



Two-Year Progress Report

On the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

1st December 2023

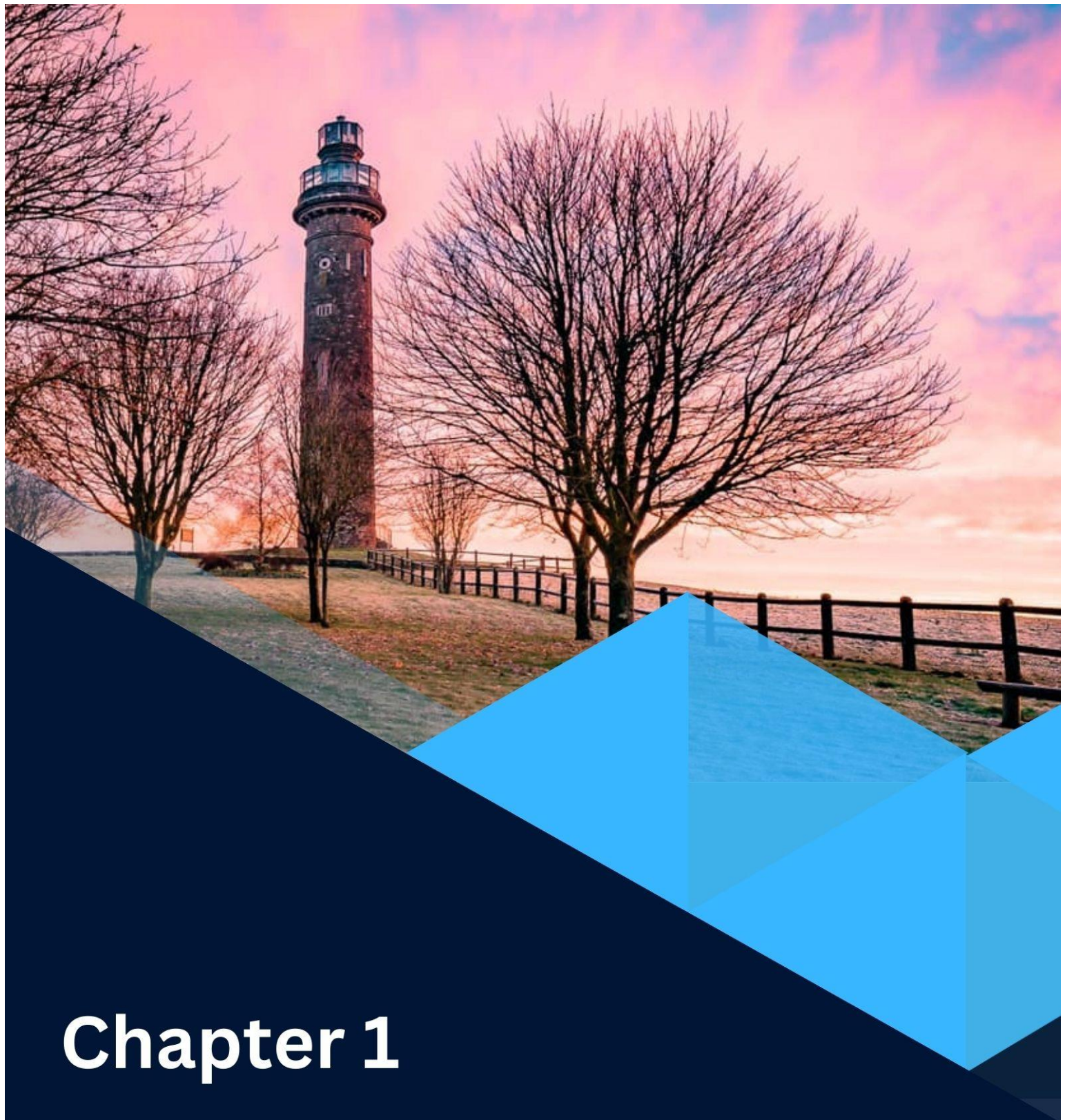
Meath County Council
Forward Planning Department

forwardplanning@meathcoco.ie | (046) 9097000 | www.meath.ie



Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	5
Chapter 2: Core Strategy.....	15
Chapter 3: Settlement and Housing Strategy	18
Chapter 4: Economy and Employment Strategy	21
Chapter 5: Movement Strategy	25
Chapter 6: Infrastructure Strategy.....	28
Chapter 7: Community Building Strategy	31
Chapter 8: Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy.....	34
Chapter 9: Rural Development Strategy.....	37
Chapter 10: Climate Change Strategy.....	40
Chapter 11: Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives.....	43
Conclusions and Recommendations	46
Appendices.....	50



