combining a mix of traditional and modern retailing experiences in a unique and differentiated setting.
7. Meath takes pride in its unique place in Ireland and Irish history, dating back many centuries to when the 'Royal County' was the center of the island of Ireland. Meath's unparalleled place in the country's formation includes the UNESCO World Heritage site of Newgrange, Trim Castle (the largest Norman castle in Ireland), the Hill of Tara, the site of the Battle of the Boyne (the most important battle ever fought in Ireland) and the River Boyne's associations with Irish legends, including An Bradán Feasa (The Salmon of Knowledge) and Fionn Mac Cumhaill (Finn McCool).

Statement of Consistency

In drafting the Economic and Community elements of the LECP, these were undertaken and have regard and are consistent to the key policies at:

- European Level
- National Level
- Regional Level
- Local Level

European Level

The plan as drafted seeks to promote measures and actions to assist in the delivery of the five headline targets for EU2020 covering employment, research and development, climate change, education and poverty.

National Level

The plan is also consistent with the current National Spatial Strategy and seeks to promote key settlements as drivers of economic and community growth. When the new spatial planning strategies are adopted such as the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, this plan will be reviewed to ensure consistency.

Regional Level

County Meath forms part of the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area promotes an economically vibrant, active and sustainable international, Gateway Region, with strong connectivity across the Greater Dublin Area as a key driver of growth in the region. The LECP in terms of its high level goals and objectives is complimentary to and consistent with the RPG Strategic Goals. It is also consistent with Government initiatives regarding jobs and employment such as the Action Plan for Jobs.

Local Level

At local level, the LECP must also be consistent with local spatial planning policy. The high level goals, objectives, and actions of the LECP is consistent with and complement the objectives articulated in Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019. The Economic Strategy for County Meath 2014-2020 has been central to informing the economic elements of this LECP. In this way, the enhanced local government role in economic and community development should ultimately ensure that planning and development are focused on supporting and promoting economic activity in a proactive and sustainable manner.

Environmental Considerations

Under the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 -2011, the local authority is obliged to carry out a screening assessment for environmental effects arising from the implementation of the objectives and actions contained in the LECP. Due consideration has been given to the SEA in the preparation of the plan and the SEA Screening Statement should be read in conjunction with this plan.

Developing the LECP

The preparation of the LECP was driven by the LECP Advisory Committee, a committee that comprises members of the LCDC and the Economic SPC. It was directed by the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and the Economic Strategic Policy Committee for County Meath. In order to inform engagement with the LECP, the Consultants prepared an LECP Briefing Paper that was circulated widely.

The first stage in the development of the LECP was the production of a Socio-Economic Statement for County Meath. As well as those outlined above, two key reports informed the Socio-Economic Statement.

- The All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO) LECP Baseline Study, which provided an analysis of key census and other data. This was assessed and further developed by the LECP Consultants.
- The Report of the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022 was produced, extracts of which were used in the LECP.

Further information relevant to the LECP from statutory, community and other organisations was sought and assessed, and a series of initial consultations with the LECP Advisory Committee, agencies and organizations on the LCDC, staff in Meath County Council and the PPN secretariat were undertaken.

On this basis, a draft Socio-Economic Statement was prepared and presented to the LECP Advisory Committee and the LCDC. Suggestions for amendments were included. The Socio-Economic Statement was submitted for discussion and feedback from the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly. It was a focus for discussion in the consultation phase for the LECP.

The consultation phase for the LECP involved:
- Four workshops on the major themes agreed - Wellbeing, Resilience, Flourishing and Public Sector Renewal;
- Four area-based consultation workshops hosted in Trim, Rath Cairn (through Irish), Ashbourne and Kells, held in the evening to facilitate attendance;
- A workshop to develop the Equality and Human Rights Statement;
- Workshops/meetings were also held with MEARN (Meath Equality and Anti-Racism Network), the Environmental Network and Comhairle na nÓg.

The workshops were widely publicised well in advance and reports of thematic and area-based workshops were immediately prepared by the Consultants for circulation and included on the Meath County Council website.

In addition to the workshops the Consultants developed an on-line resource that facilitated the call for submissions, to which there was a good response from a range of individuals, communities and organisations. Other submissions were received by email. These were assessed and the content included where relevant.

Furthermore, the economic component of this plan is primarily derived from the work undertaken in the completion of the Meath Economic Development Strategy 2014-2022. The approach in developing this strategy included quantitative and qualitative analyses of a large range of information and data garnered from an extensive consultation programme (with follow-up) with various stakeholders in the economic development of Meath, a consultation process that has duly informed the economic element of the LECP.

The draft plan was considered by the LECP Advisory Committee, the LCDC, the Economic Strategic Policy Committee and the County Meath Public Participation Network with feedback incorporated prior to completing the draft of the LECP for submission.

Proofing the LECP

The community elements of the LECP have been proofed, as required, against six horizontal priorities:

- Sustainability;
- Equality including the grounds of gender, age, disability, race, religion and sexual orientation, civil status, family status, and membership of the Traveller community;
- Social inclusion;
- Poverty;
- Rurality;
- Human Rights.

Definitions

The proofing process brought particular understandings of each of the horizontal principles:

Sustainability was understood broadly in terms of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This broad understanding enabled consideration of the full range of challenges posed by sustainability including those of adaptation to and mitigation of climate change, resource use, renewable energy sources, protection of biodiversity and ecosystems and natural heritage, recycling, pollution, and climate justice. The principle of sustainability overlaps with those of equality, social inclusion and poverty with its concern for climate justice and with human rights with its concern for the rights of future generations.

Equality was understood in terms of the goal of substantive equality to be achieved in the fields of economic equality, political equality, cultural equality and affective equality on all grounds covered by the employment equality and equal status legislation.

Social Inclusion was understood in terms of participation in society, in line with the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016, and pursued the same lifecycle approach in the strategy addressing children, people of working age, older people, people with disabilities and communities. The social inclusion principle and the poverty principle overlap and are deeply entwined while there is also an overlap with the principles of equality and human rights.

Poverty was understood in terms of deprivation, consistent poverty and relative poverty and brought the ground of socio-economic status into play which is central to national anti-poverty strategies, a ground not covered by equality legislation but a ground that is a focus for human rights instruments. It drew from goals set in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 in that impact assessment was able to take account of goals and targets set in this strategy. The nine equality grounds and the concern for economic equality is overlapping between the poverty and the equality principles.

Rurality was understood broadly in terms of economic, social and cultural life outside of the main towns in the County. A particular focus on the Gaeltacht area was included as part of this horizontal principle. This principle, given its geographical nature, was found to overlap with the poverty, social inclusion, sustainability, equality and human rights principles.

Human rights was understood in terms of respect for, protection of, and fulfillment of the minimum standards agreed in international instruments that cover civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The concern for non-discrimination in human rights instruments leads to an overlapping between human rights, equality and poverty principles.

The proofing process formed an integral part of the design of the methodology and was embedded throughout the development of the LECP. The proofing process deployed involved:

Data Gathering

Data gathering is key to screening and scoping. It allows an identification of those elements in the LECP domain that are of relevance to the issues to be proofed against. It enables an identification of the issues of relevance to be considered in each of these elements.

There were two key strands to the gathering of relevant and existing data for the proofing process. The first was the detailed socio-economic profile developed of County Meath for the purposes of the LECP. Care was taken to gather data of relevance to the horizontal priorities. The second was a review of national policy in the fields addressed by the horizontal priorities by the two consultants drafting the plan.

The data was gathered before and during the preparation of the LECP. However, the key moment for scoping and screening was at the point of agreeing the socio-economic statement, given that this established the core parameters for the LECP. However, both processes were kept under review and only finalised at the point of the drafting the LECP.

Participation

Participation is key to effective impact assessment. Care was taken in constructing the consultation process to ensure participation from civil society interests relevant to and representative of each of the six horizontal priorities.

Participation from representatives of marginalised and disadvantaged groups was targeted. The timing of the participation events (combination of day-time and evening-time events) was designed to ensure maximum participation. Specific events were organised with environmental and equality interests to deepen the proofing process on these horizontal principles.

This not only enabled the input of ideas relevant to these priorities, it allowed an input that tested the screening and scoping done, and informed the subsequent impact assessment.

Impact assessment

The first draft of the LECP was tested for impact against the six horizontal priorities. The centrality of the principles of equality and human rights that emerges from the definitions used for each principle stimulated additional work on the equality and human rights principles in preparing an equality and human rights statement with the LCDC.

The expertise of the two consultants drafting the LECP was central to implementing this impact assessment. In preparing the first draft of the plan they were able to use the data gathered and the outcomes from the participatory events to check, at each stage, the potential impact of the overall strategy and the individual

proposals in relation to each of the six horizontal principles. The results of this impact assessment, in the form of the final plan, were tested before the LECP advisory Committee, the LCDC, and the Economic Strategic Policy Committee with the assembled cross-sectoral expertise on these structures.

This process of impact assessment was informed by the preparation by the LCDC of an Equality and Human Rights Statement. This reflected the centrality of these horizontal principles to all the horizontal principles addressed and the fact that the LECP was prepared shortly after enactment of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. This was considered to lend a further imperative to the proofing process with its requirement that public bodies have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality on the grounds covered by the equality legislation and to protect human rights.

The LCDC adopted an innovative and effective approach to implementing this duty as part of the preparation of the LECP. It hosted a workshop to develop and finalise an Equality and Human Rights Statement. This sets out the values that inform the commitment of the LCDC to equality and human rights, the objectives it seeks to pursue in relation to each of these values, and the issues it wishes to address in achieving these objectives. It is noteworthy that the statement addressed all six horizontal priorities and this further underpinned the overlapping nature of the horizontal principles.

This Equality and Human Rights Statement was used in conducting the impact assessment during the drafting of the LECP. It will continue to inform the work of the LCDC in implementing and evaluating the LECP. This impact assessment assessed:

1. Adequacy of targeted actions: Were the actions proposed that specifically address the issues that were identified as arising in relation to each of the six horizontal priorities adequate to make an impact on these issues and the horizontal principle involved?
2. Capacity of general actions: Were the general actions proposed of a nature and design to contribute to a positive impact on the six horizontal priorities? A process of further developing a number of these general actions was followed to maximise this potential for positive impact.
3. Risk in any general actions: Were the general actions proposed at risk of contributing to a negative impact on any of the six horizontal priorities? None were found which meant redesign or mitigation did not need to be considered. This is a measure of the quality of the data gathering and participation elements to the proofing process.

This proofing process will continue into the implementation and evaluation phases of the LECP.

Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEA Conclusions and Recommendations
A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report has been carried out on the LECP. Following review and consideration of the issues pertaining to the LECP, the screening report concluded that the plan in itself will not result in a significant adverse environmental effect and will therefore not require a detailed assessment of effects through the SEA process.

Habitats Directive: Article 6 Assessment
An AA Screening in compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive has been undertaken on the LECP. Following an analysis of the plan and potential relationships with European sites, the screening concluded that there would be no likelihood of significant effects on any European sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects (with no requirement to carry out further stages of Appropriate Assessment on the Plan). This was informed by the collection of data on the European sites and identification of the condition, sensitivities and threats to the integrity of the sites.

Section 3. Socio-Economic Profile

This Socio-Economic Profile of County Meath uses data primarily from the 2011 Census of Population. It examines the variables outlined below. It also draws on a number of other reports, principally the *LECP Baseline Report* prepared by the All Ireland Research Observatory (AIRO) based in Maynooth University and the *Report of the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022 p*repared for Meath County Council by FTI Consulting, PMCA Economic Consulting and John Spain and Associates.

The Socio-Economic Profile of County Meath was developed to inform and support the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) and the work of the Local Community Development Committee. The variables examined include:

• Population & Population Change	• Lone Parents	• Live Register
• Age	• Ethnicity	• At Work by Industry
• Age Dependency	• Nationality	• Commuting
• Education	• Tenure	• Computer & Internet
• Disability	• Labour Force	• Irish
• Unpaid Care	• Economic Dependency Ratio	• Pobal HP Deprivation Index

According to Census 2011, there are 184,135 people living in County Meath. Meath now has the seventh highest population of all local authorities in Ireland with only the Dublin local authorities, Cork County and Kildare with a higher population. The population living within Meath is now equivalent to 4% of the State total (4.58 million), 34.6% of the Mid-East (531,087) and 10% of the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) (1,804,156).

Fast growing population. Between 2006 and 2011 the population increased by 21,304 or 13.1% compared to an average for the State of 8.2%. This was the fifth highest increase in population in the State.

Table 1.   Population and Population Change

	Population 2006	Population 2011	Actual Change	% Change
Meath	162,831	184,135	21,304	13.1
State	4,239,848	4,588,252	348,404	8.2
Eastern and Midlands Region	2,025,467	2,209,463	183,996	9.1
Ashbourne	22,889	27,164	4,275	18.7
Kells	29,360	31,534	2,174	7.4
Laytown-Bettystown	27,235	31,557	4,322	15.9
Navan	29,789	32,934	3,145	10.6
Ratoath	28,516	31,894	3,378	11.8
Trim	25,042	29,052	4,010	16.0

The main population growth was concentrated in the east of the county and in close proximity to the main urban settlements. The population of Ashbourne Municipal District increased by almost 19%, the population of Trim Municipal District increased by 16% and the population of Laytown-Bettystown by 15.9%. However, the population of Kells increased by just 7.4%.

Figure 2.   Population Change 2006-2011
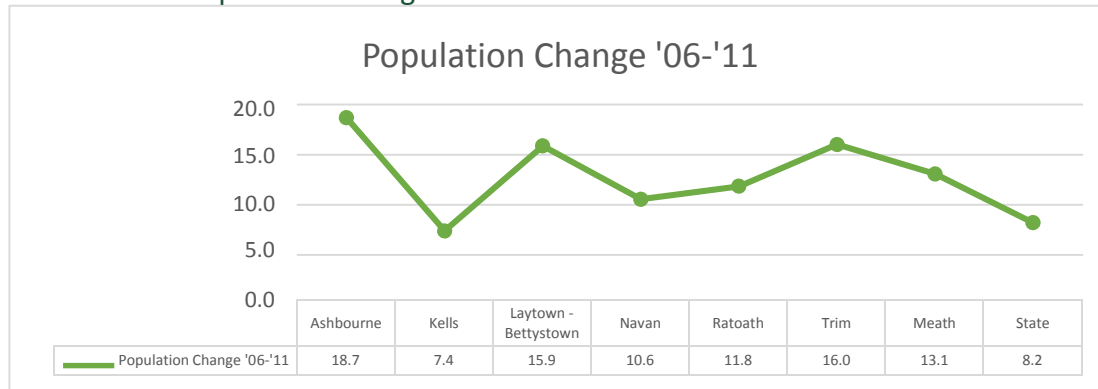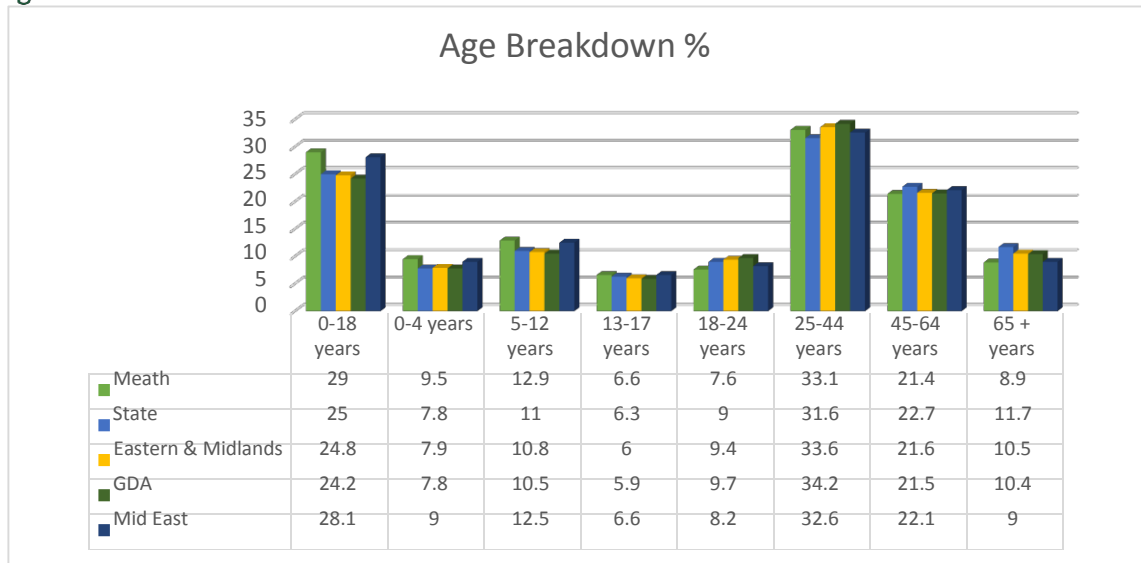
	Ashbourne	Kells	Laytown - Bettystown	Navan	Ratoath	Trim	Meath	State
Population Change '06-'11	18.7	7.4	15.9	10.6	11.8	16.0	13.1	8.2

Figure 3.   Age Breakdown

Age Breakdown %

	0-18 years	0-4 years	5-12 years	13-17 years	18-24 years	25-44 years	45-64 years	65 + years
Meath	29	9.5	12.9	6.6	7.6	33.1	21.4	8.9
State	25	7.8	11	6.3	9	31.6	22.7	11.7
Eastern & Midlands	24.8	7.9	10.8	6	9.4	33.6	21.6	10.5
GDA	24.2	7.8	10.5	5.9	9.7	34.2	21.5	10.4
Mid East	28.1	9	12.5	6.6	8.2	32.6	22.1	9

Meath is a young county. Relatively speaking, there are high levels of young people and fewer older people in Meath. A total of 29% of the population in Meath is under 18 years, the highest rate in the country. Conversely, proportionately there are fewer older people than the national average in all the Municipal Districts in Meath except for the Kells Municipal District, which has the highest proportion of people aged 65 years and over.

Table 2.   Population 0-18 and 65+ years

	Aged 0-18 years		Aged 65 + years	
	N	%	N	%
Ashbourne	7,360	27.1	2,141	7.9
Kells	8,634	27.4	3,744	11.9
Laytown-Bettystown	9,591	30.4	2,632	8.3
Navan	9,810	29.8	2,557	7.8
Ratoath	9,580	30.0	2,536	8.0
Trim	8,425	29.0	2,712	9.3
Meath	53,400	29.0	16,322.0	8.9
State	1,148,687	25.0	535,393	11.7

Map 1. Population aged 0-18 Years
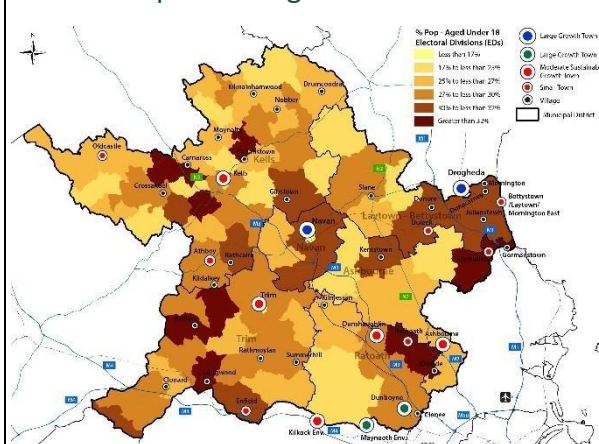
Map 2. Population aged 65+ Years

Figure 4.   Age Dependency

Age Dependency

	Ashbourne	Kells	Laytown - Bettystown	Navan	Ratoath	Trim	Meath	State	Eastern & Midlands	GDA
Young Age Dependency	34.1	35.9	42.1	39.7	39.1	38.5	38.3	31.9		
Old Age Dependency	11.5	18.3	12.9	11.8	12.0	14.3	13.5	17.4		
Total Age Dependency	45.6	54.2	55.0	51.4	51.1	52.8	51.7	49.3	46.6	45.2
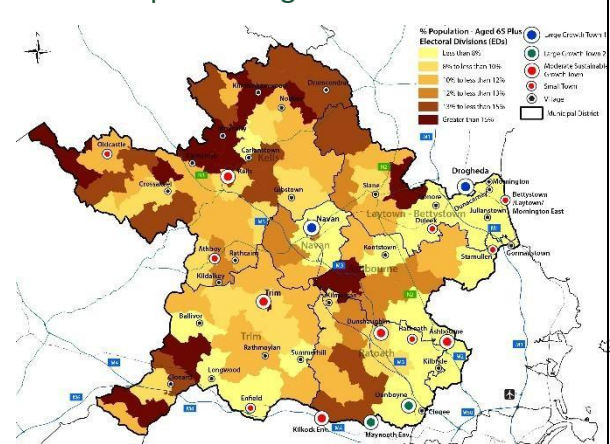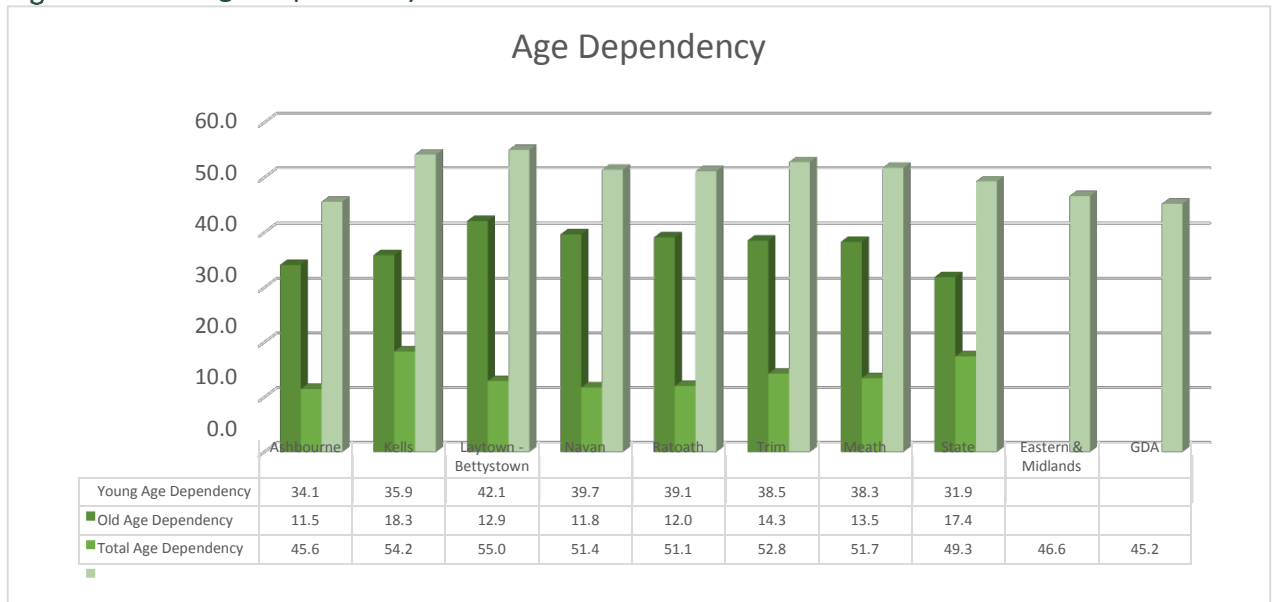
The Age Dependency Rate[8] is higher in Meath than the average for the State. However, the Old Age Dependency element is significantly lower, 13.5% compared to 17.4%, and the Young Age Dependency element is considerably higher, 38.3% compared to 31.9%.

At Municipal District level, the highest Age Dependency rate is in Laytown-Bettystown with this area having the highest Young Age Dependency element. The highest Old Age Dependency is in the Kells Municipal District, significantly higher than the average for the county. The most dependent parts of the county are in the north, west and immediate commuter belt to Drogheda, with the north and west having a higher Old Age Dependency rate.

Map 3. Age Dependency
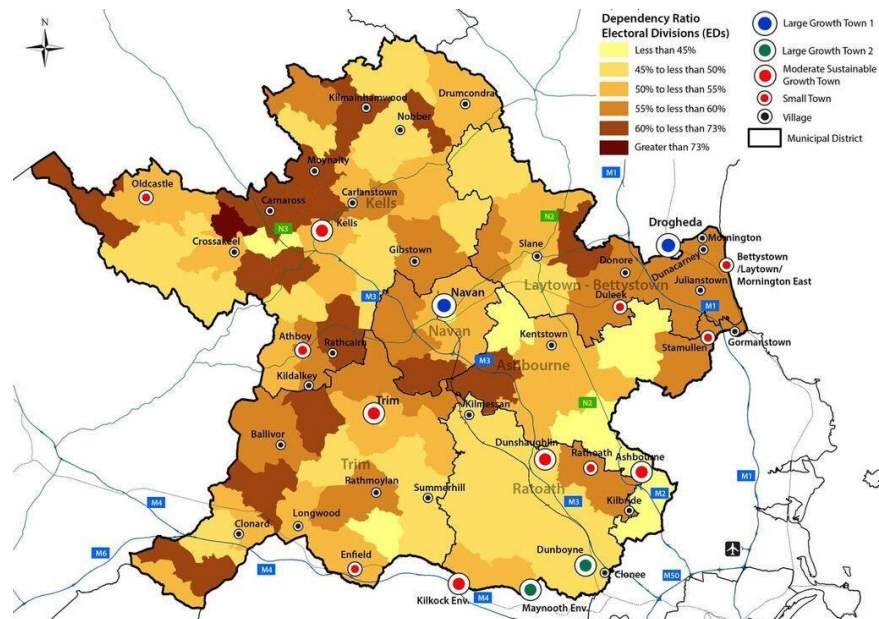
In 2013, the CSO published its Regional Population Projections 2016-2031. They estimate an increase in population for the Mid-East region of 144,000 people or 1.2%. The age dependency rate for the Mid-East is set to increase from 49.7% to 58% and the population aged over 65 years is set to increase by 17%.

Table 3. Regional Population Projections 2016-2031

Regional Authority area	Population 2011	Natural increase	Internal migration	External migration	Total increase	Population 2031	Average annual increase
	Thousands						%
Border	516	49	-22	-9	18	533	0.2
GDA	1,795	298	92	11	401	2,197	1.0
Dublin	1,262	188	47	23	257	1,519	0.9
Mid-East	534	110	45	-11	144	678	1.2
Midland	284	39	-21	7	25	309	0.4
Mid-West	378	43	-10	-1	32	410	0.4
South-East	499	58	-16	9	51	550	0.5
South-West	662	80	-18	8	71	733	0.5
West	441	31	-6	-10	15	456	0.2
State	4,575	598	0	15	613	5,188	0.6

Table 4. Projected population and dependency ratios 2011 - 2031

	Population						Dependency ratios		
	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total	Young	Old	Total
	Thousands						Percentage		
Mid-East									
2011	129	65	174	118	48	534	36.2%	13.5%	49.7%
2016	142	63	160	135	61	561	39.6%	17.0%	56.6%
2021	146	75	148	155	76	600	38.6%	20.0%	58.6%
2026	141	89	145	172	93	639	34.8%	22.9%	57.7%
2031	135	98	154	177	114	678	31.5%	26.5%	58.0%
% increase	20	14	23	26	17	100			
State									
2011	977	580	1,449	1,038	532	4,575	31.9%	17.3%	49.2%
2016	1,047	533	1,353	1,129	624	4,687	34.7%	20.7%	55.4%
2021	1,054	605	1,250	1,235	732	4,876	34.1%	23.7%	57.8%
2026	981	681	1,190	1,337	855	5,044	30.6%	26.7%	57.2%
2031	889	735	1,197	1,375	991	5,188	26.9%	30.0%	56.8%
% increase	17	14	23	27	19	100			

Population Projection

Figure 5.   Education

	Ashbourne	Kells	Laytown - Bettystown	Navan	Ratoath	Trim	Meath	State	Mid-East	Greater Dublin Area	Eastern & Midlands
Total Low Education	10.6	17.1	12.5	13.8	9.3	13.9	12.9	15.2	12.7	13.2	13.9
Total High Education	29.5	21.0	28.8	26.7	34.8	26.1	27.7	29.1	30.0	34.5	32.4
Technical or Apprenticeship	16.5	16.4	16.0	16.6	15.7	17.1	16.4	14.3	15.9	13.4	13.7
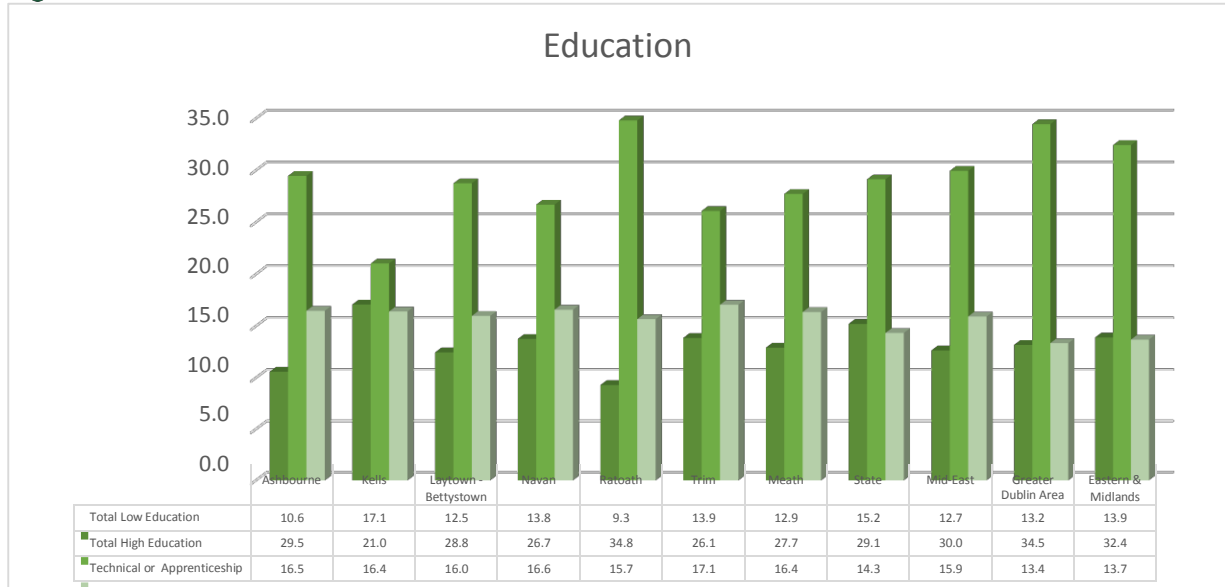
According to the 2011 census, at 12.9% the proportion of the population in Meath that have low education achievement[9] is lower than the national average of 15.2%. However, the proportion of the population that have high education[10] achievement (third level education) at 27.7% is also lower than the national average of 29.1%, though Meath ranks 11th in the country for third level education.

The spatial distribution of the population with third level education is striking, with the highest rates all in the east side of the country. The total population with a technical education or apprenticeship at 16.4% is considerably higher than the national average of 14.3%, the 6th highest in the country.

Map 4. High Education Achievement
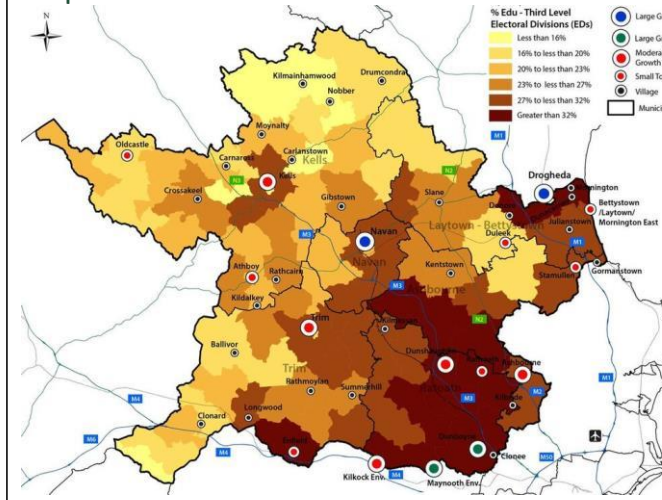
Map 5. Low Education Achievement
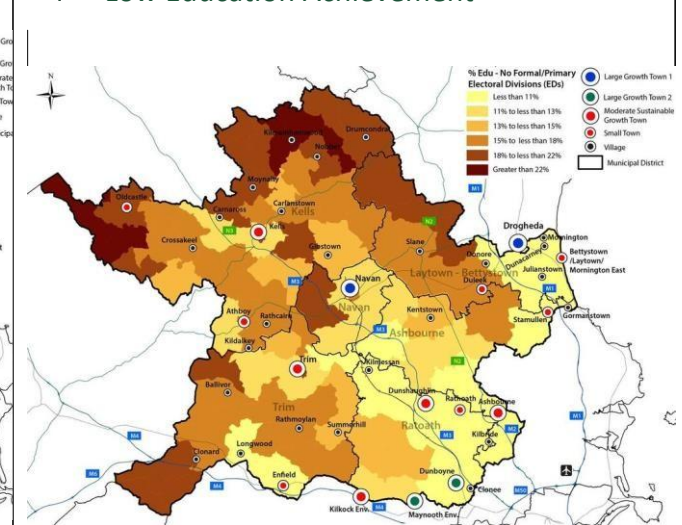
At Municipal District level, Ratoath has a significantly higher level of the population with third level education than the others MDs, Meath, the State or the Greater Dublin Area. Kells MD has the highest levels of low education and the lowest levels of high education.

Nationally, according to Census 2011, 21% of people aged 15 and over with a disability were at work, compared to 50% for the overall population. In addition, 16% of people with disabilities aged 15-49 had completed no higher than primary level education, compared with 5% for the general population in this age group. 15% of people who have a chronic illness or health problem are at risk of poverty[11]. In 2010, people with a disability were less than half as likely to be active in the labour market than the general population (36% compared to 77% of other adults) and people with disability had a higher unemployment rate (22% compared to 16% of other adults)[12].

According to the 2011 census, there are 19,669 people with a disability in County Meath, accounting for 10.8% of the population, lower than the average for the State of 13.2%. A total of 11.5% of people with a disability were aged between 0 and 14 years, 7.4% aged between 15 and 24 and almost 30% aged 65 years and over. Those with a disability were far more likely to finish education at lower levels than those without a disability.

Table 5. Disability

	Total Population		Total with a disability	
		Number		%
Ashbourne	26,878	2,627		9.8
Kells	31,352	3,756		12.0
Laytown-Bettystown	31,366	3,425		10.9
Navan	32,742	3,771		11.5
Ratoath	31,667	2,888		9.1
Trim	28,820	3,202		11.1
Meath	182,825	19,669		10.8
State	4,525,281	595,335		13.2
Mid-East	526,501	61,654		11.7
Greater Dublin Area	1,774,608	225,993		12.7
Eastern & Midlands	2,177,129	279,102		12.8

Table 6. Disability & Age[13]

Age	Number	%
0 – 14	2,270	11.5
15 – 24	1,450	7.4
25 – 44	4,523	23.0
45 – 64	5,605	28.5
65+	5,821	29.6
Total	19,669	100.0

Disability & Education[14]

Qualifications	Disability	No Disability
Primary	14%	4%
Lower Secondary	22%	15%
Upper Secondary	22%	25%
Further Education	42%	57%

Map 6. People with a disability
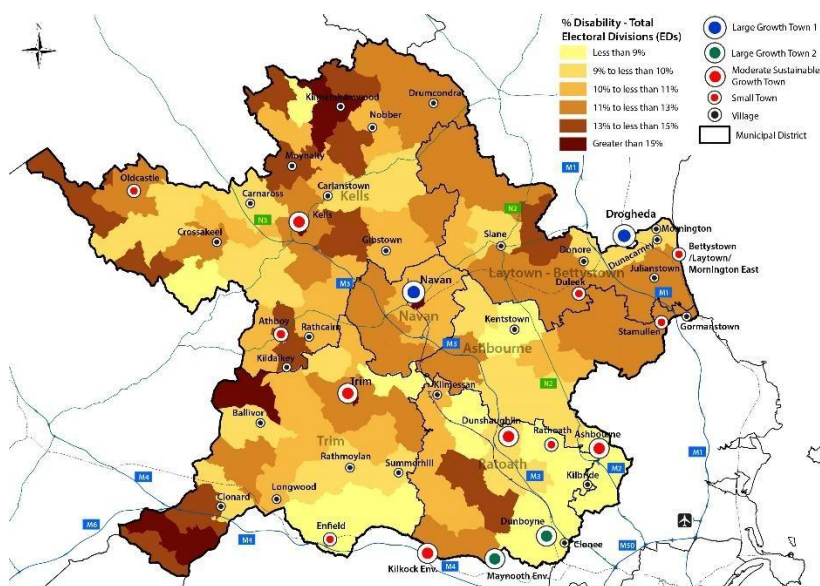
The highest numbers of people with a disability were in the Kells MD and the Navan MD. At Electoral Division level, over 17% of the populations of Kilmainham and Ceannus Mór in the Kells MD, and Cloghbrack and Ballyboggan in the Trim MD are people with a disability.

Disability

The total number of people providing unpaid care in Meath in 2011 was 6,632 or 3.6% of the population, slightly lower than the average for the State. At Municipal District level, the highest number of unpaid carers was in the Kells MD at 4.2%.

There is a clear correlation between the spatial distribution of the 'Family Cycle: Retired' and 'Population Aged 65 and Over' indicators highlighting the relationship between old age and the requirement for care[15].

Table 8.   Unpaid Care

	Total Population		Total with a disability	Unpaid Care	
		Number	%	Number	%
Ashbourne	26,878	2,627	9.8	893	3.3
Kells	31,352	3,756	12.0	1,309	4.2
Laytown-Bettystown	31,366	3,425	10.9	1,142	3.6
Navan	32,742	3,771	11.5	1,031	3.1
Ratoath	31,667	2,888	9.1	1,172	3.7
Trim	28,820	3,202	11.1	1,085	3.8
Meath	182,825	19,669	10.8	6,632	3.6
State	4,525,281	595,335	13.2	187,112	4.1
Mid-East	526,501	61,654	11.7	18,813	3.6
Greater Dublin Area	1,774,608	225,993	12.7	65,638	3.7
Eastern & Midlands	2,177,129	279,102	12.8	82,540	3.8

Map 7. Unpaid Care

Figure 6. Lone Parents Families

	At risk of poverty rate		Deprivation rate		Consistent poverty rate	
	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013
State	16.5	15.2	26.9	30.5	7.7	8.2
Lone Parents	29.1	31.7	49.5	63.2	17.4	23.0

Source: CSO 2013, EU SILC 2013
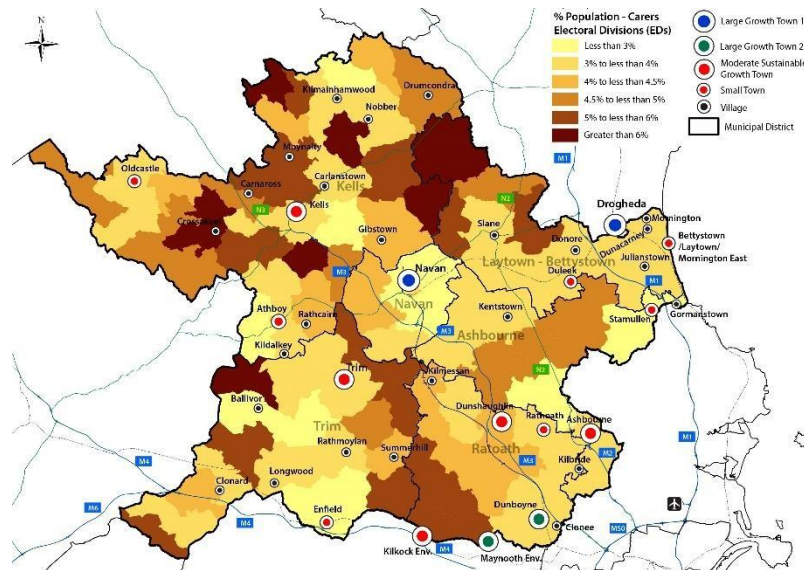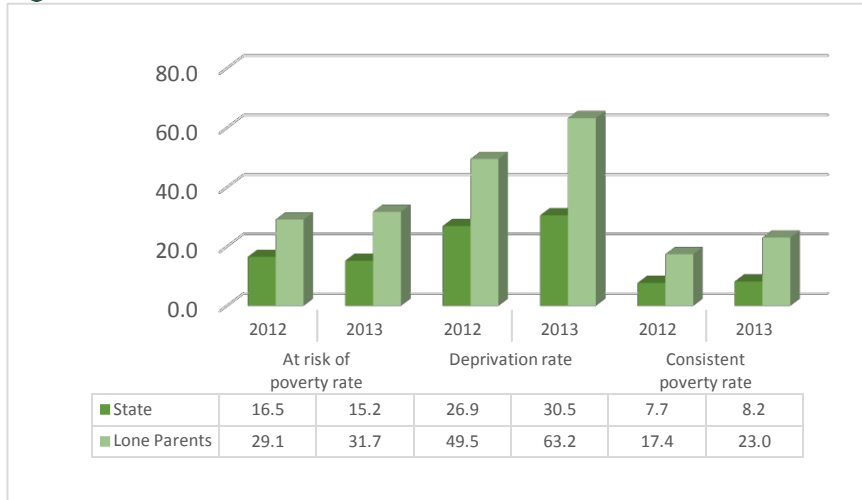
The proportion of households headed by a lone parent is general regarded as an indicator of the levels of disadvantage in an area. As EU SILC figures in Figure 6 show, lone parent households consistently have the highest levels of poverty and deprivation.

Table 9. Lone Parent Families

	Total Number of Family Units	Lone mothers	Lone fathers	Total Lone Parent Families	
	N	N	N	N	%
Ashbourne	5,293	768	138	906	17.1
Kells	6,124	1,087	205	1,292	21.1
Navan	6,529	1,332	208	1,540	23.6
Ratoath	6,407	862	169	1,031	16.1
Trim	5,719	928	184	1,112	19.4
Meath	36,475	6,127	1,082	7,209	19.8
State	834,266	186,284	29,031	215,315	25.8
Mid-East	103,832	19,660	3,181	22,841	22.0
Greater Dublin Area	322,737	78,381	11,033	89,414	27.7
Eastern & Midlands	400,138	95,167	13,662	108,829	27.2

According to the 2011 census there were 7,209 lone parent families living in County Meath, accounting for 19.8% of all families, significantly less than the average for the State (25.8%), the Greater Dublin Area (27.7%) of the Eastern and Midlands Region (27.2%).

At Municipal District level, Navan MD has the highest rate of lone parent families at 23.6%, followed by the Kells MD at 21.1%. The lowest rates were in Ratoath MD (16.1%) and Ashbourne (17.1%). At Electoral Area level, seven areas have lone parent rates of over 27%. These are Ceannus Mór (38.1%), Baile Átha Buí (28.1%), Nobber (27.7%), Kilmainham (27.6%), Oldcastle (27.3%) all in Kells, Navan Urban (31.1%), and Trim Urban (29.2%).

Lone Parent Families

Map 8.
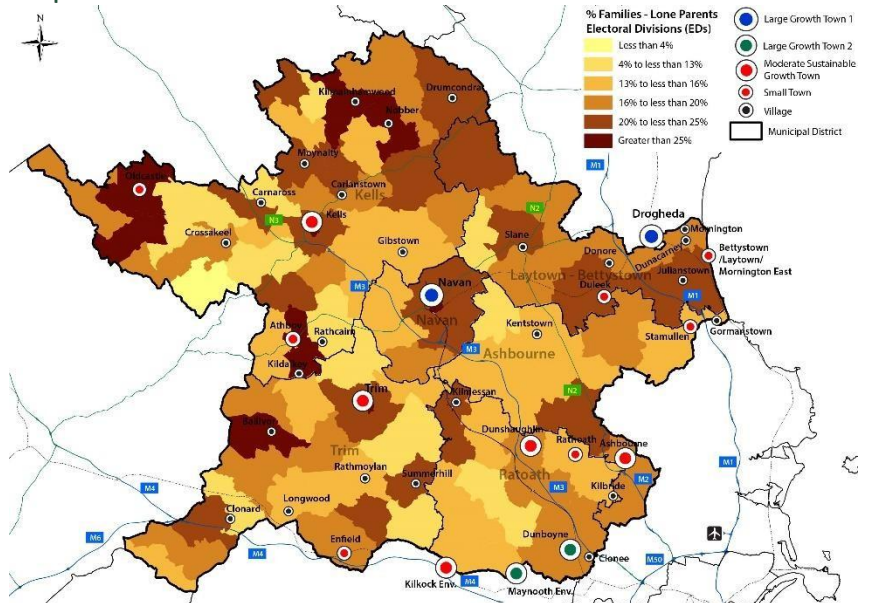
According to the 2011 census, there were 967 members of the Traveller community living in County Meath, accounting for 0.5% of the population. The highest number and proportion of Travellers live in the Navan MD, accounting 1.9% of the population and 65% of the total Traveller population.

Table 10.   Members of the Traveller Community

	Total Population	Traveller	
	Number	Number	%
Ashbourne	26878	62	0.2
Kells	30391	89	0.3
Laytown-Bettystown	32327	25	0.1
Navan	32742	626	1.9
Ratoath	31667	50	0.2
Trim	28820	115	0.4
Meath	182,825	967	0.5
State	4,525,281	29,495	0.7
Mid-East	526,501	2,562	0.5
Greater Dublin Area	1,774,608	8,461	0.5
Eastern & Midlands	2,177,129	12,413	0.6

There is general consensus that the census consistently underestimates the Traveller population. For example, Census 2011[16] states that there were 283 Traveller households living in Meath. However, figures from Meath County Council suggest that there were 424 families living in the County in 2014, a far greater number than that enumerated by the census. By far the greatest number of Traveller families 283, were living in Navan.

In 2011, the Traveller unemployment rate was 84.3%, an increase from 74.9% five years earlier. A total of 86.6% of Traveller men and 81.2% of Traveller women were unemployed in 2011, and 32.7% of Traveller women were identified as on home duties compared to 17.5% of the general population. (CSO, Census 2011). Only 3.1% of Travellers continued their education past the age of 18 compared to 41.2% of the general population in 2011. In the same year, 69% of Travellers were educated to primary level or lower and 17.7% had no formal education in 2011, compared to 1.4% of the general population. (CSO, Census 2011)[17].

Map 9. Irish Travellers
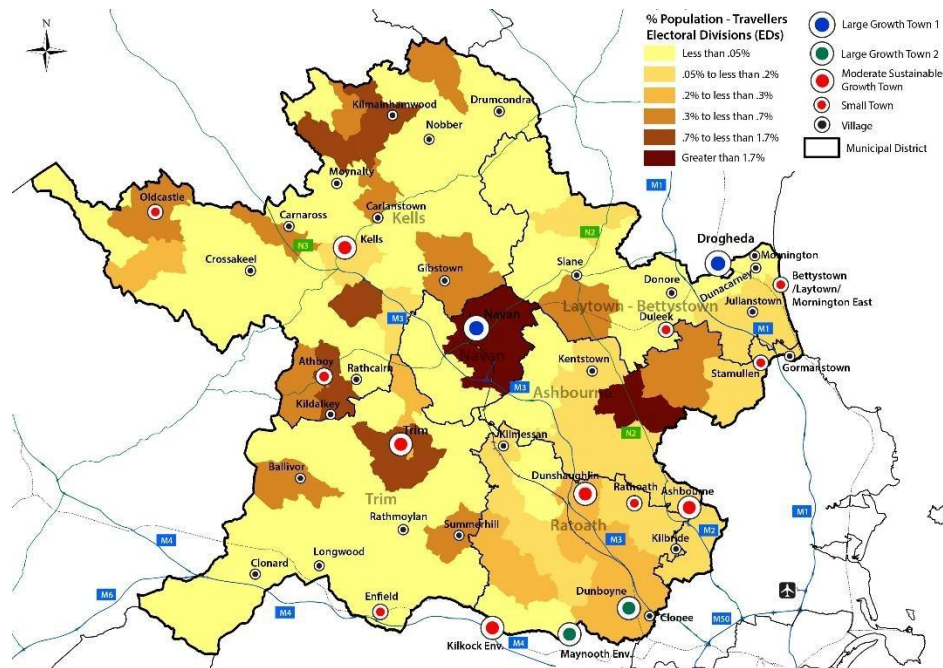
According to the 2011 census, there are a total of 19,802 'Non-Irish' people in County Meath, the 7th highest non-Irish population in the State. The non-Irish community account for 10.8% of the population, lower than the average for the State (12%), that for the Mid-East (11%), the Greater Dublin Area (14.3%) and the Eastern & Midlands Region (13.6%).

Figure 7.   Non-Irish National

% Non-Irish

	Ashbourne	Kells	Laytown - Bettystown	Navan	Ratoath	Trim	Meath	State	Mid-East	Greater Dublin Area	Eastern & Midlands
% Non-Irish	11.8	8.0	10.7	16.2	9.0	9.1	10.8	12.0	11.0	14.3	13.6
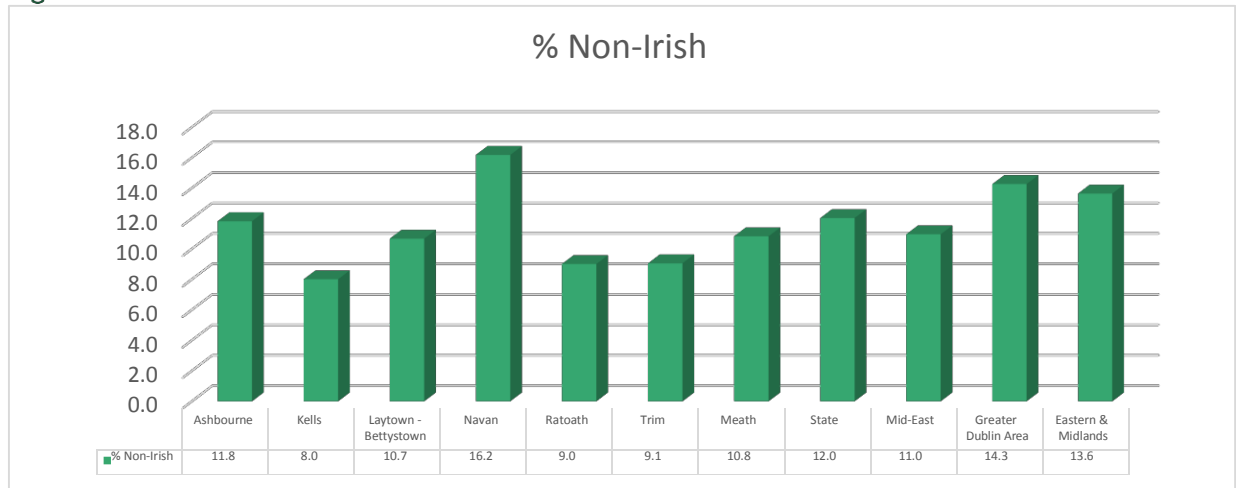
In the five years between Census 2006 and 2015, the non-Irish population increased by 5,354 (37.1%), the ninth highest increase of all local authority areas.

Map 10.   Non-Irish Population

The highest concentration on non-Irish nationals were in the eastern part of the county and in the larger urban areas. The towns of Navan, Drogheda, Ashbourne, Kells and Oldcastle have rate in excess 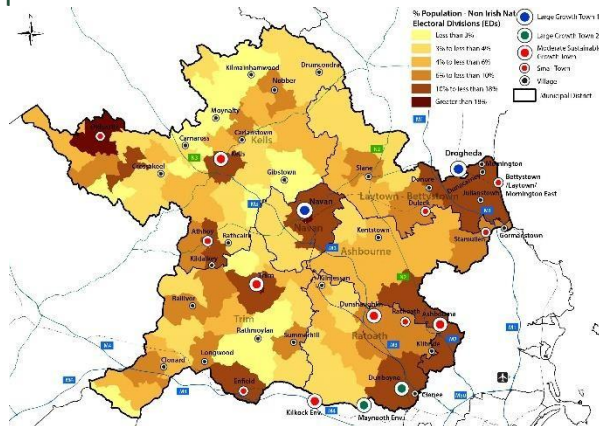of 18%. Proportionately, the Polish population represents 2.1% of the population, with the Lithuanian population representing 1.8%, other EU countries representing 2.2% and the rest of the world representing 2.7% of the population.

Table 11.   Proportion of nationality

	Irish	UK	Polish	Lithuanian	Other EU 27	Rest of World
Ashbourne	86.7	1.8	2.8	2.0	3.0	2.3
Kells	91.1	2.1	1.4	1.9	1.2	1.3
Laytown-Bettystown	88.0	2.5	1.3	1.2	2.0	3.7
Navan	82.8	1.8	3.7	3.5	2.9	4.2
Ratoath	90.0	1.7	1.7	0.9	2.4	2.4
Trim	89.8	2.1	1.8	1.5	1.7	2.1
Meath	88.1	2.0	2.1	1.8	2.2	2.7
State	86.8	2.5	2.7	0.8	2.5	3.5
Mid-East	88.1	2.2	2.6	1.1	2.2	2.9
Greater Dublin Area	84.3	1.8	2.8	0.9	3.5	5.2
Eastern & Midlands	85.0	1.9	2.7	1.0	3.3	4.8

Nationality

According to Census 2011, 48,541 households are owner occupied (with and without mortgages) in Meath, accounting for 78.4% of all households, significantly higher than the averages for the State (69.7%), the Greater Dublin Area (65.6%) and the Eastern & Midlands Region (66.9%). At Municipal District level, the highest levels of owner-occupation were in the Ratoath MD (81.5%) and the Ashbourne MD (81.2%), with the lowest in the Navan MD (70.4%).

The proportions renting from a private landlord were lower in Meath than the average for the State, with the highest level in the Navan MD.

The proportion renting from either the local authority or voluntary social housing body was 5.1% compared to the average for the State of 8.7% and 9.2% each for the Greater Dublin Area and the Eastern & Midlands Region. This rate is the second lowest in the country.

Table 12.   Tenure

	Total Households	Total Owner Occupied		Rented from Private Landlord		Rented Social	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Ashbourne	8,882	7,213	81.2	1,196	13.5	236	2.7
Kells	11,063	8,746	79.1	1,304	11.8	673	6.1
Laytown-Bettystown	10,700	8,517	79.6	1,262	11.8	435	4.1
Navan	11,329	7,980	70.4	2,252	19.9	923	8.1
Ratoath	10,194	8,308	81.5	1,290	12.7	352	3.5
Trim	9,754	7,777	79.7	1,185	12.1	550	5.6
Meath	61,922	48,541	78.4	8,489	13.7	3,169	5.1
State	1,649,408	1,149,924	69.7	305,377	18.5	143,975	8.7
Greater Dublin Area	646,466	424,330	65.6	144,689	22.4	59,577	9.2
Eastern & Midlands	789,856	528,308	66.9	166,375	21.1	72,942	9.2

Map 11.   Renting from local authority or voluntary social housing body
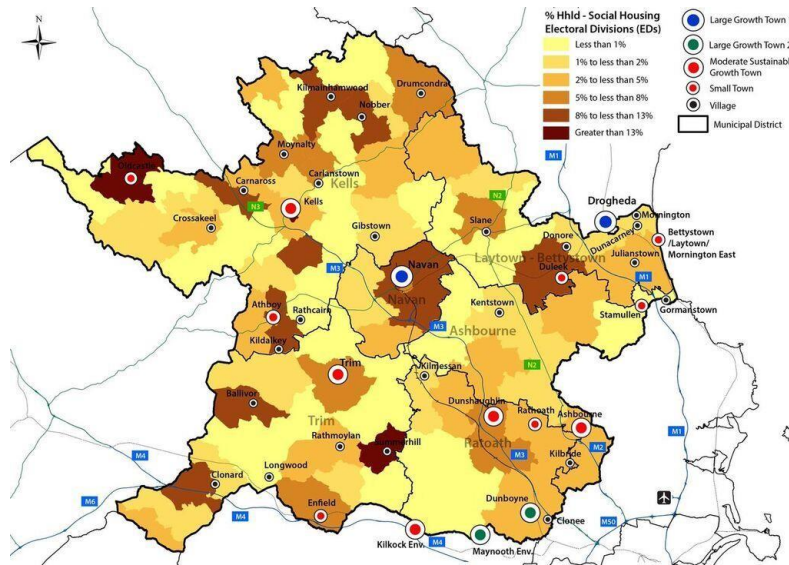
According to information from Meath County Council there were 4,291 people on the Housing Waiting List in October 2015 and 1,600 people were in receipt of rent supplement with a further 305 tenants in the Rental Accommodation Scheme. A total of 183 households required placement in emergency accommodation, 145 single/couples and 38 family units with children, for the period 1st January to 23rd October 2015.

According to figures from the Department of Social Protection[18] there were 1,941 recipients of Rent Supplement in Meath. Of these, 819 are short term (less than 18 months) and 1,122 long term (greater than 18 months). Since 2009 there has been an increase in the share of long term recipients with rate increasing from 26.8% in 2009 to 57.8% in 2013. Meath has the 11th highest number of recipients of Rental Supplement in the State.

According to the 2011 census there were 90,634 people in the labour force[19] in County Meath, a labour force participation rate[20] of 65.8%, the seventh highest labour force in the country and higher than that of the Mid-East (64.8%), the Greater Dublin Area (63.8%), the Eastern & Midlands (63.5%) and the State (61.9%).

At Municipal District level, the lowest labour force participation rate was in the Kells MD, significantly lower than the average for the County, though higher than the average for the State.

There were 74,342 people at work in County Meath in 2011, 82% of the labour force, higher than the Mid-East the Greater Dublin Area, the Eastern & Midlands and the State.

There were 16,292 people unemployed in 2011, an unemployment rate[21] of 18%, slightly lower than the average for the State. At Municipal District level the highest unemployment rates were in the Navan and Kells MDs and the lowest were in the Ratoath and Ashbourne MDs.

At Electoral District level, there was one unemployment blackspot[22] in the county, Ceannus Mór in the Kells MD (37.8%). A further five EDs had unemployment rates between 25% and 30%. These were Ardagh in the Kells MD (30.3%), Navan Urban (29.9%), Ardnamullan in the Trim MD (27.1%), Oldcastle (25.9%) and Girley (25.3%) both in the Kells MD.

Table 13.   Labour Force

	At Work	Unemployed	Labour Force	Labour Force Participation Rate	% At Work	Unemployment Rate
Ashbourne	11,981	2,068	14,049	67.5	85.3	14.7
Kells	11,874	3,211	15,085	62.3	78.7	21.3
Laytown-Bettystown	12,394	2,765	15,159	65.9	81.8	18.2
Navan	12,718	3,673	16,391	67.4	77.6	22.4
Ratoath	13,773	1,989	15,762	66.7	87.4	12.6
Trim	11,602	2,586	14,188	65.3	81.8	18.2
Meath	74,342	16,292	90,634	65.8	82.0	18.0
Mid-East	212,836	47,605	260,441	64.8	81.7	18.3
Greater Dublin Area	753,565	159,054	912,619	63.8	82.6	17.4
Eastern & Midlands	901,860	202,618	1,104,478	63.5	81.7	18.3
State	1,807,360	424,843	2,232,203	61.9	81.0	19.0

Map 12.   Labour Force Participation

Map 13.   Unemployment
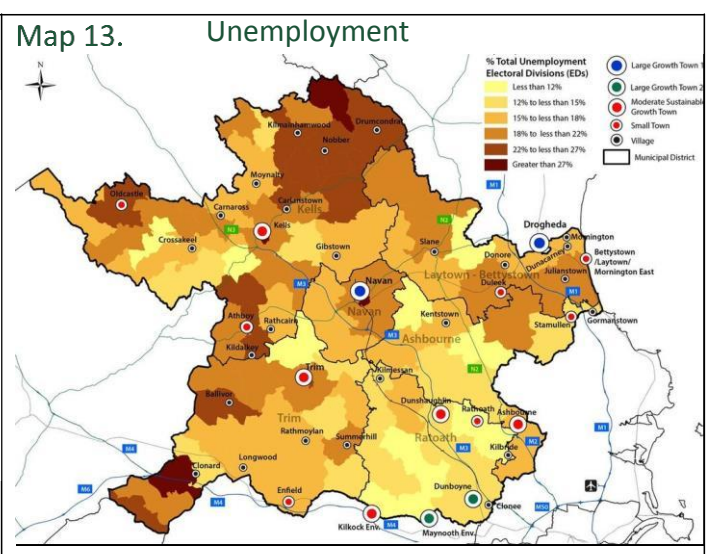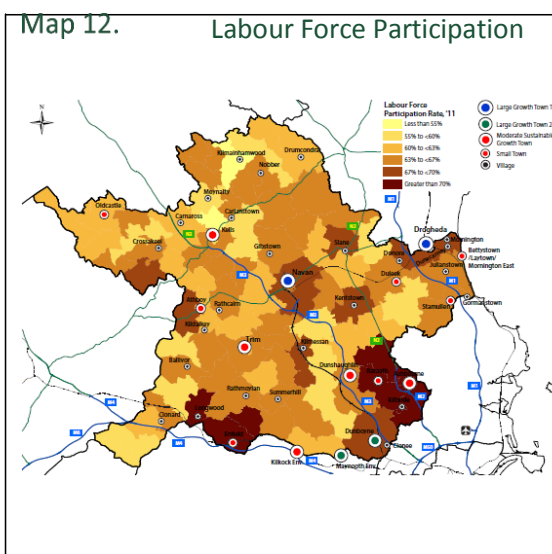
There were significant changes to employment and unemployment rates between 2006 and 2011.

Table 14.   Changes to employment and unemployment 2006-2011

	At Work			LF Participation Rate			Unemployment rate		
	2006	2011	Change	2006	2011	Change	2006	2011	Change
Ashbourne	11,762	11,981	219	1.9	69.0	67.5	-1.4	5.2	14.7	9.6
Kells	13,367	11,874	1,493	-11.2	63.2	62.3	-0.8	7.1	21.3	14.1
Laytown-Bettystown	12,888	12,394	494	-3.8	67.3	65.9	-1.3	7.5	18.2	10.8
Navan	14,592	12,718	1,874	-12.8	70.3	67.4	-2.8	8.7	22.4	13.7
Ratoath	13,928	13,773	155	-1.1	68.0	66.7	-1.4	4.1	12.6	8.5
Trim	11,900	11,602	298	-2.5	66.4	65.3	-1.1	6.2	18.2	12.0
Meath	78,437	74,342	4,095	-5.2	67.3	65.8	-1.5	6.5	18.0	11.4
State	1,930,042	1,807,360	122,682	-6.4	62.5	61.9	-0.6	8.5	19.0	10.5

In Meath, those in work fell by 4,095 or 5.2 percentage points, lower than the national average of 6.4 percentage points. At Municipal District level those in work fell by 12.8 percentage points in Navan and by 11.2 percentage points in Meath. The only area where the number of people in work increased was in the Ashbourne MD.

During the period 2006-2011, the labour force participation rate fell by 1.5 percentage points in Meath, from 67.3% in 2006 to 65.8% in 2011, two and a half times the average for the State. In the Navan Municipal District, the labour force participation rate fell from 70.3% to 67.4%, a fall of 2.8 percentage points.

The unemployment rate increased during that period from 6.5% to 18%, an increase of 11.4 percentage points compared to an average for the State of 10.5 percentage points. The highest rate of increase was in the Kells MD (14.1 percentage points), followed by the Navan MD (13.7 percentage points). The lowest rate of increase was in the Ratoath (8.5 percentage points) and Ashbourne (9.6 percentage points) MDs.

The Live Register is used to provide a monthly series of the numbers of people (with some exceptions) registering for Unemployment Assistance/Benefit or for various other statutory entitlements at local offices of the Department of Social and Family Affairs. Information is published in the form of a monthly release titled the Live Register. It is specifically not designed to measure unemployment. However, while the Live Register series is primarily an administrative count and not a specific measure of unemployment, one of its main uses/purposes is as a short-term trend indicator of Unemployment. The series also offers users data at a detailed geographic level, i.e. down as far as county and even Local office level[23].

An analysis of the live register is presented here as it provides more up-to-date information on trends in unemployment than Census 2011.

Figure 8.   Live Register All Ages Month 10 2006-2011

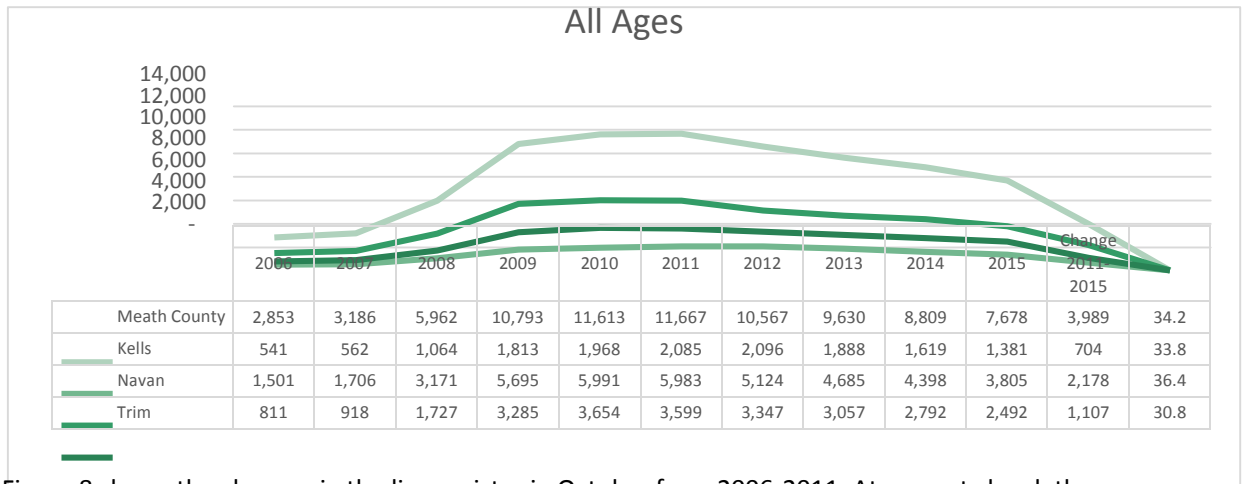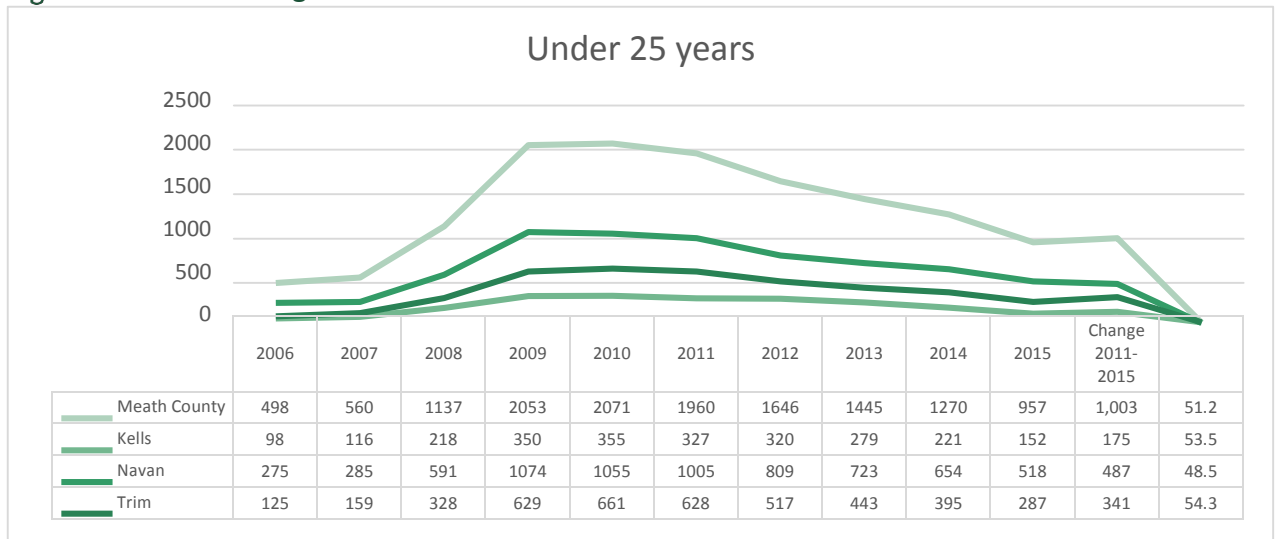|	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Change 2011-2015	
Meath County	2,853	3,186	5,962	10,793	11,613	11,667	10,567	9,630	8,809	7,678	3,989	34.2
Kells	541	562	1,064	1,813	1,968	2,085	2,096	1,888	1,619	1,381	704	33.8
Navan	1,501	1,706	3,171	5,695	5,991	5,983	5,124	4,685	4,398	3,805	2,178	36.4
Trim	811	918	1,727	3,285	3,654	3,599	3,347	3,057	2,792	2,492	1,107	30.8

Figure 8 shows the changes in the live register in October from 2006-2011. At a county level, there were significant increases in the number of people on the live register from 2007, peaking in 2011 at 11,667 people. Since 2011, the live register has been gradually falling and in October 2015, there were 7,678 people on the live register, a reduction of 3,989 or 34.2% since 2011, a considerably higher reduction than the average for the State of 25.5%.

At area level, the peaks in those on the live register occurred between 2010 and 2012, and the numbers have been gradually falling since. Navan experienced the largest decrease (36.4%) and Trim the smallest decrease (30.8%).

It is acknowledged that young people have been particularly hit by the crisis[24]. The current generation of young people have been described as the forgotten generation[25] or the lost generation[26] and there can be no doubt that the recession has been particularly difficult for young people emerging into a changing labour market[27]. The issue of 'scarring' has been particularly highlighted in relation to youth unemployment. Research has increasingly pointed to the long-term consequences of being unemployed at young ages. Not only is it a negative experience in itself, it also raises the probability of being unemployed in later years and can be associated with lower wages later   in   life[28].

Live Register

Figure 9.   Live Register Under 25 Years Month 10 2006-2011

Under 25 years

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Change 2011-2015	
Meath County	498	560	1137	2053	2071	1960	1646	1445	1270	957	1,003	51.2
Kells	98	116	218	350	355	327	320	279	221	152	175	53.5
Navan	275	285	591	1074	1055	1005	809	723	654	518	487	48.5
Trim	125	159	328	629	661	628	517	443	395	287	341	54.3

At a county level, the number of young people on the live register peaked in 2011 and has been gradually decreasing. Between 2011 and 2015, the numbers of young people on the live register decreased by 1,003 or 51.2%, a higher reduction than the average for the State of 47.1%. In October 2015, there were 957 young people on the live register, 12.5% of the total number on the live register.

At area level, the peaks in the number of young people on the live register occurred between 2009 and 2011, and the numbers have been gradually falling since. Kells experienced the largest decrease (53.5%) and Navan the smallest decrease (48.5%).

The Economic Dependency Ratio is the rate of the total inactive population (children 14 and under, unemployed, first time job seekers, those engaged in home duties, those retired, students, and those unable to work) to those at work. The higher the EDR, the more inactive people are dependent on the active population. The EDR helps to highlight those areas with smaller numbers of income earners relative to the economically dependent population and is regarded as one of the most reliable indicators of disadvantage in an area.

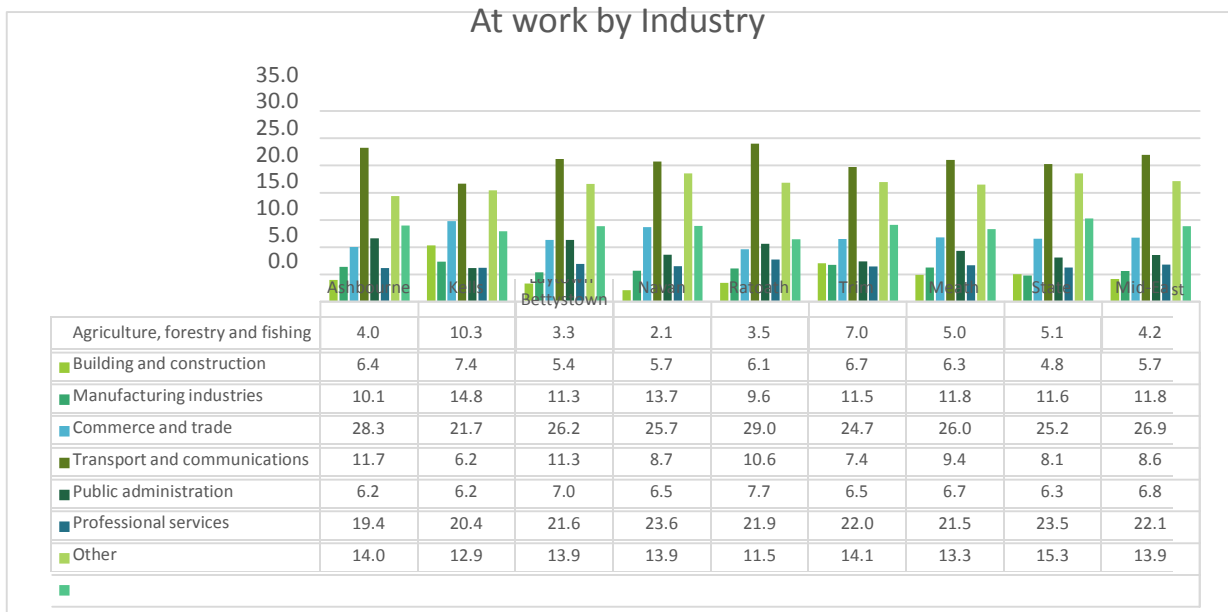Table 15.   Economic Dependency Ratio

	Active Population (At Work)	Inactive (aged 0-14)	Inactive (Outside the labour force)	Inactive (Unemployed)	Inactive Population	EDR
Ashbourne	11,981	6,362	6,753	2,068	15,183	1.3
Kells	11,874	7,337	9,112	3,211	19,660	1.7
Laytown-Bettystown	12,394	8,565	7,833	2,765	19,163	1.5
Navan	12,718	8,625	7,918	3,673	20,216	1.6
Ratoath	13,773	8,252	7,880	1,989	18,121	1.3
Trim	11,602	7,325	7,539	2,586	17,450	1.5
Meath	74,342	46,466	47,035	16,292	109,793	1.5
State	1,807,360	979,590	1,376,459	424,843	2,780,892	1.5
Mid-East	212,836	129,206	141,440	47,605	318,251	1.5
Greater Dublin Area	753,565	374,458	517,079	159,054	1,050,591	1.4
Eastern & Midlands	901,860	469,473	635,512	202,618	1,307,603	1.4

According to analysis of data from Census 2011, the average EDR for County Meath was 1.5 (5 inactive people dependent on one active person), the same rate as the average for the State, but higher than the rate for Greater Dublin Area and the Eastern and Midlands Region, both at 1.4. At Municipal District Level, the highest EDR was in the Kells MD (1.7), followed by the Navan MD (1.6), significantly higher than the average for the county and the State. The lowest rates were in the Ashbourne MD and the Ratoath MD, both at 1.3.

Economic Dependency Ratio

According to Census 2011, there were 74,342 people at work in County Meath. Figure 10 shows the industries that people were working in.

- The proportion at work in agriculture, forestry and fishing at 5.0% and was the same as the average for the State and slightly higher than that for the Mid-East (4.2%). The highest proportion of people at work in this industry was in the Kells MD, twice the average for the county and the State.
- The proportion of people working in building and construction 6.3%, higher than the average for the State (4.8%) and the Mid-East (5.7%). The highest proportion of people at work in this industry was in the Kells MD (7.4%).
- The proportion of people working in manufacturing was 11.8%, roughly the same as the average for the State and the Mid-East. According to the census report, there were 741 people working in mining and quarrying in Meath, the largest number in any county[29].
- The proportion of people working in commerce and trade was 26%, marginally higher than the average for the State (25.2%). The highest rates of work in this industry were in the Ratoath (29%) and Ashbourne (28.3%) MDs.
- The proportion of people working in transport and communication was 9.4%, marginally higher than the average for the State (8.1%). The highest rates of work in this industry was in the Ashbourne and Laytown-Bettystown MDs.
- The proportion of people working in public administration was 6.7%, marginally higher than the average for the State (6.3%). The highest rates of work in this industry were in Ratoath (7.7%) and Laytown-Bettystown (7%).
- The proportion of people working in professional services was 21.5%, marginally lower than the average for the State (23.5%). The highest rates of work in this industry were in the Navan (23.6%) and the Trim (22%) MDs.
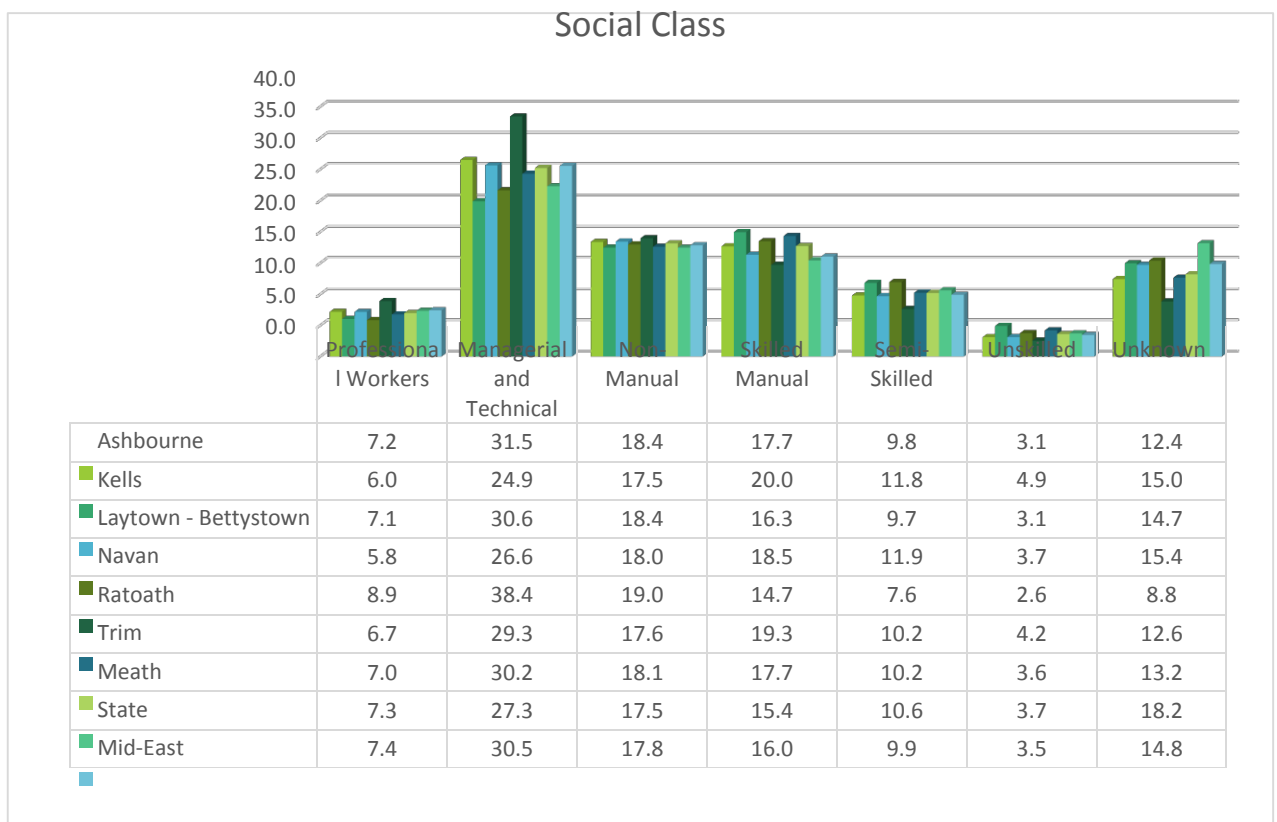
Figure 10.   At Work by Industry

At work by Industry

	Ashbourne	Kells	Laytown-Bettystown	Navan	Ratoath	Trim	Meath	State	Mid-East
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	4.0	10.3	3.3	2.1	3.5	7.0	5.0	5.1	4.2
Building and construction	6.4	7.4	5.4	5.7	6.1	6.7	6.3	4.8	5.7
Manufacturing industries	10.1	14.8	11.3	13.7	9.6	11.5	11.8	11.6	11.8
Commerce and trade	28.3	21.7	26.2	25.7	29.0	24.7	26.0	25.2	26.9
Transport and communications	11.7	6.2	11.3	8.7	10.6	7.4	9.4	8.1	8.6
Public administration	6.2	6.2	7.0	6.5	7.7	6.5	6.7	6.3	6.8
Professional services	19.4	20.4	21.6	23.6	21.9	22.0	21.5	23.5	22.1
Other	14.0	12.9	13.9	13.9	11.5	14.1	13.3	15.3	13.9

According to information from the *Report of the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022,* Meath is a fundamentally prosperous county with a number of innate comparative advantages. The report states that the economic performance of the county is stronger than most other parts of the country but says that the current economic model is unlikely to be sustainable and is at variance with the current Meath County Development Plan (CDP) (as varied), which envisages a more dynamic and vibrant local economy supporting sustainable communities throughout the county. Manifestation of Meath not fulfilling its economic potential takes a number of forms, including:

- Narrow base of economic activities in largely traditional area and low penetration of knowledge-oriented activities;
- Low educational attainment (among those working within the county);
- FDI deficit – the proportion of jobs in Meath accounted for by agency-assisted foreign-owned firms is less than half the corresponding figure for the country as a whole;
- Substantial skills leakage in the form of the large cohort of outbound commuters.

At Work by Industry

The profile of social class is a good indicator of the concentrations of relative affluence and poverty in a geographic area. As everyone in the population is assigned a social class based on their census returns, it is possible to compare the profile of the area with the averages for the State and other areas. A large proportion of the population in the higher social classes suggests good educational attainment and earning potential, while a large proportion of the population in the lower social class indicates lower levels of educational attainment, fewer qualifications and lower income generating potential. Research has shown that social class is both deeply-rooted and extremely resistant to change and is therefore resistant to cyclical variations such as economic growth[30].

Figure 11.   Social Class

|	Professional Workers	Managerial and Technical	Non Manual	Skilled Manual	Semi Skilled	Unskilled	Unknown
Ashbourne	7.2	31.5	18.4	17.7	9.8	3.1	12.4
Kells	6.0	24.9	17.5	20.0	11.8	4.9	15.0
Laytown - Bettystown	7.1	30.6	18.4	16.3	9.7	3.1	14.7
Navan	5.8	26.6	18.0	18.5	11.9	3.7	15.4
Ratoath	8.9	38.4	19.0	14.7	7.6	2.6	8.8
Trim	6.7	29.3	17.6	19.3	10.2	4.2	12.6
Meath	7.0	30.2	18.1	17.7	10.2	3.6	13.2
State	7.3	27.3	17.5	15.4	10.6	3.7	18.2
Mid-East	7.4	30.5	17.8	16.0	9.9	3.5	14.8

At 7%, the proportion of people in the Professional Workers social class was marginally lower than the averages for the State (7.3%) and the Mid-East (7.4%). At Municipal District level, the highest proportions were in the Ratoath (8.9%) and Ashbourne (7.2%) MDs and the lowest in the Navan (5.8%) and Kells (6%) MDs.

At 30.2%, the proportion of people in the Managerial and Technical social class was higher than the average for the State (27.3%) but lower than the Mid-East (30.5%). At Municipal District level, the highest proportions were in the Ratoath (38.4%) and Ashbourne (31.5%) MDs, and the lowest in the Kells (24.9%) and Navan (26.6%) MDs.

At the other send of the social class spectrum, at 3.6%, the proportion of those in the Unskilled social class was marginally lower than the average for the State (3.7%) and marginally higher than the average in the Mid-East (3.5%). At Municipal District level, the lowest proportions of those in this social class were in the Ratoath (2.6%), Ashbourne and Laytown-Bettystown (both at 3.1%) MDs, and the highest in the Kells (4.9%) and Trim (4.2%) MDs.

According to the AIRO report, *LECP Baseline Study,* a total of 73,798 people were enumerated as residing in Meath and being at work. Of this population, 38.5% (28,449) were employed within Meath, 44.6% (32,942) were employed outside Meath, 9.2% (6,811) were classed as Mobile workers and 7.6% (5,596) had a blank or uncodeable work destination.

Figure 12. Outbound Commuters

(CSO Powscar[1] 2011)
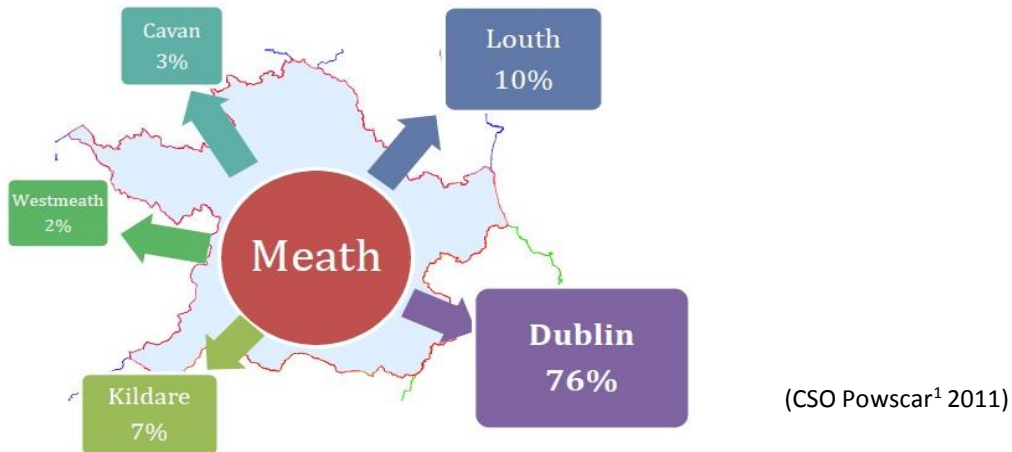
The total number of residents in Meath with a fixed place of work is 61,391. Of this population, 53.7% (32,942) are classed as Outbound (Out of County) Commuters. County Meath has the 4th highest rate of Outbound commuters with only South Dublin, Fingal and DLR having higher rates.
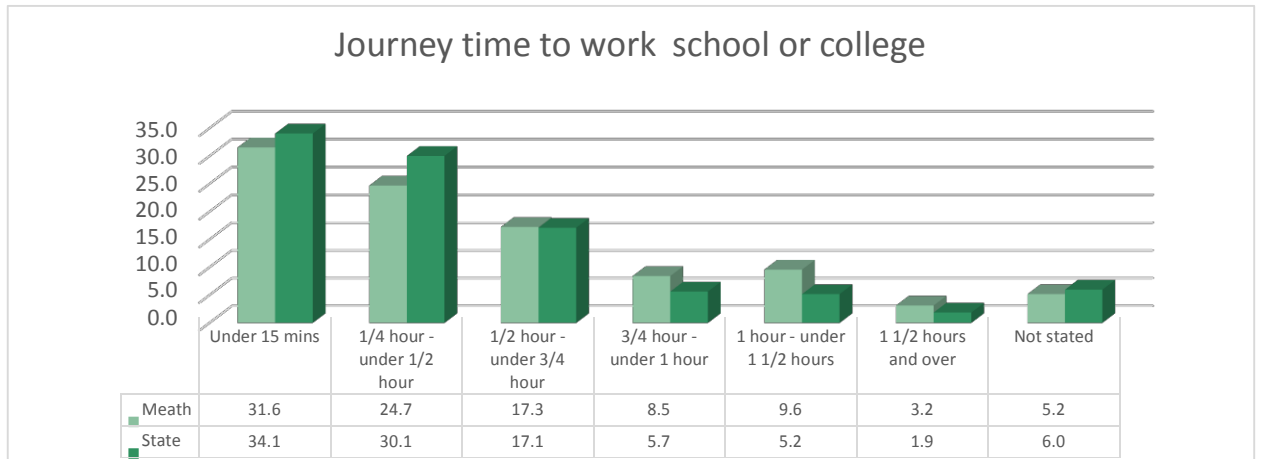
The main destination for Outbound Commuters are Dublin City (12,642), Fingal (8,648), Louth (3,270), South Dublin (2,692), Kildare (2,148), Dún Laoghaire Rathdown (1,026), Cavan (905), Westmeath (713) and the remainder of local authorities account for 898 commuters.

Highest rates of commuting were on the eastern and southern periphery of the county along key transport corridors such as the M1, M2, M3 and M4. In excess of 60% of all workers.

Generally, people in Meath spend significantly more time commuting than average. Over 3% of those travelling to work, school or college commute for over 1.5 hours, double the national average, and 9.6% of people spend 1-1.5 hours commuting, compared to the State average of 5.2%.

The facts on the outbound commuters illustrate the wide range of skills available to businesses, prospective and existing, and overseas as well as domestic. A theme of the Economic Development Strategy is that the outbound commuters represent a 'strategic asset' for the county, where the skills of these workers residing in Meath can be harnessed to promote greater investment within the county, thereby retaining more economic impact *within* County Meath.

Commuting

Figure 13.   Journey time to work, school or college

Journey time to work school or college

	Under 15 mins	1/4 hour - under 1/2 hour	1/2 hour - under 3/4 hour	3/4 hour - under 1 hour	1 hour - under 1 1/2 hours	1 1/2 hours and over	Not stated
Meath	31.6	24.7	17.3	8.5	9.6	3.2	5.2
State	34.1	30.1	17.1	5.7	5.2	1.9	6.0

According to information from the *Report of the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022*, there were about 33,000 people living in Meath but working outside the county in 2011;

- This number of workers exceeded (a) the number of people both living and working in the county in that year (namely around 28,500) and (b) the number of people from outside the county working in Meath or the 'inbound commuters' (c. 10,500);
- Thus, the outbound commuters represent the largest part of the local labour market in Meath;
- Put another way, these workers represented almost 54% of all residents of the county at work in any location in that year;
- Outside of the capital, no other local authority area in the country had more than half of its residents at work outside its territory in 2011 (we would expect commuting among the four local authority areas of Dublin to be high in any event);
- Proportionately speaking, it may therefore be inferred that Meath is the largest commuting county in the country (at least it was in 2011);
- About 25,000 or 76% of the outbound commuters were working in Dublin in 2011 and the number of Meath residents working in the capital alone was almost as big as the number of residents of the county working within Meath at the last census (about 28,500).

The outbound commuters have the strongest educational attainment among the categories of worker in Meath – in 2011, over 41% of the outbound commuters had third-level or higher educational attainment, compared with 25% among those both living and working in Meath and 37% among the inbound commuters to Meath, and the corresponding proportion for the State was 38% in that year.

The relatively low educational attainment of those at work within the county illustrates the fact that the economic activities in the county are to a large extent traditional and there is a low penetration of knowledge-oriented employment in Meath, which needs to be addressed.

In terms of the socio-economic groupings or skills of the outbound commuters, the following facts are noteworthy;

- The number of commuters working as *employers and managers* outside the county in 2011 (7,438) exceeded the corresponding number working within the county (6,115 made up of 4,230 employers and managers both living and working in Meath and 1,885 inbound employers and managers);
- The number of commuters working as *higher professionals* outside Meath in the same year (2,859) was greater than the corresponding number working within the county (namely 2,089, this being the sum of 1,289 higher professionals both living and working in Meath and 800 higher professionals among the inbound commuters to the county);

- The number of commuters working as *lower professionals* outside the county in 2011 (6,086) surpassed the corresponding number working within Meath (5,759, comprising 3,856 lower professionals who were both living and working in the county and 1,903 inbound lower professionals);
- In addition to the above, there were more outbound commuters classified as *non-manual workers* (9,620) compared with non-manual workers both living and working in Meath in 2011 (8,324);
- Furthermore, there was a larger number of outbound commuters employed as *manual skilled workers* (2,886) compared with non-manual workers both living and working in Meath in that year (2,415);
- The number of outbound commuters working in the information and communication, financial, real estate, professional, administration and support service activities sector in 2011 (namely 7,771 or 24% of the total number of outbound commuters) far exceeded the corresponding number in respect of those both living and working in Meath (3,262 or 11.5% of the respective total) and the inbound commuters (1,421 or 13.7% of the respective total) (the corresponding proportion of those at work countrywide was 18.5%);
- The proportion of the outbound commuters aged between 20 and 44 years in 2011 was 71%, compared with 59% among those both living and working in Meath in that year; and
- The highest rates of outbound commuting at town level in Meath occurred in those settlements closest to the capital and/or with multi-modal transport access to Dublin;
    - Drogheda (South) (outbound commuting rate of 91.9%) (although this figure also includes some residents of that part of Drogheda working in the Louth part of the town – but most of the outbound commuters from Drogheda work in Dublin):
    - Clonee (89.5%)
    - Ratoath (87.3%)
    - Dunboyne (85.5%)
    - Ashbourne (83.1%)
    - Dunshaughlin (77.2%)
    - Trim (55.6%)
    - Kells (53.6%)
    - Navan (46.1%).

According to Census 2011, 48,280 households in County Meath have a computer, accounting for 78% of households. This is higher than the average for the State of 72.7%. The highest rate of computer ownership was in the Ashbourne MD at 82.2% and the lowest was in the Kells MD at 70.3%.

Table 16.   Households with computer access

	Households	Computer Yes		Computer No	
	Total	Number	%	Number	%
Ashbourne	8,882	7,298	82.2	1,424	16.0
Kells	11,063	7,774	70.3	3,096	28.0
Laytown-Bettystown	10,700	8,497	79.4	1,911	17.9
Navan	11,329	8,736	77.1	2,417	21.3
Ratoath	10,194	8,645	84.8	1,412	13.9
Trim	9,754	7,330	75.1	2,250	23.1
Meath	61,922	48,280	78.0	12,510	20.2
State	1,649,408	1,199,298	72.7	414,597	25.1

Table 17.   Households with internet access

	Households	Broadband		Other		No internet access	
	Total	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Ashbourne	8,882	6,249	70.4	946	10.7	1,512	17.0
Kells	11,063	6,337	57.3	1,159	10.5	3,333	30.1
Laytown-Bettystown	10,700	7,570	70.7	797	7.4	2,043	19.1
Navan	11,329	7,762	68.5	964	8.5	2,414	21.3
Ratoath	10,194	7,736	75.9	778	7.6	1524	14.9
Trim	9,754	5,972	61.2	1,161	11.9	2,437	25.0
Meath	61,922	41,626	67.2	5,805	9.4	13,263	21.4
State	1,649,408	1,051,942	63.8	132,973	8.1	426,096	25.8

A total of 47,431 households had access to the internet, 41,626 (67.2%) of these had broadband access and 5,805 (9.4%) had other internet access. The proportions with internet access was higher than the average for the State. The highest proportions were in the Ratoath, Ashbourne and Laytown-Bettystown MDs and the lowest in the Kells MD.

Table 18.   Ability to speak Irish

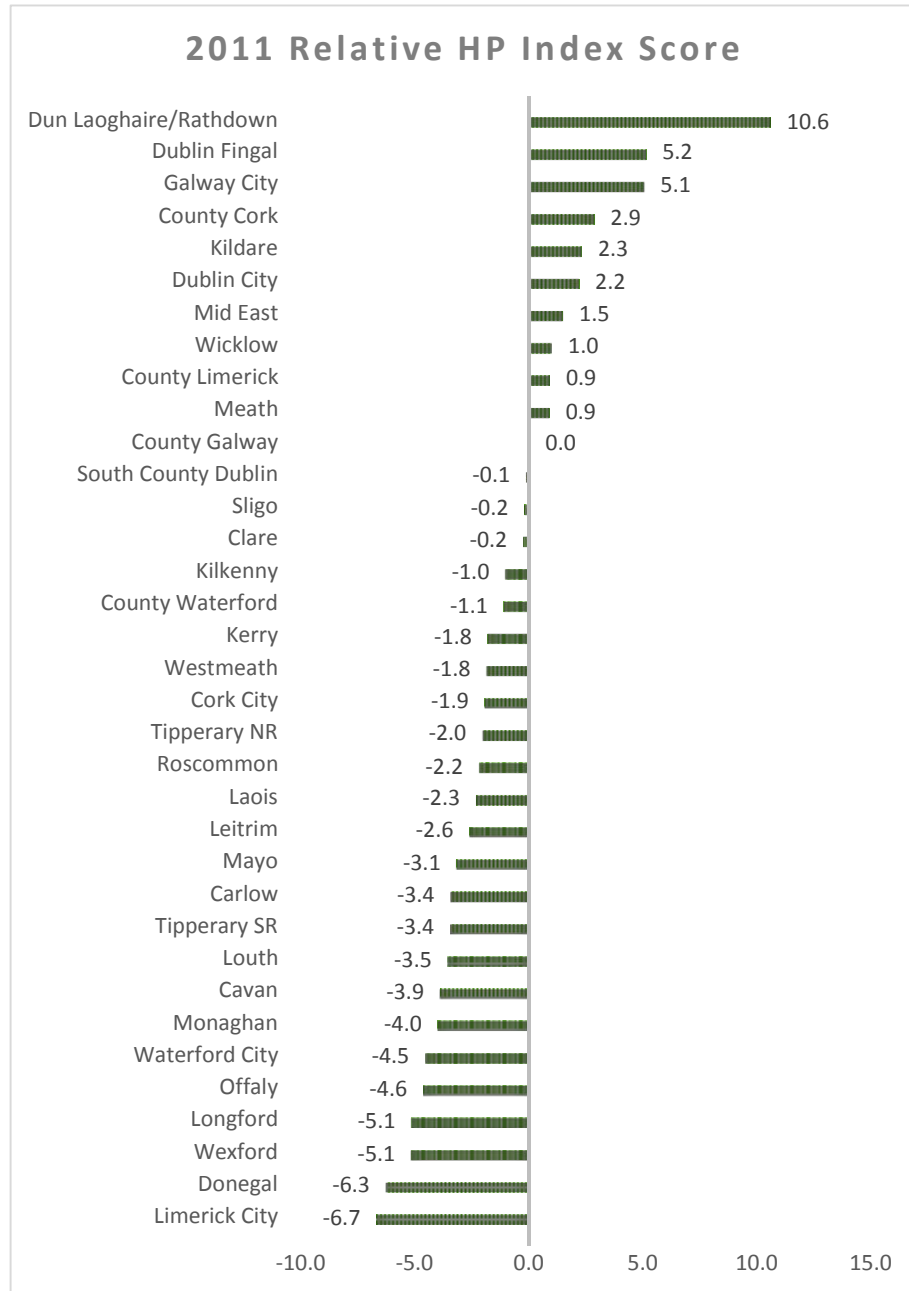|	Total	Yes (Speak Irish)	
		Number	%
Ashbourne	25,566	9,895	38.7
Kells	29,979	11,462	38.2
Laytown-Bettystown	29,476	11,115	37.7
Navan	30,958	11,385	36.8
Ratoath	30,232	13,689	45.3
Trim	27,333	10,713	39.2
Meath	173,544	68,259	39.3
State	4,370,631	1,774,437	40.6
Mid-East	502,047	200,287	39.9

A total of 68,259people stated that they had the ability to speak Irish in 2011, accounting for 39.3% of the population over the age of three years. This was marginally lower than the average for the State of 40.6%. At Municipal District level the ability to speak Irish was highest in the Ratoath MD at 45.3% and lowest in the Navan MD at 36.8%.

Computer & Internet

Irish

The Pobal HP Deprivation Index[31] is a method of measuring the relevant affluence or disadvantage of a particular geographical area using data compiled from the census.[32] The index uses a number of indicators under the headings of demographic profile, social class composition and labour market situation on the basis of which an area is assigned a score that ranges from 35 (Extremely Affluent) to -35 (Extremely Disadvantaged). The score indicates the level of disadvantage in an area. It is possible to compare the area with others and track changes within the area over time. In 2012, the Pobal HP Deprivation Index became available for Small Areas, allowing for an analysis of affluence and deprivation at this level.

Using the relative index scores it is possible to analyse the relative position of each ED within Meath and other areas around the country.

Figure 14.   Relative HP Index Score 2011

2011 Relative HP Index Score

Area	Score
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	10.6
Dublin Fingal	5.2
Galway City	5.1
County Cork	2.9
Kildare	2.3
Dublin City	2.2
Mid East	1.5
Wicklow	1.0
County Limerick	0.9
Meath	0.9
County Galway	0.0
South County Dublin	-0.1
Sligo	-0.2
Clare	-0.2
Kilkenny	-1.0
County Waterford	-1.1
Kerry	-1.8
Westmeath	-1.8
Cork City	-1.9
Tipperary NR	-2.0
Roscommon	-2.2
Laois	-2.3
Leitrim	-2.6
Mayo	-3.1
Carlow	-3.4
Tipperary SR	-3.4
Louth	-3.5
Cavan	-3.9
Monaghan	-4.0
Waterford City	-4.5
Offaly	-4.6
Longford	-5.1
Wexford	-5.1
Donegal	-6.3
Limerick City	-6.7

Pobal HP Deprivation Index

In 2011, Meath had a Relative HP Index scorer of .9 (marginally above average), making it the ninth most affluent local authority area in the country.

Figure 15.   Change in Absolute HP Index 2006-2011

Change in Absolute HP Index Score

County	Score
Meath	-8.8
Offaly	-8.5
Cavan	-8.2
Roscommon	-8.2
Wexford	-8.1
Mid East	-8.1
Laois	-8.1
Kildare	-8.1
Monaghan	-8.0
County Limerick	-7.7
Leitrim	-7.6
Carlow	-7.6
Westmeath	-7.6
Kilkenny	-7.5
Tipperary NR	-7.4
Clare	-7.2
Longford	-7.2
Wicklow	-7.2
County Cork	-7.0
County Waterford	-7.0
Tipperary SR	-6.9
County Galway	-6.8
Louth	-6.8
Kerry	-6.7
South County Dublin	-6.7
Sligo	-6.7
Dublin Fingal	-6.6
State	-6.6
Mayo	-6.3
Limerick City	-6.2
Donegal	-6.1
Waterford City	-5.8
Galway City	-4.9
Cork City	-4.9
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	-4.3
Dublin City	-3.8

The Absolute HP Index Scores are used to compare across time. Between 2006 and 2011, the absolute scores fell all across the country. The rate of decrease was highest in Meath, -8.8 points compared to an average for the State of -6.6 points.

Map 14.   HP Index of Affluence and Deprivation

At Electoral Area level, there are no areas in the extremes of affluence or disadvantaged. The majority of EDs were classed as either just above or below the average. The three areas with the lowest relative scores were Ceannanus Mór (-12.1) and Kilmainham (-10.1) in the Kells MD and Castlejordan (-9.4) in the Trim MD.

In the latest year to which the DJEI data pertain (2014), there were 5,765 people working in a permanent and full-time capacity in EI-client companies in Meath and the corresponding number in IDA-client companies was 1,245, meaning an EI-to-IDA employment ratio in the county of almost 5-to-1 in that year. The corresponding ratio in the EMRA Region was 1:1 and this was also the ratio in the State as a whole. Accordingly, the ratio of EI- client employment-to-IDA-client employment in Meath is to a large degree out of sync with that elsewhere in the country.

Furthermore, much of the relatively large and growing EI-client employment in Meath is in traditional activities (like engineering and manufacturing) and there is a low penetration of knowledge-oriented employment in the county (like IT, internationally-traded services, high-tech manufacturing etc.).

Analysis presented as part of the Economic Development Strategy for Meath 2014-2022 throws this particular issue into sharp relief. In the detailed analysis of the local labour market in Meath, based on the latest available comprehensive data (using the POWSCAR data conducted as part of Census 2011), the proportion of all employment within Meath working in the knowledge-oriented sector *information and communication, financial, real estate, professional, administration and support service activities* (as defined by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in the POWSCAR data) was 12.1% in that year, compared with 18.5% for the country overall, and with 24% for Meath's outbound commuters in 2011. This fact captures the extent to which there is a dichotomy or dual in the economic activities between the outbound commuters living in Meath, on the one hand, and those at work within the county, on the other hand.[1]

The DJEI data (on permanent full-time employment) show that the number of jobs in agency-assisted enterprises in County Meath – that is, enterprises assisted by EI and IDA Ireland – grew by 1,223 during 2011-2014. Most of the growth came from EI-client enterprises – 1,182 compared with growth of just 41 among the IDA-assisted enterprises in the county. In addition to these figures, we are informed by the DJEI that, in 2014, employment growth among Meath LEO client companies was 154 (the highest growth rate among the counties making up the Eastern SPA within the EMRA Region and one of the highest rates of employment growth in the whole EMRA and indeed in the State as a whole).

The table below shows the relative performance of LEO-client enterprises in Meath in EMRA and national context in 2014.

Table 19.   LEO Clients & Employment

Region	No. Clients	Total Jobs	Jobs/Client	Jobs Growth 2014	% Jobs Growth 2014
	LEO Clients and their Employment 2014				
Kildare	103	683	7	63	10.2%
Louth	197	656	3	66	11.2%
Meath	180	806	4	154	23.6%
Wicklow	97	572	6	137	31.5%
Eastern SPA	*577*	*2,717*	*5*	*420*	*18.3%*
Laois	85	384	5	35	10.0%
Longford	222	899	4	75	9.1%
Offaly	194	931	5	115	14.1%
WestMeath	242	1,284	5	38	3.0%
Midlands SPA	*743*	*3,498*	*5*	*263*	*8.1%*
Dublin City	258	1,431	6	453	46.3%
DLR	211	1,304	6	156	13.6%
Fingal	142	562	4	126	28.9%
Dublin South	229	1,146	5	58	5.3%
Dublin SPA	*840*	*4,443*	*5*	*793*	*21.7%*
EMRA Region	*2,160*	*10,658*	*5*	*1,476*	*16.1%*
State	*6,255*	*31,982*	*5*	*4,078*	*14.6%*

In 2014, there were 180 client enterprises of Meath LEO with total employment of 806, the highest level in the Eastern SPA within the EMRA Region. Furthermore, during 2014, the DJEI data show that Meath LEO clients added an extra 154 jobs, giving a growth rate of employment of 23.6% in that year, which was higher than the figure for the Eastern SPA (18.3%), the EMRA Region (16.1%) and for the State as a whole (14.6%). The DJEI data indicate that LEO clients are performing strongly in Meath.

Figure 16 below shows the trend in permanent full-time employment in agency-assisted indigenous enterprises in Meath, the Eastern SPA, the EMRA Region and the State during 2005-2014 (these would be predominantly EI-assisted clients). In the graph, in order to control for scaling issues (in particular, as we widen the geographical coverage, the number of jobs increases), we have fixed the opening year of 2005 to 100 in each case and all subsequent value are interpreted relative to that year.

The chart clearly shows that the most rapid growth in employment in EI-client companies occurred in Meath during 2005-2014: 14.7% cumulative growth during the period, compared with 3.7% growth for the Eastern SPA, 5.4% growth for the EMRA Region and 1.4% growth for the State. The corresponding cumulative growth rates for the Dublin Region and the Midlands Region within the EMRA Region were 6.3% and 3.8% respectively.

Thus, permanent full-time employment in agency-assisted Irish-owned enterprises grew relatively rapidly in Meath during 2005-2014, where the graph below reveals that there was comparably strong recovery in employment in Meath since 2010, with the county pulling away from the other regions on this basis.

It is seen that the trends are similar in all cases – employment growth to 2007, then employment contraction during the crisis years and then recovery since 2010. Since that year, it is clear from Figure 16 that the rate of recovery in permanent full-time employment in agency-assisted Irish-owned firms (EI clients) has been strongest in Meath.

Figure 16.   Employment in Irish Owned Agency Assisted Enterprises
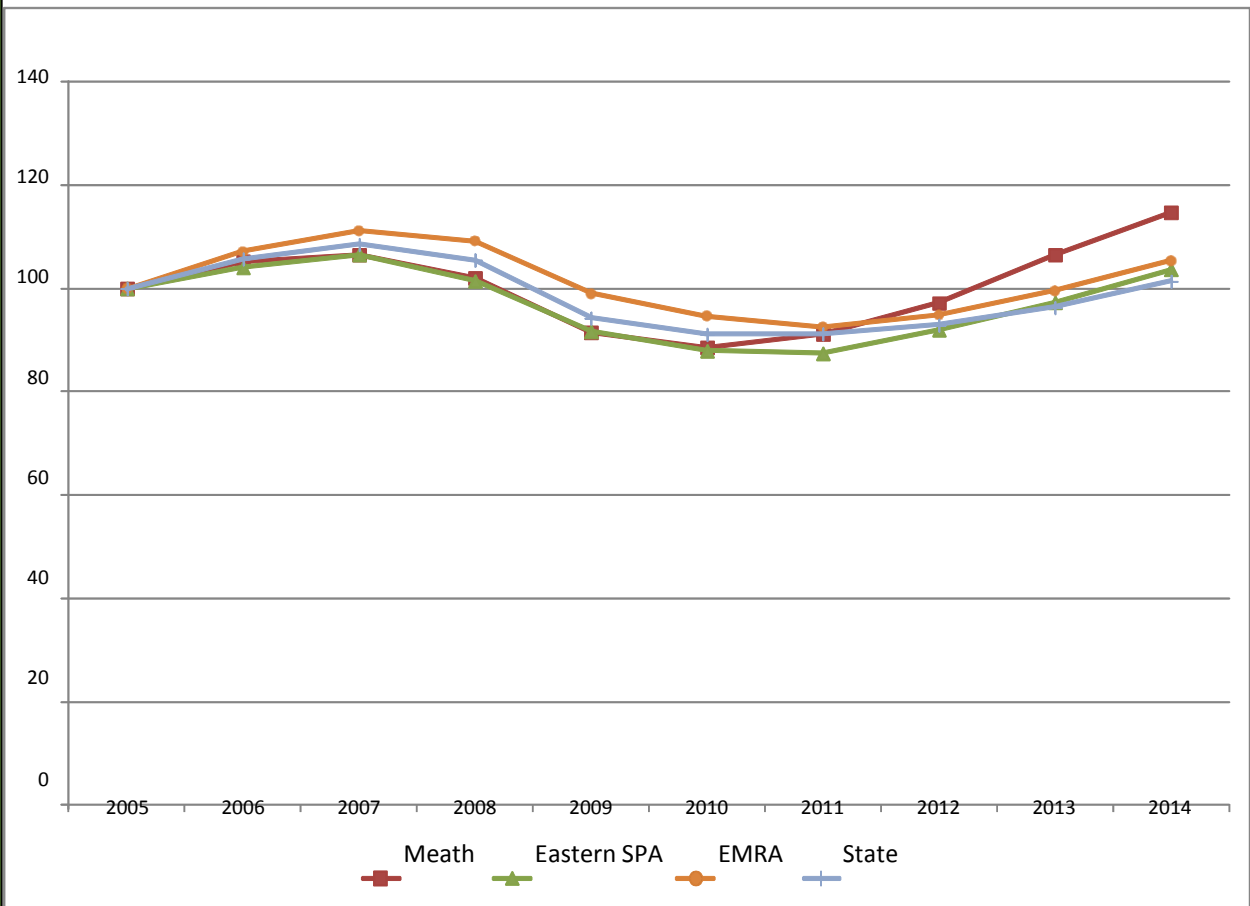
Thus, taken together, small and larger indigenous enterprises (LEO clients and EI clients respectively) have performed well in Meath in regard to permanent full-time employment in recent years.

However, the same cannot also be said of permanent full-time employment in agency-assisted foreign-owned enterprises (IDA clients), as the next chart below shows.

It is evident from Figure 17 that employment performance among FDI companies has been least strong in Meath during 2005-2014, with the strongest growth occurring in the Dublin Region.

Nevertheless, there is some hope for Meath because the marked downward trend during 2005 to 2010 appears to have been reversed since 2010, and FDI employment has grown in the county since that year (albeit slowly).

Figure 17.   Employment in Foreign-Owned Assisted Enterprises

Permanent Full-Time Employment in Foreign-Owned Agency Assisted Enterprises
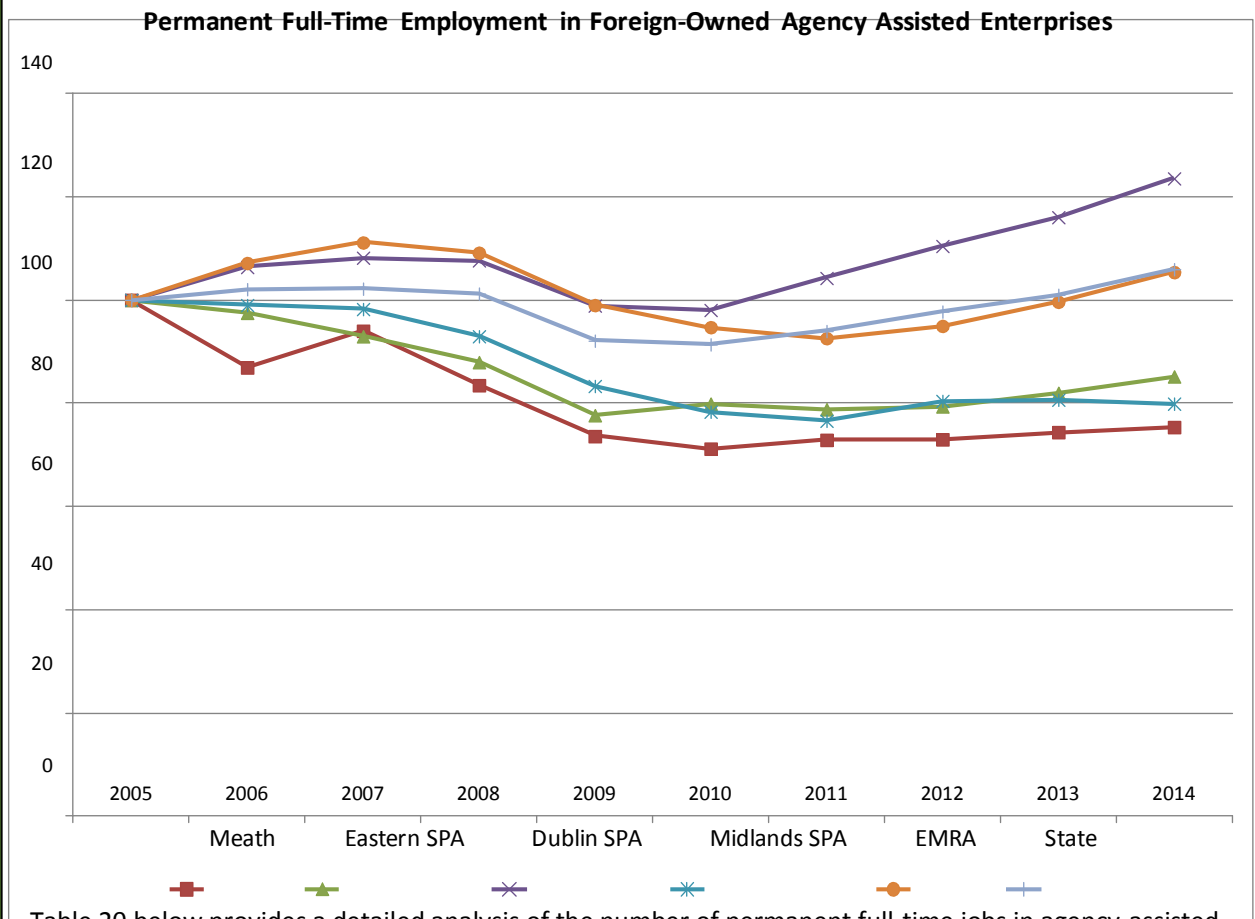
Table 20 below provides a detailed analysis of the number of permanent full-time jobs in agency-assisted indigenous (EI-client) and foreign-owned (IDA-client) enterprises in Meath relative to the overall number of jobs in the county in 2011 and 2014, with comparison between the Meath proportions and those for the State as a whole in those years (the State figures are in grey).

In 2011, the 4,583 permanent full-time jobs in agency-assisted indigenous enterprises (EI clients) in Meath accounted for 11.8% of the 38,822 jobs overall in the county in that year. The corresponding proportion for the State was 7.7%, meaning that the gap in the density of such employment in Meath was 4.1 percentage points higher compared with the country as a whole in that year.

One of the targets of the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022 is to maintain or widen this gap in favour of Meath during the lifetime of the plan. The figures presented in the table below suggest that this has been achieved in 2014, where the density in Meath compared with the State has widen to 5.9 points in 2014, reflecting the observation that larger indigenous enterprises are growing employment in Meath comparably rapidly. The positive differentials in favour of Meath are highlighted in green in the chart.

However, in regard to FDI employment, the trend appears to be going against Meath. In 2011, there were 1,204 permanent full-time jobs in IDA-client firms in Meath, representing 3.1% of all employment in the county in that year. The corresponding proportion in the State was 7.7%, representing a gap of 4.6 percentage points against Meath. In 2014, the evidence suggests that the gap has widened against Meath (gap of 5.3 points). The adverse

gaps in respect of IDA-client employment in Meath are highlighted in red (jobs growth in IDA-clients during 2011-2014 was only 41).

Overall, bringing both sets of enterprises together, the total gap in 2014 was in Meath's favour, with agency-assisted employment in the county accounting for an estimated 17.3% of all employment compared with 16.7% for the country as a whole.

The analysis presented in the table below further highlights the skewed nature between EI and IDA employment in Meath, and, in particular, the observation (noted earlier) that there are 5 times as many people working in EI- client companies in the county as there are in IDA-client companies, compared with a ratio of 1:1 in the State and in the EMRA Region.

This further underlines the fact that Meath needs more FDI employment in the coming years, while continuing to grow its strong base of indigenous enterprises (Meath LEO clients and EI clients).

Table 20.   Employment within Meath

| Statistic/Variable | Employment within Meath | | |
	2011	2014	CAGR
Total Persons	38,822	40,500	1.4%
Agency-Assisted Enterprises			
Indigenous/Irish-Owned (EI)	4,583	5,765	7.9%
	11.8%	14.2%	6.4%
State	7.7%	8.3%	2.4%
Diff	4.1%	5.9%	
Foreign-Owned (IDA)	1,204	1,245	1.1%
	3.1%	3.1%	-0.3%
State	7.7%	8.4%	2.9%
Diff	-4.6%	-5.3%	
All-Agency Assisted	5,787	7,010	6.6%
	14.9%	17.3%	5.1%
State	15.4%	16.7%	2.6%
Diff	-0.5%	0.6%	

Meath Socio-Economic SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Opportunities
- Fundamentally prosperous county; - Strong performance in agri-food, mining and quarrying, manufacturing and engineering, transport, storage and distribution, wholesale and retailing, and banking and financial services; - Growing strength in tourism performance – Boyne Valley and Tayto Park - High labour force participation and employment rates; - Strong employment growth among larger indigenous enterprises (under the remit of Enterprise Ireland); - Fall in unemployment since 2011 - higher than the national average - Relatively well educated population; - The diversity of the population; - Young and rapidly growing population; - Outbound commuters – unique and important asset in respect of their educational attainment and workplace skills; - The Gaeltacht areas with their strong language and cultural traditions - Emerging networks of community, voluntary, cultural, and environmental organisations/groups and NGOs; - Growing strength of community leadership and community organisations - A County with a wealth of resources in history and heritage; - Proximity to Dublin and radial transport corridors (M1, M2, M3 and M4 and connected to the M50); - Cost-competitive location – rents, average salaries etc.; - A fertile County that is also wealthy in natural resources.	- Local economy that performs pro-cyclically (driven in large part by Dublin, but this is also a negative issue in times of downturn/recession) and growth opportunities now and in the coming years with the upturn; - EU Regional Aid Map 2014-2020, which includes Kells and environs in the north of Meath (with a population of almost 29,000) – new FDI opportunity for Meath; - The universities and ITs on the doorstep of Meath, which account for a large proportion of all students (including international students) and staff engaged in research and commercialisation countrywide; - International policy developments with national policy implications in the recently agreed Sustainable Development Goals and the outcomes of COP21 in Paris; - National policy developments on social inclusion and on job creation; - Regional development potential on foot of new regional spatial and economic strategies; - Local authority policy and practice developed and evolving in the field of heritage, culture, biodiversity and sustainability; - New structures within the local authority in particular the PPN, LCDC, the Strategic Policy Committees, and the LECP Advisory Committee; - Emerging cross-sectoral developmental partnerships in many areas and willingness to work collaboratively on an inter-agency, cross-sectoral basis; - Potential driving force for development in the community, voluntary, cultural, and environmental sectors.
Weaknesses/Issues	Threats
- Spatial concentrations of disadvantage and affluence, for example, Kells and Navan Municipal Districts significantly more disadvantaged than Ratoath and Ashbourne Municipal Districts; - Poverty, not only in defined spatial areas, but also among particular groups, in particular lone parents, Travellers, people with disabilities, and the long-term unemployed;	- Economic circumstances have a strong external vulnerability and economic prospects will be influenced by international and European developments in this regard; - Institutional commitments and capacities have still to be developed to address new economic, social, cultural and environmental challenges and opportunities in a rapidly changing context and new systems for participation and mainstreaming;

- Particular impact of the economic crisis on young people with emigration, unemployment, mental health and substance misuse at issue;
- Uneven population spread with older people concentrated in the north and west and younger people in the commuter areas;
- Education levels unevenly distributed with higher levels in the east and lower levels in the north and west;
- Low third-level or higher educational attainment among all residents, residents of working age and among those at work *within* the county. Lower educational attainment among those at work compared with the country as a whole reflecting the relatively low educational attainment of those *both working and living within the county* and also the more traditional mix of sectors/activities in the County;
- Population growth concentrated in the commuter areas;
- One of the lowest levels of investment in public and social services in the country and low level of service provision in many areas;
- Underdeveloped and under-resourced community infrastructure in many areas;
- Homelessness and threat of homelessness, including issues of personal debt and mortgage payment difficulties;
- Particular exclusion of those seeking asylum and refugees, carers and older people;
- Lack of provision for integration of a culturally diverse population;
- Poor provision of public, rural and accessible transport outside the main commuter lines;
- Pro-cyclical local economy driven to a large extent by Dublin (also an opportunity for the County) with accompanying need to become more self-reliant and less dependent on the capital city.
- Low levels of FDI (nonetheless, existing FDI firms provide high quality employment and demonstrate Meath's capacity to accommodate FDI)
- Many of the sectors in which employment in Meath is focused or which have experienced employment growth are also traditional activities largely concentrated in local or domestic markets
- Smaller concentration of employment in information and communication, financial, real estate, professional, administration and support service activities compared with elsewhere and greater tendency to be more reliant on public sector or non-market employment

- Climate change, pollution, destruction of ecosystems and biodiversity;
- Shortage of investment-ready sites for inward investment or delays in their delivery; lack of readiness with certain key infrastructure and services for certain types of activities;
- Lack of valuing of community, community organisation and community development within the general public and the public sector leading to inadequate engagement and inappropriate funding arrangements;
- Stigma, stereotyping, and lack of accommodation for diversity experienced by women, people with disabilities, older people, young people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, trans people, lone parents, Black and minority ethnic people including Travellers, and carers.

Section 4.   Vision, Values, Concepts and Goals

This section sets out the Vision, Values, Concepts and Goals that underpin the LECP. These underpin the LECP and were derived from the evidence provided by the data and SWOT analysis, the initial interviews and the consultation workshops, where they were also subsequently refined.

Vision

The vision that was identified is:

> Meath, a county that will build upon its unique heritage to enable the diversity of its people
> and communities to have the resources for economic, social and environmental wellbeing,
> the creativity to flourish, and the strength to be resilient and that will develop a vibrant,
> sustainable, and competitive economy, all based on shared goals and collaboration
> between statutory, community, voluntary, environmental and private sectors.

Underpinning Values

This plan is based on and seeks to progress values of:

- **Community**: Community is the foundation for economic and social and cultural development and there is a diversity of communities in the County based on a sense of place and a sense of identity.
- **Community Development:** Resources need to be targeted on those communities experiencing disadvantage, their voice in articulating their needs and interests needs to be ensured, and their influence on decisions that impact on them enabled.
- **Equality and Human Rights**: Dignity, autonomy, social justice, democracy, and inclusion underpin our commitment to equality and human rights and these values are defined in our equality and human rights statement.
- **Sustainability**: Climate change needs to be addressed and its impact managed, recycling and re-use of resources need to be expanded and resource depletion reduced, renewable energy sources need to be increased, and ecosystems need to be protected and enhanced.
- **Sense of Place:** The unique heritage of Meath needs to be celebrated, made accessible, and protected.
- **Partnership:** Collaboration and alliance building is needed between the different sectors driving local development, including between public and private agencies and between these agencies and communities, in a manner that is based on mutual esteem, shared vision, and coordinated endeavour, including the sharing of resources.

Key Concepts

Five key concepts underpin the LECP objectives that have been identified. These concepts are outlined below with associated high level goals and broad outcomes:

Key concepts

Five key concepts underpin the Sustainable Community Objectives that have been identified. These are outlined below with the associated High Level Goals and Broad Outcomes.

Concepts	High-level Goals	Associated Broad Outcomes
Wellbeing is where people can meet their basic needs, have a sense of purpose, enjoy financial and personal security, engage in meaningful and rewarding work, and have good physical and mental health.	Promote and secure wellbeing of all people and communities in the County.	• A reduction in poverty levels and associated disadvantage along with increased levels of income for those experiencing poverty in and out of work. • An increase in employment levels in quality jobs spread throughout the county, supported by effective and relevant training, and person centred labour market activation. • An enhancement in the culture of, skills for, and support to entrepreneurship. • Improved access to high levels of mental health and physical health for all people in all communities. • Reduced levels of homeless and at-risk-of homelessness and improved forms of support to those in and at-risk-of homelessness. • Increased levels of social housing provision and regeneration that enable sustainable communities. • Improved transport links for those experiencing exclusion in rural areas. • Improved perception and experience of safety for people in rural areas.
Dynamic economy is where production, distribution and consumption are supported and stimulated with creativity, innovation, and rigour to be resilient and to best meet the needs and aspirations of the people of Meath.	Stimulate and support a dynamic economy to best meet the needs and aspirations of the people and communities in the County	• A cost-competitive location that is internationally, nationally and locally recognised as an attractive and distinctive centre in which to conduct business. • A large number and varied range of serviced sites and property solutions to suit the needs of large and small businesses in all sectors. • Seamless access to skills, infrastructure and services, and national and international markets for businesses. • An environment for growing enterprises with clusters of FDI and indigenous companies in vibrant economic centres. • Enhanced status as a visitor destination with a large and varied choice of attractions, accommodation and eateries, leisure and entertainment facilities, and events throughout the year. • Attractive and competitive shopping locations combining a mix of traditional and modern retailing experiences in a unique and differentiated setting. • An inclusion for and benefit to people and communities experiencing inequality and disadvantage from the further development of the economy in the County. • An inclusive, innovative economy in the Gaeltacht areas.

Resilience is where people have the capacity to mobilise and deploy the necessary human and physical resources to withstand challenges, adapt in the face of challenges, and build human progress on foot of challenges.	Build and enable the resilience of all people and communities in the communities.	• An independent, resourced, empowered, vibrant and diverse community infrastructure that gives voice to place based communities and identity based communities, pursues innovation in responding to issues, enables and supports voluntary endeavour, and contributes to wellbeing, resilience, and flourishing within their County. • Meeting the specific needs of women, carers, lone parents, older people, young people, Black and minority ethnic people including Travellers, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, and people with disabilities. • Widespread implementation of transition initiatives that include community and social businesses serving local needs, community owned renewable energy production, local food production and related food-processing activities. • Enhanced and effective systems of environmental protection and sustenance.
Flourishing is where people have the capabilities necessary to live lives that they have reason to value, including capabilities to access and deploy knowledge and learning, to access and produce culture, and to enjoy recreation and leisure.	Stimulate and empower a flourishing for all people and communities in the County.	• Enhanced education experiences, services, facilities, and outcomes for people experiencing inequality and disadvantage. • Enhanced network of and access to informal education opportunities. • Enhanced and full access to high quality broadband throughout the county, as well as an improved IT infrastructure and IT skills and knowledge for all • Community arts programmes that enable communities experiencing disadvantage and inequality to develop their capacity to access and produce culture. • Enhanced facilities and services for all people and communities to engage in recreation, sport and leisure activities. • Enhanced physical infrastructure in which the community sector can provide efficient and cost effective services and supports in a way that facilitates them to be able to respond to the needs of communities. • Strengthening the Irish language and culture in the Gaeltacht areas and beyond.
Renewal is where organisations bring a concern for social inclusion, equality and human rights into policy making and policy implementation, enable the voice of those experiencing inequality and disadvantage to be heard in their work, and engage with and integrate their efforts with other organisations pursuing similar or linked goals including in the community, voluntary, environmental and private sectors.	Develop and implement ongoing renewal in public sector bodies, the manner in which they fulfill their mandates and the manner in which they work with others.	• Interagency systems that enable coordination and cooperation between public bodies and publicly funded organisations and with the community, voluntary, environmental and private sectors that will enhance their impact. • Interagency processes to develop shared values and understanding across public bodies and publicly funded organisations. • A smooth functioning of the reformed structures in the County Council that reflects the ambition and provision of establishing legislation and policy. • New forms of intervention and new relations of collaboration with other sectors by the public sector in achieving its goals. • Policy and programme processes that enable the voice of people experiencing disadvantage and inequality, and the organisations that represent them, to be heard in the operations of public bodies and publicly funded organisations. • Planning, policy-making, budgeting, policy-implementation and policy-evaluation methods within public bodies that are transparent, target the pockets of disadvantage in the County, and mainstream social inclusion, equality and human rights values and issues.

These concepts and associated high level goals and broad outcomes flow from and build on the analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified for the County.

The concept of Wellbeing seeks to:

- Build on the strengths identified in the prosperity of the County, the emerging economic opportunities, the high labour force participation and the relatively well educated population;

- Address weaknesses identified in relation to spatial concentrations of poverty and disadvantage, uneven distribution of education levels, homelessness and the threat of homelessness, and the low level of investment in public and social services including mental health and addiction services;

- Seize opportunities identified in the inclusion of Kells and environs in the north of Meath in the EU Regional Aid Map, access to universities and ITs on the County borders, and policy developments at international and national level.

- Take on threats identified in relation to difficult external economic circumstances.

The concept of Dynamic Competitive Economy seeks to:

- Build on the strengths identified in areas of strong and emerging strength economic performance, high labour force participation and employment rates, relatively well educated population, the outbound commuters, and proximity to Dublin and competitive location.

- Address weaknesses identified in low levels of FDI, the pro-cyclical nature of the local economy and the dominant focus in the more traditional areas concentrated on the domestic market and sectors with limited development to date.

- Seize opportunities identified in the current positive circumstances for the pro-cyclical nature of the local economy, the inclusion of Kells and environs in the north of Meath in the EU Regional Aid Map, and international, national, and regional policy developments.

- Take on threats identified in relation to difficult external economic circumstances, institutional commitment and capacity and shortage of investment ready sites.

The concept of Resilience seeks to:

- Build on the strengths identified in the prosperous nature of the County, the diversity of the population, emerging civil society networks, growing strength of community leadership and community organisations, and the wealth of history, heritage and natural resources in the County.

- Address weaknesses identified in the under-developed and under-resourced community infrastructure, issues of accessible transport, and the particular issues, including poverty, facing young people, older people, refugees and asylum seekers, carers and lone parents and lack of investment in integration.

- Seize opportunities identified in international, national and local policy developments and civil society potential to be a driving force for development.

- Take on threats identified in climate change, pollution, destruction of ecosystems and biodiversity, lack of valuing of community, community organisations and community development, institutional commitments and capacities, and stigma, stereotyping and lack of accommodation of diversity.

The concept of Flourishing seeks to:

- Build on the strengths identified in the diversity of the population, the relatively well educated population, and the Gaeltacht areas and a County with a wealth of resources in history and heritage.

- Address weaknesses identified in uneven distribution of educational levels, uneven population spreads, and spatial concentrations of disadvantage.

- Seize opportunities identified in international, national, regional and local policy developments and

access to universities and ITs near Meath.

- Take on threats identified in economic circumstances of external vulnerability.

The concept of Renewal seeks to:

- Build on the strengths identified in what is a fundamentally prosperous County.
- Address weaknesses identified in low level of investment in public and social services, and low levels of services in some areas.
- Seize opportunities identified in new structures within the local authority, emerging cross sectoral partnerships, and local authority policy developments.
- Take on threats identified in institutional commitments and capacities.

Introduction

This statement reflects our commitment within the LCDC to address equality and human rights concerns for all in fulfilling our mandate, in particular our responsibilities with regard to the Local Economic and Community Plan. It responds to our obligations under the Irish Human Rights Equality and Commission Act 2014 (S.42) to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect human rights. It will inform the development, implementation and evaluation of the LECP in a manner that reflects available resources and that is measurable and framed within the time span of that plan.

Values, Objectives, Issues

Our commitment to equality and human rights is underpinned by a particular set of values. These values shape our ambition to promote equality, combat discrimination and protect human rights. They provide the starting point for our implementation of the public sector duty. They are the five values of dignity, inclusion, social justice, democracy and autonomy.

Dignity is about human worth, respect and fair treatment for all people. It is person centered and is concerned with the quality of life of people.

The **LCDC** seeks to ensure that all people are treated with respect, that each individual is valued in service delivery, with particular care to those most vulnerable in our society, and that the rights of all to live in a safe and clean local environment are respected.

We, therefore, wish to address the following equality and human rights issues:

- The lack of equal and respectful treatment for all individuals and groups, in particular minority groups.
- Poor living conditions, poor housing, lack of education, and limited health services that undermine dignity for some individuals and minority groups.
- Pollution of the air and water and damage to our natural environment that undermine dignity for all.
- Fears held about crime, safety and health that undermine dignity for some individuals and groups.
- Inadequate services for people with disabilities.
- Lack of supports and rights for carers.
- Stigma surrounding certain identities, conditions or situations including people from minority groups, people with mental health issues, people from particular addresses, and people who are unemployed.
- Lack of recognition for voluntary services, care providers, community and youth leaders, and public servants.

Inclusion is about participation and acceptance. It concerns minority groups such as Travellers, people with disability, migrants, trans people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, lone parents, and people from minority or no religions, it concerns older and young people, and it concerns women. It is about community, integration, social cohesion, and securing a focus on the most excluded.

The **LCDC** seeks to encourage the participation and integration of all groups in the community, including the most vulnerable, while preserving the best of existing values in society.

We, therefore wish to address the following equality and human rights issues:

- The lack of integration and cross-fertilisation between different groups and communities.

- Concerns of both majority and minority groups about preserving identity and values in contexts of change.

- Limited acceptance of difference and low levels of awareness of issues around difference.

- Limited recognition of the value of community.

- Challenge of integrating new communities, including in education.

- The need to focus on the causes of exclusion, political and economic.

Social Justice is about social change and redistributing wealth, power and privilege. It concerns access to resources, a living wage, employment, integration and justice. It can hold different meaning and priorities for different groups in society.

The **LCDC** seeks to create visible pathways to social justice that break the cycle of poverty and unemployment, in particular through interventions at an early age, create greater access to education and training, and incentivise active citizenship based on high levels of morale and hopes for a better future.

We, therefore, wish to address the following equality and human rights issues:
- Unemployment.
- Poverty.
- Child poverty.
- Barriers to accessing education.
- Homelessness.
- The need for systemic change in legislation, policy and how services are delivered in order to address the root causes of inequality.
- The need for access to a clean environment for all and to environmental information on issues affecting local communities.
- Limited supports and resources to integrate asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
- Unequal pay for women.
- Low pay.
- Limited childcare services and early education opportunities for children.
- Barriers to participation experienced by people with disabilities.
- The need to enable the contribution to society and the economy of early school leavers and ex-offenders.

Democracy is about voice and having an equal say, accountability and transparency, and leadership and empowerment. It is concerned with collective decision-making, valuing different perspectives, and the freedom to choose, to speak, and to be heard.

The **LCDC** seeks to promote, encourage and advocate for strong community leadership, clear decision-making processes, and full engagement of and accountability by all stakeholders without fear of consequences, and to do so in a manner that reflects the environment and the needs of all in the County.

We, therefore, wish to address the following equality and human rights issues:

- Limited participation by excluded groups in democratic structures, including women, young people, migrants, people with disabilities, and Travellers.
- The need for greater participation in democratic structures.
- Lack of empowerment and support for the voice of people in communities such that they are heard and listened to.
- Limited involvement of community groups in decision-making.
- Limited numbers of people coming forward to take leadership roles within communities.
- The need for participatory forms of democracy.

Autonomy is about self-determination and having the resources to act in one's own interest and free from coercion. It is both personal and collective. It concerns empowerment and accountability. It requires flexibility and includes a freedom for people to choose whether or not they wish to engage.

The **LCDC** seeks to support individual and collective autonomy by enabling choice through economic inclusion and by empowering individuals and communities to achieve agency and to have the vehicles through which to increase their autonomy.

We, therefore, wish to address the following equality and human rights issues:

- Disempowerment of communities.
- Limited community infrastructure.
- Lack of access to services for minority groups including older people and people with disabilities.
- Lack of power for the most marginalised.
- Personal and structural barriers to autonomy.

This Statement

This statement will serve as a set of guiding principles to bring an equality and human rights focus into the work of the LCDC, particularly in relation to the LECP. This statement will be used to inform the planning, implementation and evaluation processes for the LECP.

Community Element of the LECP

The community element of the LECP is concerned with achieving wellbeing, resilience and flourishing for communities. These goals are to be underpinned with goals for a dynamic competitive economy and for renewal in the public sector. Values shape the community element of the LECP. These are the values of community, community development, equality and human rights, sustainability, sense of place, and partnership.

Community emphasises a focus in the plan on place-based and identity-based groups that experience inequality and exclusion. Community can be a site of exclusion but it is also a source of strength and creativity, and a basis for development and positive change. Community development is key to responding to the situation and experience of these groups. Community development is the starting point for wellbeing and the source of resilience and flourishing with its emphasis on leadership by, the participation and voice of, and action by the community. The community strategy within the LECP emphasises the need for a strong, effective and resourced community infrastructure with access to adequate community facilities.

Equality and human rights capture some of the key challenges to be pursued by the community element of the LECP. Dignity, autonomy, social justice, democracy, and inclusion are identified as the values that underpin equality and human rights. The first step in responding to the challenge of equality and human rights is to acknowledge and respond to diversity by identifying the specific needs of the diversity of groups in the County. These groups are identifiable by the particular situation they find themselves in, the experience they share in engaging with the wider society and its institutions, and specific identity they hold and share.

A concern for equality and human rights inevitably draws the focus of the community strategy into a concern for eliminating poverty and addressing issues of income inadequacy through the plan. It requires a priority focus in the plan on taking action in the fields of mental and physical health, education, training, employment and entrepreneurship.

In moving beyond the objective of wellbeing within communities to the objective of flourishing communities a range of further concerns are brought forward as part of the community element to the plan. Arts, culture and heritage emerge as a key arena for action in this regard. Arts and culture are rooted in a concern for people and communities to be both consumers and producers of arts and culture. Heritage draws on a valuing of a sense of place and acknowledging the particular wealth of Meath as a County that can call on such a breadth and depth of heritage. Sports, recreation and leisure are a further focus for action in pursuit of flourishing communities.

Environmental sustainability captures another set of key challenges to be pursued by the community element of the LECP. Action is required to both prevent and address the impact of climate change, pollution, resource depletion, and degradation of biodiversity. The idea of transition is introduced as a means of devising, exploring, and implementing alternative forms of development that meets the challenge of environmental sustainability. Alongside equality and human rights, environmental sustainability is both a focus in its own right and a factor that needs to be taken into account in all actions taken under the LECP.

The value of partnership points to the potential of and interest in public sector renewal underpinning the community element of this plan. Partnership emphasises the need for cooperation and collaboration between organisations and sectors. The agenda for public sector renewal needs to go further to meet goals of wellbeing, resilience and flourishing to include action to support and implement a mainstreaming of inclusion, equality, human rights and environmental sustainability and an engagement with the voice of people experiencing inequality and disadvantage.

Economic Element of the LECP

The economic element of the LECP has been designed as a succinct and action-focused document, and due recognition has been given to the fact that the delivery of the economic element, and the LECP overall (both the economic and the community elements, which are required to be consistent and supportive of each other), will be achieved through the efforts and programmes of other stakeholders as well as by Meath County Council, which will be the lead body in all the proposed economic actions.

Accordingly, the economic strategy has been prepared as an action-oriented resource capable of supporting and complementing the existing county-level economic actions currently underway and also regional-level economic development initiatives, including the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022, the Regional Action Plan for Jobs for the Mid-East Region (2015) and the work of the recently-established Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA), in respect of its Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), which will replace the aforementioned RPGs for the GDA.

The economic plan has been put together on foot of a substantial amount of work that has been carried out regarding the promotion of economic development in County Meath in the past few years. The work in question includes the Meath County Development Plan (CDP) 2013-2019, the Baseline Economic Profile of County Meath (2014) carried out by researchers at the University of Maynooth (re-branded in 2014 from the earlier National University of Ireland Maynooth, NUIM) and the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022.

In the past few years the economic development work being led by Meath County Council has also benefitted from the advice of the Meath Economic Forum (MEF). Formed in 2013, and operating in a voluntary capacity, and supported by Meath County Council, the MEF is chaired by Meath native and former Taoiseach Mr. John Bruton, and comprises senior figures from the business world, academia and the policy environment with connections to the county, all with the goal of helping to support and promote economic and employment development in Meath. The MEF is an important asset for progressing economic development in the county and Meath County Council looks forward to continuing this important relationship in the years ahead, during the lifetime of the LECP, and beyond.

Accordingly, the Economic Goal, Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDOs), Actions and Outcomes presented in this document have been designed and developed with the intention of supporting/complementing the high-level actions of the Economic Development Strategy and ensuring that the local economy in the county is more competitive and dynamic in the coming years, and better equipped to retain more of its residents to work and live with the county.

A major part of the economic development planning for Meath in the coming years will be to promote the county as an attractive and competitive location for inward investment, harnessing the skills and experience of the outbound commuters in the process. More high quality jobs need to be facilitated

within the county and the SEDOs and Actions set out here are designed in this regard, by helping to support existing enterprises and attracting new job creators, by facilitating a competitive business environment with the right infrastructure as well as the right skills

Thus, the SEDOs and Actions here have been designed to realise the potential of the economic support levers available to Meath County Council and its stakeholder organisations in facilitating enterprise, economic development and employment within the county. They are also designed to be compatible with the overall Vision annunciated in the Meath CDP 2013-2019 and with the Economic Vision set out in the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022, namely to:

"Stimulate and Support a Competitive, Dynamic and Innovative Local Economy to Best Meet the Needs and Ambitions of People, Entrepreneurs/Enterprises and Communities in County Meath"

The SEDOs, Actions and Outcomes are based on the following principles and foundations:
- ***To address the key economic issues identified for County Meath***, which comprise ensuring (1) more employment within the county, (2) broader base of economic activities and employment opportunities within the county, (3) addressing the issue of outbound commuting, thereby contributing to the goal of enabling sustainable communities in the county, (4) enhancing educational attainment among those living in Meath, (5) making the county more attractive as an investment location and (6) proclaiming the economic strengths and opportunities of Meath, which will in turn serve to reinforce (1)-(5) in a virtuous cycle of sustainable development;
- ***Having appreciation of what local authorities can realistically achieve in respect of local economic development***, which is to say to facilitate enterprise and employment development within their respective areas through various practical actions using the levers at their disposal;
- Accordingly, every one of the SEDOs and Actions outlined are geared towards the objective of ***facilitating enterprise and employment development within County Meath***. The role of the Council and other public support bodies is and will be to facilitate the environment in which entrepreneurs and businesses of all kinds will actually create the vast majority of jobs within Meath during the lifetime of the LECP.
- Thus, the words "Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath" begin each and every one of the 15 SEDOs.

The SEDOs and Actions presented are designed to support all forms of enterprises in Meath during the lifetime of the LECP, and beyond, and are designed to maximise the levers under the control of Meath County Council and its partner stakeholders.

The SEDOs are also reflective of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats(SWOT) of the local Meath economy, which are presented overleaf.

Integrated Strategy

The LECP involves both an economic and a community element. The values that provide the starting point for the LECP provided the basis to secure an integration of these two elements. Many of the actions under each of the LECP areas are socio-economic in nature and will require an integrated approach to their implementation. In particular, these are:

- SCO 1.2 Increased levels of employment and employability;
- SEDO 2.3 Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through effective educational infrastructure provision;
- SEDO 2.8 Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through the various economic and community initiatives throughout Meath via access to LEADER funding;
- SEDO 2.12 Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath by promotion of the use of energy hubs, energy efficient business processes, practices and buildings;
- SCO 3.2 To enhance environmental protection, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and action for a low carbon future, and to increase the range of transition activities;
- SCO 4.1 To Reduce Educational Disadvantage;
- SCO 4.3 To preserve Meath's heritage and enable appropriate access;
- SCO 4.5 To Increase IT Access for all groups;
- SCO 5.1 To stimulate and support interagency and collaborative approaches by the Public Sector;
- SCO 5.2 To support internal capacity for the LECP.
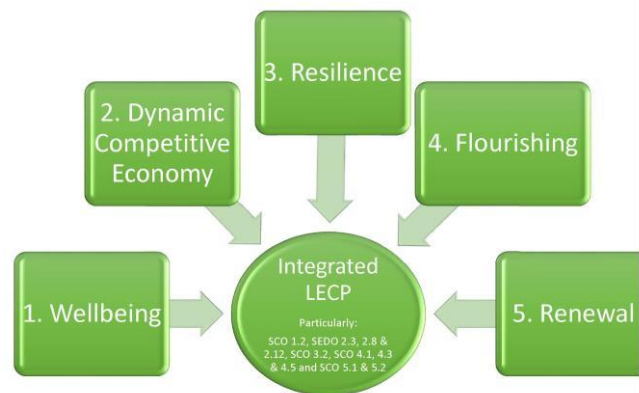
In that regard, retention of the principle initiated by the LECP Advisory Group (where there are representatives of the LCDC and the Economic SPC) is crucial to maintain the integrated approach. The goal of public sector renewal and the actions outlined to achieve this provide the means to secure an ongoing integration of these two fields of endeavour.

Planning Frame

The community component of this plan is developed around three types of action, Flagship Actions, Gap Actions, and Seed Actions.

- **Flagship actions** are high profile, ambitious, and large in scale. They pursue the core developmental trajectories identified.
- **Gap actions** address key gaps in public policy and provision. These gaps have been identified during the planning and consultation process.
- **Seed actions** are small scale and innovative. They create the conditions for identifying and responding either to new needs or to old needs in new ways.

The economic actions are developed around six categories, as follows:

- **Internal engagement** – promotion of a culture that supports sustainable economic development practices within Meath County Council
- **External engagement** – engage with state and regional agencies, and Higher Education Institutions to stimulate economic development in Meath
- **Spatial implementation** – promote our towns and strategic employment sites as the economic

drivers for employment in Meath, while acknowledging the role of the rural economy

- **Spatial implementation** - identify and support investment in infrastructure and services that enable and deliver economic development
- **Fiscal Incentives** – Examine financial incentives designed to aid the delivery of the employment generation
- **Marketing** – Develop a marketing plan and initiatives aimed at promoting the economic strategy

The delivery of this plan is rooted in interagency cooperation and cross-sectoral collaboration. The mechanism for this is *Development Partnerships*.

- Development Partnerships draw in the agencies and organisations that are relevant for the particular actions. One organisation commits to convene the Development Partnership.
- They are based on agreed values, commitment and objectives. They provide the space for expertise and resources to be pooled behind these shared objectives in implementing the particular action. An underpinning principle will be that all partners are equal.

County Meath

Local Economic & Community Plan

2016-2021

1. Wellbeing

Goal

To promote and secure wellbeing of all people and communities in the County.

Core Concept

Wellbeing is where people can meet their basic needs, have a sense of purpose, enjoy financial and personal security, engage in meaningful and rewarding work, and have good physical and mental health.

Sustainable Community Objectives

The goal of Wellbeing opens up significant and wide ranging issues with five Sustainable Community Objectives identified for work on this goal:

SCO 1.1   To reduce the levels of poverty being experienced.

SCO 1.2   To increase levels of employment and employability

SCO 1.3   To improve health outcomes

SCO 1.4   To prevent and reduce homelessness

SCO 1.5   To increase perceptions and experience of community safety.

SCO 1.1 To reduce the levels of poverty being experienced

1.1.1 Flagship Action - Early Intervention

Purpose

To break the cycle of disadvantage in areas and/or communities where there are concentrations of disadvantage.

Activity

- To identify the areas and communities where the concentration of poverty and social exclusion is highest.
- Identify two communities, experiencing high levels of child poverty, within which to develop and implement an Area Based Approach Childhood Programme. This will involve early intervention with children and families in disadvantaged areas to ensure basic needs are met and to improve outcomes for children and young people. It will intensify and expand the services available for children and young people and their parents/families, enhance supports for service providers and further develop interagency cooperation. This will be a community led initiative, supporting the implementation of *Better Outcomes Brighter Futures*.
- DSP will continue to support low income families through income and other supports.

Outcomes

- Improved outcomes for children and young people and their parents/families.
- Enhanced, evidence based, supports for parenting.

1.1.2 Gap Action - Income Adequacy

Purpose

To address income inadequacy.

Activity

- Implement a preventative programme to build budget management skills at an early age, including a life skills programme to be delivered through the schools that would prepare young people for independent living.
- Develop interagency action to address money lenders and provide access to alternative sources of credit.
- Develop supports for people who are constrained by mortgage debt.
- Provide education/awareness raising about the Mortgage to Rent and other schemes.
- Roll out of personal micro-credit scheme by Credit Union to help eligible borrowers to access low-cost credit, thus combating moneylenders.

Outcomes

- Improved budget management skills from an early age.
- Increased awareness of and access to appropriate sources of credit.
- Improve the situation of those constrained by mortgage debt.

1.1.3 Seed Action - Enhanced Evidence Based Service Provision

Purpose

To ensure that all agencies and organisations have the data and information required to underpin planning, making the case for resources, and focusing service provision.

Activity

- Sustain, and keep up to date, a socio-economic profile of County Meath that would make use of census and other sources of data to present a comprehensive, accessible report on the county. The profile would be repeated for census periods and would make all data available at county, ED and SAP level.
- Produce, and keep up to date, a gap analysis that maps the services to those experiencing poverty in the county and identifies where gaps in services exist.
- Provide ongoing training to those in key positions within the statutory, community and voluntary sectors on the collation and analysis of a range of data sources that contribute to maintaining high quality socio-economic data.

Outcomes

- Increased level of evidence based decision making within agencies and organisations.
- Increased capacity across different sectors concerned with the provision of evidence based supports, including developmental supports and service provision for individuals and communities.

SCO 1.2 Increased levels of employment and employability

1.2.1 Flagship Action - New Opportunities for the Long-Term Unemployed

Purpose

To ensure the economic strategy for the County addresses the diversity of people experiencing long-term unemployment.

Activity

- An inter-agency Employment and Enterprise Taskgroup will be established to develop a range of actions, supports and services to ensure that long-term unemployed people benefit from the developments on foot of the economic strategy.
- Steps would be taken ensure training provision to the diverse groups that make up the long-term unemployed and the unemployed is matched with new opportunities in initiatives such as the Boyne Valley Hub, High Tech Campus and tourism.
- Steps would be taken to ensure access for diverse groups to training and employment services by taking account of and addressing the particular needs, experience and situation of these groups, in particular people with disabilities, Travellers, migrants, carers, lone parents and women.
- DSP will open an Intreo Service across two offices in Navan. DSP will continue to engage with unemployed people in a timely manner and support customers into employment, training and further education via Intreo, JobPath & the Job Club, and will identify suitable individuals to avail of SICAP. DSP will continue to engage with employers to publicise job vacancies via Jobsireland.ie, support recruitment of suitable employees, and will provide financial support to employers through JobsPlus.

Outcomes

- Decreased levels of long-term unemployment.

1.2.2 Flagship Action - Empower the Long-Term Unemployed

Purpose

To enable the voice and perspective of unemployed people to influence policy and provision.

Activity

- Develop a Centre for the Unemployed to enable long-term unemployed people and unemployed people to identify and respond to structural issues they face. It will serve as a base to provide welcoming, effective and inclusive support services governed by unemployed people. It will inform the development of new access routes to education, training, and employment to respond to the diversity of the long-term unemployed including lone parents, people with disabilities, Travellers, and carers. Unemployed people will be supported to identify their own ambitions, needs and the supports they require.

Outcomes

- An active, articulate and innovative centre for the unemployed.
- Increased levels of engagement by long-term unemployed people.

1.2.3 Gap Action - Access to Entrepreneurship

Purpose

To enhance support for women and for diverse groups to entrepreneurial opportunities.

Activity

- Develop programmes of support to encourage women's entrepreneurship, migrant entrepreneurship and Traveller entrepreneurship, to address the particular barriers they face, and to mobilise the particular potential they offer.
- Develop a social enterprise programme with a capacity to engage, support and enable entrepreneurs, from among the long-term unemployed and other groups experiencing inequality, to establish enterprises that combine goals of economic gain with social benefit.
- Enhance the capacity of LEO to develop broader access to mentoring services for social, micro, and small enterprises established by people from communities experiencing inequality and disadvantage. There is a high level of demand on the mentoring services of LEO. This demand will be met to ensure access to entrepreneurship.
- Develop a programme of support for business, enterprise and employment through the Library Service on foot of the learning from their current Business, Enterprise and Employment project and make specific links for this programme to this activity.
- DSP will continue to support unemployed people into self-employment through the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance and other supports.

Outcomes

- Social, micro and small enterprises established by women, migrants and Travellers, and by people from groups experiencing inequality and disadvantage.

1.2.4 Gap Action - Access to Opportunity

Purpose

To enable those distant from the labour market to explore and access new opportunities.

Activity

- Implement an enabling opportunities initiative that would draw from and expand work being done through SICAP to support individuals to take opportunities in employment, education or personal development. It would be concerned to convert knowledge, skills and experience into earning opportunities by providing resources and supports designed around individual people.
- Develop initiatives to support groups in Meath to access funding under the positive action measure for women returning to the workforces and women's entrepreneurship run by the Department of Justice and Equality under the PEIL Operational Programme.

Outcomes

- Increased take up of education, training and employment opportunities by those distant from the labour market.

1.2.5 Seed Action - Progression from Precarious Work

Purpose

To enable progression for those in precarious work.

Activity

- Devise and support new progression paths out of precarious work and inform those in precarious work of these and already existing pathways. Deploy flexibility in creating access routes to new supports for people in low paid and precarious employment. Address the particular obstacles for women to progress out of precarious work.

Outcomes

- Increased participation by those in precarious work in services to support progression to higher skilled, better paid work.

SCO 1.3 To improve health outcomes

1.3.1 Flagship Action - Community Health Initiatives

Purpose

To enhance physical health, mental health and wellbeing outcomes through community based initiatives, using the social determinants model, while also recognising the impact of health inequalities on health and wellbeing of marginalised communities and their particular needs.

Activity

- Community based initiatives will be stimulated and supported in communities experiencing inequality and disadvantage to enhance access to health services, improve take up of screening services, promote healthy living, and bring health issues of concern within the community to the attention of the health services. Smoking reduction, prevention and reduction of alcohol related harm, healthy eating and active living would be promoted.

Outcome

- Increased and appropriate uptake of health services, in particular screening services, by people within communities experiencing inequality and disadvantage.
- A reduction in unhealthy behaviours and an increase in healthy behaviours within these communities.

1.3.2 Flagship Action - County-Wide Obesity Initiative

Purpose

To enhance physical health, mental health and wellbeing and to tackle obesity through physical activity.

Activity

- Develop and implement a county -wide obesity initiative that will work through the schools, youth clubs and community-based groups to improve access to physical activity will be developed and implemented. There will be a focus on non-competitive sports and recreation and in targeting disadvantaged communities.

Outcome

- Improved access to a range of physical activities across the lifecycle
- Improved physical health, mental health and wellbeing outcomes
- Obesity level reduced.

1.3.3 Gap Action - Mental Health of Young People

Purpose

To increase access to appropriate mental health services for young people.

Activity

- Expand the services of Jigsaw to enable it to meet the demand from young people in the County and to improve understanding of mental illness and information on availability of services to support and respond to individuals, carers and families.

Outcome

- Increased uptake of Jigsaw services.
- Improved referral to other relevant services.

1.3.4 Seed Action - Addiction Services for Young People

Purpose

To establish addiction services for young people.

Activity

- To establish an initiative to address substance misuse among young people that combines treatment and support with enforcement and prevention. Particular attention will be given to providing addiction services to the under 18s. This initiative would be piloted in Trim.

Outcome

- Enhanced uptake of addiction services by young people.
- Reduction in drug misuse by young people.

1.3.5 Seed Action - Driver

Purpose

To secure implementation of actions related to marginalised communities who experience health inequalities.

Activity

- To identify a HSE lead person to drive healthy Ireland in the County. This role would include a developmental and policy focus on community health.

Outcome

- Enhanced activity in the County under Healthy Ireland.

SCO 1.4 To Prevent and Reduce Homelessness

1.4.1 Flagship Action - Social Housing Plan

Purpose
To increase provision of social housing

Activity
- Develop and promote the implementation of a social housing and tenancy sustainment plan for the County to meet the needs of the County. This will focus on the needs of those currently homeless and those vulnerable to homelessness. It will also focus on providing supports to maintain tenancies and ensure appropriate accommodation standards.

Outcomes
- Increased provision of social housing.
- Support for tenancy sustainment.

1.4.2 Gap Action – Evidence Base

Purpose
To increase evidence base for action on housing issues

Activity
- Undertake an action based research initiative to identify the range of housing and accommodation issues impacting on people across both the public and private sector. This would provide the evidence base for the development of a comprehensive response to housing and accommodation including a model of support in the County, gaps in services and innovation in response to these issues.

Outcomes
- Availability of evidence based knowledge to inform policy and provision.

1.4.3 Gap Action – Housing Support

Purpose
To enable people to sustain necessary housing supports

Activity
- Maximise the potential of HAP as a labour activation measure which allows individuals to take up full time employment without losing Housing support.

Outcomes
- Increased numbers availing of Housing support.

1.4.4 Gap Action – Tenant Purchase

Purpose

To increase provision of social housing

Activity

- Utilise the new Tenant Purchase Scheme to increase home ownership.

Outcomes

- Increased home ownership.

1.4.5 Gap Action - Social Housing

Purpose

To maximise provision of social housing

Activity

- Maximise the provision of Social Housing Units through collaboration with the Approved Housing Bodies.

Outcomes

- Increased provision of social housing.

1.4.6 Seed Action - A Housing NGO

Purpose

To build greater priority for housing issues and more effective responses through advocacy for homeless people.

Activity

- Establish a County level non-governmental organisation to bring forward the full range of housing issues for the different groups in the County, to devise and model, as appropriate, innovation in response to these issues, to seek responses to these issues from the appropriate authorities, and to promote and support housing and tenant rights.

Outcome

- Greater visibility for and understanding of the full range of housing issues.

SCO 1.5 To Increase Perceptions and Experience of Community Safety

1.5.1 Gap Action - Extend Good Practice

Purpose

To expand community safety programmes.

Activity

- Extend the 'Crime Ambassador' programme that supports older people to develop crime prevention strategies and extend 'The Way We Were' programme that focuses on local older people and young people working jointly on projects throughout the County.
- Underpin and strengthen the work of the Joint Policing Committees and the development and implementation of the Joint Policing Committee strategy for County Meath.

Outcomes

- Increased coverage of community safety programmes.

2. Dynamic Competitive Economy

Goal

Stimulate and support a dynamic competitive economy to best meet the needs and aspirations of the people and communities in the County.

Core Concept

Dynamic competitive economy is where production, distribution and consumption are supported and stimulated with creativity, innovation, and rigour to be resilient and to best meet the needs and aspirations of the people of Meath.

Objectives

Fifteen Sustainable Economic Development Objectives are identified as central to achieving this goal:

SEDO 2.1   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through a well-resourced research and economic development support office within Meath County Council

SEDO 2.2   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath by embedding an economic and employment development ethos throughout all departments and functions within Meath County Council, including among elected reps of the Council.

SEDO 2.3   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through effective educational infrastructure provision – potential new tertiary educational infrastructure & third level outreach facilities

SEDO 2.4   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath by building on the unique opportunity from Kells Local Electoral Area (LEA) being included in the current EU Regional Aid Map 2014-2020

SEDO 2.5   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath by proactive promotion – twin/sister project learning and dissemination

SEDO 2.6   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through proactive promotion – promotion of the county's key visitor attractions

SEDO 2.7   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through giving consideration to the development of a CEDRA REDZ (Rural Economic Development Zone) in the county

SEDO 2.8   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through the various economic and community initiatives throughout Meath via access to LEADER funding.

SEDO 2.9   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through a streamlined and efficient local planning process

SEDO 2.10   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through effective infrastructure provision – sites and property solutions for employment generation

SEDO 2.11   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through effective infrastructure provision – high speed broadband.

SEDO 2.12   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath by promotion of the use of energy hubs, energy efficient business processes, practices and buildings

SEDO 2.13   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath by enhancing the environments and promotion of Meath's main town centers as retailing, visitor and employment centers

SEDO 2.14   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through effective infrastructure provision – financial incentives aimed at making Meath a more attractive investment location

SEDO 2.15   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through regularly promoting and espousing the achievements on economic development in the county

SEDO 2.1 Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through a well-resourced research and economic development support office within Meath County Council.

Purpose

Internal Engagement – Create and promote a culture that supports sustainable economic development practices within Meath County Council.

Activity

- Provision of a well-resourced research economic and enterprise office for Meath County Council to develop in house expertise to support the Council (corporate goals), the Planning and Enterprise SPC and to promote best practices for job creation initiatives.

Outcomes

- Fully operating & resourced economic office in place first year of adopting the LECP
- Unified Economic and Enterprise/LEO Team.

SEDO 2.2 Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath by embedding an economic and employment development ethos throughout all departments and functions within Meath County Council, including among elected reps of the Council.

Purpose

Internal Engagement – Create and promote a culture that supports sustainable economic development practices within Meath County Council.

Activity

- Embed an Economic Development ethos and culture into all Departments of Meath County Council and ensure all staff and elected members are aware of the role of Local Authorities as a lead agent at local level to create jobs.

Outcomes

- Culture of economic and jobs growth throughout Meath County Council achieved
- Engage via staff presentation with all departments/service areas at Meath County Council by the end of first year of adoption of the LECP

SEDO 2.3 Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through effective educational infrastructure provision – potential new tertiary educational infrastructure & third level outreach facilities.

Purpose

External Engagement – Engage and work with State Agencies, Regional Agencies, Higher Education Institutions and Local Enterprise Agencies to stimulate and grow economic development in Meath.

Activity

- Aid and support the collaborative working of all education and training providers with relevant stakeholders and local employers to develop and deliver targeted responses to skills and employment needs and to determine the feasibility of establishing Third Level outreach facilities
- Support the development of Dunboyne College of Further Education, which will allow the college to expand and serve the strong demand for places in more vocationally oriented third level education in its environs
- Promote the provision of third level education and training courses within Meath by facilitating higher education institutions in the vicinity of Meath to provide specialist education and training

Outcomes

- Carry out skills audit/needs among local employers with survey during Year 1 of adoption of the LECP
- Identify progress in regard to Dunboyne FE College-new site/building, independent boll and student numbers growth
- Number of HE and training courses provided in County Meath at the end of each year

SEDO 2.4 Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath by building on the unique opportunity from Kells Local Electoral Area (LEA) being included in the current EU Regional Aid Map 2014-2020.

Purpose

External Engagement –Collaborate with wealth creators and business innovators who have the capacity to assist in job creation and entrepreneurship.

Activity

- Build upon the status of Kells as part of EU designated regional aid area and explore available funding streams to support enterprise within Meath.
- Promote awareness of this unique development for Kells and the county as a whole by outlining the enhanced State financial aid on offer for small, medium and large businesses

Outcomes

- EU funding programmes accessed & funding drawdown
- Enhanced financial support for businesses
- Employment attributed to the funding secured

SEDO 2.5 Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath by proactive promotion – twin/sister project learning and dissemination.

Purpose

External Engagement –Collaborate with wealth creators and business innovators who have the capacity to assist in job creation and entrepreneurship.

Activity

- Sister City Projects – work in partnership focusing on sharing and learning best practices to boost economic development.
- Build on the well-established and growing relationship between Meath and Cary (USA), the county's twin by considering Cary's successes and how they were achieved

Outcomes

- Best practices in relation to supporting business and facilitating employment creation identified
- Action Plan with Cary (USA) developed
- Sister Agreement with Chinese Group established

SEDO 2.6 Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through proactive promotion – promotion of the county's key visitor attractions.

Purpose

External Engagement –Collaborate with wealth creators and business innovators who have the capacity to assist in job creation and entrepreneurship.

Activity

- Support the promotion of key visitor attractions in Meath, including the Boyne Valley as part of the 'Ireland's Ancient East'
- Develop the Boyne Valley as a recognised 'must go to' destination in national and international tourism.
- Support the Tourism Trade to attract increased business and generate additional bed nights

Outcomes

- Boyne Valley Region integrated into 'Ireland's Ancient East'
- Awareness of Meath comparative visitor attractions and events heightened
- Number of visitors to Meath increased
- Meath's reputation as a visitor destination enhanced

SEDO 2.7 Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through giving consideration to the development of a CEDRA REDZ (Rural Economic Development Zone) in the county.

Purpose

External Engagement –Collaborate with wealth creators and business innovators who have the capacity to assist in job creation and entrepreneurship.

Activity

- Review the provisions of the CERDA reports and examine the potential for a pilot CEDRA REDZ in Meath (rural economic development zones) or similar concepts to enhance the capacity of local economic development at sub county and town level.

Outcomes

- The hot desking and innovation space within Kells Enterprise Centre operational & economic impact achieved
- Community led economic development supported
- Sustaining more isolate/rural communities by supporting more jobs locally

SEDO 2.8   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through the various economic and community initiatives throughout Meath via access to LEADER funding.

Purpose

External Engagement –Collaborate with wealth creators and business innovators who have the capacity to assist in job creation and entrepreneurship.

Activity

- Ensure integration and consistency of the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022 and the operation of the LEADER programme.

Outcomes

- Close collaboration between MCC Economic & Enterprise Development and Meath Partnership achieved
- Opportunities for enterprise development through available funding streams maximised

SEDO 2.9 Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through a streamlined and efficient local planning process.

Purpose

Spatial Implementation – Promote our towns and strategic employment sites as the economic drivers for employment in Meath while acknowledging the role of the rural economy.

Activity

- Promote the hierarchy of economic centers and targeted sectors in Meath with the objective of facilitating significant new enterprise development.
- Examine pilot strategic sites to advance in Navan, Ashbourne, Drogheda, Kells and Dunboyne including targeted sectors and cluster opportunities. Develop and implement best practice to advance same.
- Ensure local planning processes in place aimed at ensuring a flexible and business friendly system that will facilitate employment opportunities.

Outcomes

- Sustainable development promoted
- Economic growth within these towns advanced
- Meath a business friendly environment

SEDO 2.10   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through effective infrastructure provision – sites and property solutions for employment generation.

Purpose

Spatial Implementation – Promote our towns and strategic employment sites as the economic drivers for employment in Meath while acknowledging the role of the rural economy.

Activity

- Promote workspaces for indigenous and/or rural enterprise development.
- Compile and regularly update database comprising:
- sites for employment generation and
- workspaces available in business/industrial parks, office & commercial developments, incubation and research facilities
- Advance suitable site solutions to ensure developments meet market needs with high quality infrastructure and utility provision.
- Develop and operate best practice procedures to enter into public private partnerships.

Outcomes

- Development of Incubation space for Enterprise
- Increase in business floor space (office/industrial/retail etc) within the County
- Levels of vacancy of existing workspaces reduced
- Suitable sites available for development.
- Opportunities of public private partnerships maximised.

SEDO 2.11   Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through effective infrastructure provision – high speed broadband.

Purpose

Spatial Implementation – Identify and support investment in infrastructure and services that enable and deliver economic development.

Activity

- To encourage the further co-ordinated and focused development and extension of telecommunications infrastructure including broadband connectivity in the county as a means of improving economic competitiveness and quality of life.

Outcomes

- Continue to encourage and positively influence infrastructure improvements in the Region
- Seamless access to infrastructure and services
- Adequate telecommunications infrastructure in place

SEDO 2.12 Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath by promotion of the use of energy hubs, energy efficient business processes, practices and buildings.

Purpose

Spatial Implementation – Identify and support investment in infrastructure and services that enable and deliver economic development.

Activity

- Promote the use of energy hubs/energy efficient business processes, practices and buildings.
- Consider the establishment of energy hubs in the county through pilot schemes and investigate the possibility of funding to support such schemes

Outcomes

- Enhanced energy efficiency
- Cost savings achieved
- Enhanced business competitiveness
- Contribution towards renewable energy targets

SEDO 2.13 Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath by enhancing the environments and promotion of Meath's main town centers as retailing, visitor and employment centers.

Purpose

Spatial Implementation – Identify and support investment in infrastructure and services that enable and deliver economic development.

Activity

- Enhance and promote the role of Town Centers to better facilitate economic development.
- Ensure that the built and natural environments of Meath's main urban centers and other towns are as attractive as possible for retail customers, businesses and investors

Outcomes

- Implementation plan for the Town Centre Development Programme with Retail Excellence Ireland completed
- Economic growth created and vibrant urban areas.
- Enhanced retail spending locally

SEDO 2.14 Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through effective infrastructure provision – financial incentives aimed at making Meath a more attractive investment location.

Purpose

Fiscal Incentives – Examine financial incentives designed to aid the delivery of the employment generation.

Activity

- Meath County Council to consider the possibility and where appropriate, introduce financial incentives designed to aid the delivery of the employment generation in specific locations/sites.
- Compile & maintain inter-county information on levies and charges in respect of economic development planning, to assess the relative competitive position against other local authorities

Outcomes

- Meath's competitive position enhanced
- MCC's Development Contribution Scheme reviewed

SEDO 2.15 Facilitate enterprise and employment development within County Meath through regularly promoting and espousing the achievements on economic development in the county.

Purpose

Marketing –Develop a marketing plan and initiatives aimed at promoting the economic strategy.

Activity

- Develop and implement an integrated marketing strategy for the County
- Promote and market Meath as a location for economic development
- Publish the Economic Strategy in a user friendly format incorporating the key components of background documents.

Outcomes

- Marketing Plan for target audiences developed and published
- Promotional material for key strategic sites beginning with the IDA in Navan and Drogheda published.

Goal

We will build and enable the resilience of all people and communities in the County.

Core Concept

Resilience involves people having the capacity to move beyond survival in the face of change by having access to and being able to deploy the necessary human, material, financial, and physical resources to withstand challenges, adapt in the face of these challenges, and build human progress on foot of such challenges.

Objectives

Three Sustainable Community Objectives are identified as central to achieving this goal:

SCO 3.1   To expand and strengthen the community infrastructure.

SCO 3.2   To enhance environmental protection and increase the range of transition activities.

SCO 3.3   To address the specific needs of particular groups

SCO 3.1 To Expand and Strengthen the Community Infrastructure

3.1.1 Flagship Action - Renew Our Community Infrastructure

Purpose

To enable and empower an independent, resourced, empowered, effective, vibrant and diverse community sector, encompassing community, voluntary and environmental organisations.

Activity

- Support and resource the emergence of new community sector organisations where these are required and the strengthening of existing community sector organisations where this is necessary.
- Support the establishment of a specific organisation to bring forward the interests of women and a specific organisation to bring forward the interests of people with disabilities.
- Support and resource the development and implementation of community plans, area based and group based, through this community sector.
- Support and resource a range of development and training opportunities for community sector organisations in areas such as community leadership, community development, and analysis of social issues.
- Develop and resource a networking of community sector organisations to promote the sharing of resources, the development of joint policies and projects, new levels and forms of coordination, and the stimulation of new thinking and innovation.
- Obtain the necessary resources and employ a team of two community workers that would be directed by an independent steering committee to drive these activities and other activities required.
- DSP will continually review Community Employment (CE) Programmes to ensure that outcomes delivered are effective and ensure that CE is flexible in terms of delivering optimum outcomes at a local level.

Outcomes

- A community sector that is broader in the range of organisations included and stronger in the level of resources these organisations have access to.
- A community sector better able to analyse and respond to change that is happening in their

communities and to engage with policies and programmes to ensure benefit for their communities.

- A community sector impact that is evident in effective local and community development and County wide policy and programmes.

3.1.2 Gap Action - Accommodate Our Community Infrastructure

Purpose

To expand the range of accessible and affordable facilities for community sector organisations.

Activity

- Map the needs for community based facilities.
- Develop and implement a programme to develop community based facilities found to be required including through new builds, adaptation of current facilities, making facilities that are idle at particular times available or refurbishing old buildings, or creating hubs to provide space for community organisation activity.
- Make community based facilities available in a manner that is affordable and accessible, allows for pooling of resources between community sector organisations, and addresses the diversity of needs and usages.

Outcomes

- A plan for addressing the diverse needs for community facilities.
- New community facilities in place and in use.
- A wider range of and quality for community based activities enabled and pursued.

3.1.3 Seed Action - Information on Our Community Infrastructure

Purpose

To inform and empower community sector organisations.

Activity

- An online resource for community sector organisations and other stakeholders that provides up-to-date information on community sector organisations working in different areas and communities; contact points for these organisations; information on different issues and activities that these organisations are engaged in; information on supports available and becoming available for these organisations; and information on issues of concern for these organisations.

Outcomes

- The establishment and management of an online resource.
- The use of the online resource by community sector organisations

SCO 3.2 To Enhance Environmental Protection, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, and Action for a Low Carbon Future, and to Increase the Range of Transition Activities

3.2.1 Flagship Actions - Community Renewable Energy

Purpose

To increase and evolve the production and distribution of renewable energy at local community level.

Activity

- Develop a community renewable energy fund and support service.
- Stimulate and enable local community engagement with renewable energy potential and possibilities for community initiatives in this field.
- Support a range of locally controlled community led renewable energy initiatives. These initiatives would directly benefit the local community and would not include developer led initiatives.

Outcomes

- Reduced dependence of fossil fuels.
- Enhanced access for communities to cheap renewable energy sources.

3.2.2 Gap Action - House Retrofits

Purpose

To increase retrofitting of non-local authority houses in disadvantaged communities to improve insulation, enhance heating systems, and reduce energy use.

Activity

- Establish, support and resource a social economy enterprise to retrofit houses to raise the BER rating and to improve the heating systems in the homes of people living in poverty.

Outcome

- Create employment within disadvantaged communities.
- Homes insulated.
- Fuel poverty reduced.

.1.1 Gap Action - Community Transport

Purpose

To expand shared and community transport initiatives

Activity

- Support Meath Flexibus to plan for and implement an expansion of its activities.
- Promote car-pooling and expand with access to bus lanes and with places made available to meet and leave cars.
- Improve and expand bicycle lanes, in particular on school routes.

Outcome

- Improved access to transport.
- Reduced use of individual cars.

3.2.3 Gap Action - Public Transport

Purpose

To identify, highlight, and address the issues relation to poor public transport and to significantly improve the infrastructure and accessibility to the public.

Activity

- Establish a forum for transport users and representative groups will be established to identify and work on issues of accessibility and availability of public transport.
- Highlight the issues identified in relation to public transport, including issues of accessibility, availability and affordability.
- Negotiate with the National Transport Authority, Bus Éireann and other relevant companies to address the issues.
- Highlight issues in relation to public transport infrastructure and accessibility through the community representative on the Transportation SPC.
- Transportation SPC linkage group to participate in public consultation processes in relation to public transportation strategies.

Outcome

- Improved accessibility and availability of public transport.

3.2.4 Gap Action - Community Production

Purpose

To contribute to food security by enabling community activity in food production and processing.

Activity

- Provide support for the further development and tending of community gardens to produce food for a healthy diet, to engage people experiencing social inclusion in 'growing their own', to enable healthy eating in disadvantaged communities, and to make productive use of derelict sites and green spaces in these communities.
- Support microenterprises in food production and processing.

Outcome

- Increased levels of community activity within disadvantaged communities in food production and processing.

3.2.5 Gap Action – Community Protection of the natural environment

Purpose

To support and enable activity to protect, conserve and enhance the county's natural heritage and biodiversity.

Activity

- Develop and implement biodiversity awareness, education and management initiatives within schools, communities and the business sector.
- Establish a Community Biodiversity Scheme to support the development and implementation of community biodiversity action plans across the County.
- Stimulate and support the development of more communal nature reserves under this scheme that underpin collective action to protect and enhance biodiversity and provide a focus for educational events.
- Provide linkages between key green infrastructure resources through multi-functional green corridors which enhance biodiversity, extend access and recreation opportunities.
- Undertake habitat mapping of the County.

Outcome

- Increased levels of community activity in nature protection.
- No of biodiversity initiatives completed.
- No of individuals /organisations who complete training.

3.2.6 Seed Action - Community Environmental Awareness

Purpose

To create greater awareness of and engagement with environmental issues and activities at community level.

Activity

- Implement an active environmental awareness programme that involves and encourages a community and business participation, including using a community development approach. Test out and apply a community arts approach that engages people in community settings.

Outcome

- Increased community and business involvement in environmental activities.

Purpose

To enhance the capacity of Meath County Council to lead on and drive environmental sustainability policies and programmes for the County.

Activity

- Appoint a Biodiversity Officer in Meath County Council, within the confines of public sector recruitment policy.
- Appoint a Sustainability Officer in Meath County Council, within the confines of public sector recruitment policy.

Outcome

- Positions established.
- Broader and more effective action on biodiversity protection, including implementation of the biodiversity plan for the County.
- Broader and more effective action on environmental sustainability.

SCO 3.3 To Address the Specific Needs of Particular Groups

3.3.1 Flagship Action - Young People's Strategy

Purpose

To develop a strategic and comprehensive approach to the issues affecting young people.

Activity

- Develop a County wide youth strategy to improve the situation, experience and standing of young people and the different groups of young people in the County, including a focus on the development of facilities, support for youth services, and the creation of new opportunities for young people.
- Link with and integrate the work and plans of the LMETB in this strategy.
- Obtain the necessary support and employ a team of two community youth workers that would be directed by an independent steering committee to drive the strategy.
- DSP will engage with other organisations including ETB to support young people back into education and training and will develop programmes to support those furthest from employment into employment through supported employment initiatives.

Outcome

- Greater visibility and understanding for the issues affecting young people.
- Concerted and effective responses to the situation of young people.
- Increased level and quality of youth work interventions.

.1.2 Gap Action - Achieving Integration

Purpose

To support and secure the implementation of the Meath Integration Action Plan.

Activity

- Support the re-establishment and operation of the Meath Intercultural Network.
- Provide seed funding to enable and stimulate the implementation of the Action Plan.
- Secure and support the participation of Black and minority ethnic representatives in local decision-making structures, in particular the LCDC and the PPN.

Outcome

- Enhanced situation and experience for Black and minority ethnic people.
- Increased influence and voice for Black and minority ethnic people in local decision-making.

3.3.2 Achieving Inclusion for People with Disabilities

Purpose

To support and secure the participation of people with disabilities in their local communities.

Activity

- Increase supports for disability services in particular to enhance access to personal assistant and home support hours to enable independent living for people with disabilities.
- Increase supports for the reconfiguration of day services to people with disabilities to secure their full participation in their local communities.
- Take action to progress the implementation of the Congregated Settings Working Group Report and reduce the number of people with disabilities in these settings in Meath.

Outcome

- Improved contribution to community life from people with disabilities.

3.3.3 Gap Action - Asylum Responses

Purpose

To improve the situation and experience of asylum seekers, those with leave to remain, those relocated from other countries, and programme refugees.

Activity

- Establish interagency action on the health, education, labour market and training needs of asylum seekers, those with leave to remain, those relocated from other countries, and programme refugees in the County.
- Identify and respond to the particular needs of those living in direct provision, including targeted support for young people, child centred supports and recreational supports.
- Resourcing a community work initiative with asylum seekers to support them in representing their issues.

Outcome

- Increased participation by asylum seekers, those with leave to remain, those relocated from other countries, and programme refugees in health, education, accommodation, employment and training and language initiatives.
- Increased participation by and support for people living in Direct Provision

3.3.4 Gap Action – Family Carer Supports

Purpose

To improve the situation and experience of family carers and expand the range and availability of services to them.

Activity

- Expand the capacity of the Carer's Association to provide support to family carers by providing for a full-time family carer support officer.
- Expand the geographical spread of supports for family carers through the County.
- Expand the supports to family carers, in particular in home respite services, health and information workshops, and the availability of a family carers' centre.

Outcome
- Increased participation by family carers in society.
- Enhanced supports to family carers in their caring work.

3.3.5 Seed Action - Older People in North Meath

Purpose
To develop area based responses to poverty experienced by older people.

Activity
- Establish interagency action to build on, expand and enhance current activities to respond to the social, care, cultural, transport, safety, accommodation, social service, and economic needs of older people in the north Meath area.
- Develop learning from this initiative to expand activities across the County.

Outcome
- Enhanced situation and experience for older people in the target area.

3.3.6 Seed Action – Lone Parents in North Meath

Purpose
To develop area based responses to poverty experienced by lone parents.

Activity
- Establish interagency action to build on, expand and enhance current activities to respond to the specific needs of lone parents in Navan and in Kells.
- Develop learning from this initiative to expand activities across the County.

Outcome
- Enhanced situation and experience for lone parents in the target areas.

Goal

To stimulate and empower a flourishing for all people and communities in the County.

Core Concept

Flourishing is where people have the capabilities necessary to live lives that they have reason to value, including capabilities to access and deploy knowledge and learning, to access and produce culture, and to enjoy recreation and leisure.

Objectives

Six Sustainable Community Objectives were identified under the flourishing concept.

SCO 4.1   To reduce educational disadvantage.
SCO 4.2   To further develop community cultural action.
SCO 4.3   To preserve Meath's heritage and enable appropriate access.
SCO 4.4   To increase participation in recreation, sport and leisure
SCO 4.5   To enhance the standing of Irish in and outside the Gaeltacht areas.
SCO 4.6   To increase IT access for all groups.

SCO 4.1 To Reduce Educational Disadvantage

4.1.1 Flagship Action –Routes to Higher &Further Education

Purpose
To further develop routes to higher and further education in the County**.**

Activity
- Conduct a study on existing routes for people in Meath into further education and on the potential for improving and expanding these routes. location, provision and role of a further education college in the County.
- Develop and build on the collaboration, outreach and satellite initiatives with existing providers of higher and further education in and near the County in accordance with the study.

Outcomes
- Increased participation in further education.
- Linkages between further education provision and the economic strategy of the County.

4.1.2   Flagship Action – Forum for Education and Training

Purpose

To establish a Forum for Education and Training

Actions

- A Forum for Education and Training will be established. It will explore ways to link education and training with labour market opportunities and focus initiatives on the long-term unemployed and people from disadvantaged communities. The Forum will explore innovative approaches to education and training such as establishing a Mobile Leaning Unit that could be used to facilitate outreach to communities that cannot access education opportunities. The Forum will develop an education and training plan for the County.

Outcomes

- An education and training plan for the County.
- County Meath primed to take advantage of future employment opportunities.
- Access to education and training opportunities improved.

4.1.3 Gap Action - Support the extension of the Yellow Flag initiative throughout the County.

Purpose

To enhance the intercultural environment in primary and secondary educational institutions.

Activity

- Extend the Yellow Flag initiative within primary and secondary schools in the County with a view to enabling and securing an intercultural environment and practice within these establishments through staff training, school action plans, classroom practice and initiative, and engagement with the wider Black and minority ethnic community.

Outcome

- Enhanced intercultural awareness among students.
- Improved educational experience for Black and minority ethnic students, including Travellers.

4.1.4 Gap Action - Support the extension of community education and training for women.

Purpose

To enhance education and training provision for women.

Activity

- Convene groups providing community based education and training opportunities for women to explore current provision with the relevant public agencies and how this might be expanded and further developed.
- Invest further resources in community education and training initiatives for women throughout the County.

Outcome

- Enhanced access to education and training for a diversity of women.

4.1.5 Seed Action - Language Support

Purpose

To support English language skills among migrants

Activity

- Embed and support English language programmes for migrants in a range of educational establishments and community organisations.

Outcome

- Enhanced language skills among migrants and improved integration opportunities.

SCO 4.2 To Further Develop Community Cultural Action

4.2.1 Flagship Action - Community Based Cultural Action

Purpose

To promote inclusion through arts and culture.

Activity

- Develop and implement a programme to bring artists and communities together to devise and engage in activities that build a pride in identity, Irish language, culture and place, with a particular and sustained focus on communities experiencing inequality and disadvantage.
- Actions to educate about the arts and culture, to enable access to and appreciation of arts and culture, and to support the production of arts and culture within these communities would be an integral part of this programme.
- Ensure the support of professional artists for this.

Outcome

- Increased participation in the arts and culture, as producers and consumers, by members of disadvantaged communities.

4.2.2 Gap Action - Craft Collectives

Purpose

To ensure that crafts are promoted throughout the county

Activity

- Develop craft collectives that gather artists and craftspeople in supportive community- based settings with facilities available for their creative work in making work and financial support to sustain and promote this work.

Outcomes

- Increased levels of artistic and creative production.

4.2.3 Seed Action - Public Realm Work

Purpose

To enhance public spaces.

Activity

- Implement a programme of public realm works with a focus on shop fronts, playgrounds, green infrastructure, and streetscapes to enhance sense of place and quality of life.
- Works should complement those public artworks already in place and should have a high level of design input particularly with regard to streetscapes and green areas and strong artistic merit.

Outcome

- Improved public spaces and greater pride of place in communities.

4.2.4 Seed Action - Drivers for Action

Purpose

To increase the capacity to develop and lead community cultural action.

Activity

- Increase the number of staff available to the Arts Officer in the County Council to enable a programme of community cultural action to be sustained and to be community led, within the confines of public sector recruitment policy.
- Support the further emergence of local leaders for community culture activities and to enable their access to new thinking and ideas in this field.

Outcomes

- Increased and informed demand within communities experiencing inequality and disadvantage for community cultural activities.
- Increased capacity to respond to this demand.

SCO 4.3 To Preserve Meath's Heritage and Enable Appropriate Access

4.3.1 Flagship Action - Boyne Valley

Purpose

To conserve and make available a key part of Meath's heritage in line with the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 and the Boyne Valley Destination Development Strategy, the "Boyne Valley Destination Development Strategy" and the Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy 2016- 2020.

Activity

- Develop the potential of the Boyne Valley as a visitor destination for the purpose of maximising the length of stay, level of enjoyment and economic return from national and international visitors, including through market research, programme development and partnership building to promote Boyne Valley locally and abroad.
- Renovate the Boyne Valley navigation along with ancillary heritage and culture initiatives.
- Facilitate the restoration of the Boyne Valley navigation and the development of the Boyne Valley Greenway along with ancillary heritage and culture initiatives
- Develop the infrastructure for educational and pilgrimage tourism, walking routes, and access to local heritage activity tourism, festivals, food and crafts and improve access to local heritage.
- Devise and deliver educational programmes on the heritage of the Boyne Valley to "Boyne Valley

Champions" Tourism members with those graduating becoming 'Boyne Valley Ambassadors'.
- Support and co-ordinate festivals and events to maximise their economic potential.

Outcome
- Improved tourism infrastructure
- Enhanced tourism.

4.3.2 Flagship Action - Historic Town Centre and Village Centre Scheme

Purpose
To conserve, restore, renew and redevelop historic town centers and village centers.

Activity
- Establish an Historic Town Centre and Village Centre Scheme to support the development and implementation of heritage led regeneration plans.

Outcome
- Improved public realm.

4.3.3 Gap Action - Awareness and Access

Purpose
To enhance awareness of and access to heritage.

Activity
- Implement a programme of cultural heritage initiatives to allow schools, communities and the private sector to creatively engage with and develop a sense of ownership of their local heritage.
- Improve access and interpretation of heritage sights and include beach/coastal areas in activities.
- Develop and support projects to engage local communities in caring for and presenting local heritage to their own community and to visitors.
- Promote and communicate the heritage of the County through publications, audio-guides, web and social media platforms.
- Link the Boyne Valley with Ireland's Ancient East as the 'master-region' in order to maximise on the opportunities that Ireland's Ancient East will bring the Boyne Valley in raising awareness of the abundance and quality of world class heritage available.

Outcome
- Access to heritage and cultural sites improved, including improved promotion and publicity.
- Greater understanding of Meath's heritage.

4.3.4 Seed Action - Drivers for Action

Purpose
To increase the capacity to implement plans in place and develop further activities.

Activity
- Increase the number of staff available for heritage in the County Council to ensure implementation of the County Meath *Heritage Plan* within the confines of public sector recruitment policy.

Outcomes
- Implementation of the County Meath *Heritage Plan*.

SCO 4.4 To Increase Participation in Sport, Recreation, and Physical Activity

4.4.1 Gap Action - Increased Opportunities

Purpose

To increase opportunities to participate in sport, recreation and physical activity within Meath across the lifespan.

Activity

- Support the development of local sports club to broaden the offer available and to expand the groups involved.
- Support the emergence and capacity of sports leaders within communities experiencing inequality and disadvantage.
- Support clubs and community groups in developing, delivering and sustaining a broad range of sports, recreation and physical activity programmes.
- Provide capacity building programmes for clubs and community groups to empower them to engage with, develop and deliver community wide local sports, recreation and physical activity programmes.
- Work with school representatives to support the sharing of school based sports facilities, and the development and delivery of extra - curricular sports, recreation and physical activity.

Outcome

- Increased participation in sports activities.
- More people, more active, more often, including people with disabilities.
- Increased range of community sport, recreation and physical activity opportunities, which are appropriate to the needs and resources of communities.

4.4.2 Gap Action - Public spaces

Purpose

To expand local public space opportunities for recreation.

Activity

- Further develop Slí na Sláinte routes in all areas of the County.
- Map areas suitable for outdoor gym equipment and install where possible.
- Take steps to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities to public recreation facilities.

Outcome

- Increased availability of accessible recreation opportunities suitable for all ages.

4.4.3 Gap Action - To Enhance the Standing of Irish in and outside the Gaeltacht Areas

Purpose

To support tourism in the Gaeltacht areas in a manner that protects the Irish language.

Activity

- Provide support for community organisations in the Gaeltacht areas to develop specialised tourist packages that will promote the heritage in the areas in a way that protects the Irish language.

Outcome

- Local economy in Gaeltacht areas strengthened.

SCO 4.5 To Increase IT Access for all Groups

4.5.1 Gap Action - Broadband Coverage

Purpose

To improve broadband coverage in the County.

Activity

- Conduct an audit of gaps in broadband coverage.
- Convene a forum for providers to present the gaps.
- Develop a plan of action to address the gaps.

Outcome

- Action to improve broadband coverage in the County.

5. Renewal

Objective

We will develop and implement ongoing renewal in public sector bodies that addresses how they fulfill their mandates and work with other stakeholders.

Core Concept

Renewal involves deepening the concern for social inclusion, equality and human rights into policy making and policy implementation in the organisation, enabling the voice of those experiencing inequality and disadvantage to be heard by the organisation, and engaging with and integrating the work of the organisation with other organisations pursuing similar or linked goals including organisations in the community, voluntary, environmental and private sectors.

Objectives

Two Sustainable Community Objectives are identified as central to achieving this goal:

SCO 5.1   To stimulate and support interagency and collaborative approaches by the public sector.

SCO 5.2   To support internal capacity for the LECP.

SCO 5.1   To Stimulate and Support Interagency and Collaborative Approaches by the Public Sector

5.1.1 Flagship Action - Development Partnerships

Purpose

To establish a cooperative and collaborative mechanism to deliver the LECP actions.

Activity

- Establish Development Partnerships, with identified conveners, to implement LECP actions, based on agreed values, shared resources, an action-based focus, and the involvement of the different relevant sectors and agencies.

Outcome

- Flexible delivery mechanisms for key areas of the LECP based on cooperation and collaboration.

5.1.2 Gap Action - Accountability Process

Purpose

To deepen commitment to and capacity for cooperation and collaboration.

Activity

- Establish processes of accountability within the LCDC to assess participation in interagency cooperation and cross-sectoral collaboration and to further support the capacity for and values involved in interagency cooperation and cross-sectoral collaboration.

Outcome

- Strengthened interagency cooperation and cross-sectoral collaboration.

5.1.3 Seed Action - Peer learning

Purpose

To share experience and expertise within and between the different sectors involved in implementing the LECP.

Activity

- Establish processes for peer learning within the LCDC to share the experiences of and learning from different interagency and collaborative arrangements used in delivering the LECP. Models for cooperation and collaboration would be communicated, marketed and celebrated.

Outcome

- Strengthened interagency cooperation and cross-sectoral collaboration.

SCO 5.2 To Support Internal Capacity for the LECP

5.2.1 Flagship Action - Mainstreaming

Purpose

To develop a process for mainstreaming the values on which the LECP is based into the work processes of public agencies.

Activity

- Develop an Open Method of Coordination[33] process for public agencies to agree commitments to mainstream the LECP values in their general work and provision, to establish effective models for this purpose, and to engage in a peer review of their implementation.

Outcome

- The LECP values, including those that underpin social inclusion, equality, human rights and environmental sustainability are central to decision making within public agencies.

5.2.2 Gap Action - Capacity

Purpose

To support capacity for mainstreaming and participation within public agencies.

Activity

- Develop training within public agencies to support mainstreaming.
- Develop training within public agencies to support participation.
- Establish indicators for mainstreaming by public sector agencies.
- Establish indicators for participation of those experiencing inequality and disadvantage in the work processes of public agencies.

Outcome

- Enable and track progress in mainstreaming and participation within public agencies.

5.2.3 Seed Action - Mapping LECP Concepts

Purpose

To deepen engagement with the core concepts that shape the LECP.

Activity

- Implement a mapping exercise to identify where the LECP core concepts fit within the mandates and plans of public agencies, to identify how best to bring these concepts into the work and thinking of agencies, and to create an alignment with the LECP concepts in the work of public agencies

Outcome

- The capacity in public agencies to mainstream social inclusion, equality, human rights, and environmental issues and to engage the participation of people experiencing inequality and disadvantage is deepened.

Section 7.Implementation Strategy

This LECP serves both as a high level strategy template and an action focused plan. The implementation of the LECP will require a focus on both elements. It enables an effective implementation of national and regional policy in the County alongside diving economic and local and community development through the actions set out in the LECP.

The LECP is a six-year plan. Its implementation will require the preparation of annual action plans to progress the specific objectives and actions identified. An interim review will be conducted after three years to evaluate progress and give further impulse to the implementation of the LECP. This review will reflect the commitment to broad consultation deployed in the preparation of the LECP.

The LECP enables a targeting of resources under the direct management of the LCDC, under the management of LCDC partners, and under the direct management of other publicly funded local development agencies and bodies not on the LCDC. Development Partnerships are recommended as the key mechanism for implementing the actions set out in the plan and mobilising the necessary resources for this.

The LCDC will drive the formation of Development Partnerships required to implement the LECP. Development Partnerships bring all appropriate stakeholders together from the public sector, the community and voluntary sector, the environmental sector and the private sector. Stakeholders work together behind shared values and shared objectives as equal partners in implementing a particular action or set of actions. Development Partnerships pool financial and other resources, expertise and links to ensure effective implementation. Development Partnerships can be formed around individual actions or a set of related actions as appropriate.

The LECP Advisory Committee should monitor progress on the implementation of the LECP and report to the LCDC and the Economic Strategic Policy Committee on this progress. The LECP Advisory Committee should drive the formation of the necessary Development Partnerships. It should lead the process of preparing annual action plans for the implementation of the LECP.

The LCDC will coordinate, manage, oversee and evaluate the implementation of the actions in the LECP where these relate to local and community development. It will apply the strategic framework provided in the LECP in fulfilling its broad mandate to enhance the strategic planning and coordination of local and community development activity. This includes a particular focus in securing coherence between Leader and SICAP with the LECP. This strategic framework encompasses the vision, values, goals and objectives established in the LECP and the commitments made in the Equality and Human Rights Statement in the LECP.

The Economic Strategic Policy Committee will coordinate, manage, oversee and evaluate the implementation of the actions in the LECP where these relate to economic development. It will apply the strategic framework of vision, values, goals and objectives in the LECP in fulfilling its broad mandate to assist the Council in the formulation, development and review of economic policy.

Resources need to be mobilised for the implementation of the LECP as there is no specific budget for the LECP. Leader and SICAP funding in the County will need to be aligned directly with the LECP and

its annual plan of action. Resources will need to be mobilised and shared through the Development Partnerships established to implement actions or groups of actions. New external, including European, funding sources will need to be secured for the LECP.

Section 8.   References

[1] Meath County Development 2013-2019

[2] Economic Value of Ireland's Historic Environment Ecorys & Fitzpatrick Associates February 2012 referenced in ibid

[3] ibid

[4] Report of The Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022

[5] Expenditure per person is an agreed standard for measuring the level of service a local authority can provide [6] As part of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the former either Regional Authorities and two Regional Assemblies were replaced by three new Regional Assemblies.

[7] Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022, p. 32

[8] The age dependency ratio is derived by expressing the young population (0-14 years) and the old population (aged 65 years and over) as percentages of the population of working age (15-64 years). The total age dependency rate is the sum of the young and old rates. The age dependency rates provide crude but useful indicators of the age structure of the population. Age dependency rates are crude because the notion of age dependency is not precise. There is a likelihood that there may be a substantial number of people aged 15 years and over still in education and there is also a likelihood that people aged 65+ may still be at work. However, they are still useful indicators, showing the number of those age dependent on the population of working age. High values indicate areas of relatively high percentages of less economically active population, a more dependent population

[9] Low education refers to the proportion of the population aged 15 years and over that have ceased education with no formal education or primary education only.

[10] High education refers to the proportion of the population aged 15 years and over that have ceased education with third level education.

[11] A Social Portrait of People with Disabilities in Ireland (2011). Economic and Social Research Institute

[12] ESRI and Equality Authority, 2013 referenced in Community Platform's *The Future Perspective*

[13] http://www.disability-federation.ie/index.php?uniqueID=10997

[14] Ibid

[15] AIRO (2015) LECP Baseline Study

[16] Profile 7 – Religion, Ethnicity and Irish Travellers, p. 61

[17] Referenced in Crowley, Niall for the Community Platform (2015) *The Future Perspective*

[18] Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2013 Report referenced in the AIRO LECP Baseline Study

[19] The Labour Force consists of those who are at work, unemployed or seeking regular work for the first time. Those outside the Labour Force are those who are students, those looking after home/family, those who are retired, those who are unable to work and those not in the Labour Force for other unspecified reasons

[20] The Labour Force Participation Rate indicates the proportion of the population that is economically active. It is calculated as the sum of those at work, seeking their first job and unemployed as a percentage of the overall population aged 15 years and over.

[21] The Unemployment Rate is the sum of those unemployed and those seeking their first job as a percentage of the labour force.

[22] An unemployment blackspot is defined as an ED whose labour force exceeded 200 persons and where the unemployment rate on a Principal Economic Status basis exceeded 35 per cent.

[23]   http://www.cso.ie/en/studentscorner/labourmarket/whatistheliveregister/

[24] National Economic and Social Council, *The Social Dimensions of the Crisis: the Evidence and the Implications*. Report No. 134. Dublin 2013 p. 17

[25] National Youth Council of Ireland, *Youth Unemployment in Ireland: The Forgotten Generation*

[26] Bell D. & Blanchflower, YEAR *Young People and Recession: A Lost Generation*

[27] Council recommendation 22 April 2013 on establishing a youth guarantee (2013/C 120/01) (2).

[28] David N. F. Bell and David G. Blanchflower, *Young People and Great Recession*, IZA Discussion Paper No. 5674 April 2011

[29] Census 2011, Profile 3, At Work

[30] Haase and Pratschke, 2005, p.14

[31] The HP Pobal Index measures a number of indicators under each of the three dimensions based on information under the following categories:

  • Demographic Profile

- •   Social Class Composition and
- •   Labour Market Situation

It is widely used by policy makers and underpins the Resource Allocation Model employed by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

[32] A scoring is given to the area ranging from approximately -35 (being the most disadvantaged) to +35 (being the most affluent).

[xxxiii] The Open Method of Co-ordinations is an intergovernmental means of governance in the European Union, based on the voluntary cooperation and sharing of good practice of its member states.

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[i] Meath County Development 2013-2019

[ii]

[iii] Economic Value of Ireland's Historic Environment Ecorys & Fitzpatrick Associates February 2012 referenced in ibid

[iv] ibid

[v] Report of The Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022

[vi]

[vii] As part of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the former either Regional Authorities and two Regional Assemblies were replaced by three new Regional Assemblies.

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[14] Ibid

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