Chapter 1

Introduction

Photo Credit: John Sheridan



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Policy & Legislation Context

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 was adopted on 22nd September 2021 and came into effect on 3rd November 2021. A Two-Year Progress Report is a statutory requirement in accordance with Section 15(2) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) which requires *‘The Chief Executive of a planning authority shall, not more than 2 years after the making of a development plan, give a report to the members of the authority on the progress achieved in securing the objectives.*

Section 10.3 ‘Plan Monitoring’ contained in the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2022 also requires *two strategic monitoring elements: (a) Core Strategy Monitoring (b) Plan Objectives Monitoring (including SEA Monitoring).*

This ‘Core Strategy Monitoring’ is to occur annually and include the following indicators:

Indicator	
Residential	
1.	New home completions (including through refurbishment/conversions)
2.	New home completions per NPO 3 (see below)
3.	Planning permissions granted for residential development with: (i) A breakdown of 1, 2, 3 and 4+ units permitted and (ii) A breakdown per Tier 1 and Tier 2 lands
4	Breakdown by relevant rural area type of rural housing: (i) Planning Applications lodged (ii) Breakdown in decisions (iii) New home completions
Commercial	
5	Developed and occupied commercial floorspace
6	Planning permissions for business/employment uses (m2 of development) for: (i) Office (ii) Industrial (iii) Retail (iv) Warehousing/Logistics
Settlement Consolidation Sites	
7	Specific reporting on the progression of the Settlement Consolidation Sites identified in the development plan. This should include information on enabling infrastructural services delivery, planning permissions granted, housing constructed, funding applications made, project timelines, Vacant Site Levy commentary, etc.

As required by Section 15(2) of the Planning & Development Act, this report details the progress towards achieving the objectives which are included in Volume 1 and Volume 2 of the County Development Plan (CDP) 2021-2027. This Two-Year Progress Report and accompanying Appendices provide summaries, updates, and further information on all the objectives. The introduction of this report provides a summary of new Guidelines and Legislation which have been introduced or are in draft format since the adoption of the CDP including the population change in the county between 2016 and 2022. Progress in relation to Chapter 2 *Core Strategy* of the CDP will then be discussed, outlining key figures and trends for housing permissions and completions for the first two years of the development plan. Summaries of the remaining development plan chapters are then subsequently provided (Chapters 3 to 11). These summaries have been informed directly by the full list of 1200 objectives which are contained in Appendix 1 of this report. Appendix 1 provides individual updates

on the status, timeline, and further information on each objective, as provided by the relevant departments within Meath County Council.

1.2 Legislative Changes

New Section 28 Guidelines

Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (June 2022)

The new Development Plan Guidelines provide guidance to Local Authorities in relation to the preparation, process, content, implementation, monitoring, and reporting for Development Plans. Section 10.3 of the Guidelines specifically details the monitoring requirements.

Residential Zoned Land Tax Guidelines for Planning Authorities (June 2022)

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was announced in Budget 2022 and was introduced into Part 22A of Taxes Consolidation Act (TCA) 1997 by the Finance Act 2021. The principal purpose of the RZLT is to encourage the timely activation of zoned and serviced residential development land for housing. The RZLT Guidelines outline the criteria for the inclusion of lands within scope for the tax and the formal process which must be followed.

Draft Sustainable & Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities (August 2023)

The Draft Sustainable and Compact Settlement Guidelines set out policy and guidance in relation to the planning and development of urban settlements, with a focus on residential development and the creation of sustainable and compact settlements. The Guidelines, when finalised, will be accompanied by a non-statutory Design Manual that will illustrate best practice guidance on how the policies and objectives of the Guidelines can be applied. These Guidelines will replace the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities published in 2009.

Draft Planning & Development Bill 2022

The Draft Planning and Development Bill was published in December 2022 and has completed the Dail Eireann First Stage with an envisaged enactment in early 2024. The main proposed changes from a Forward Planning point of view include:

- **Duration of County Development Plans** - extended to a 10-year cycle with an '*Interim Report on Implementation*' to be prepared after 5 years at which point a variation can be proposed if required.
- **Area Based Plans** – The automatic need to prepare Local Area Plans (LAP's) based on population size will be replaced by specific types of area-based plans to meet particular needs including Urban Area Plans for towns designated as "regional growth centres" or "key towns" in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES); Priority Area Plans for a sub-part of an urban area; Joint Area Plans for a urban area that is in the administrative area of more than one local authority and Urban Development Zones for strategic underutilised lands.

1.3 Census 2022

During the preparation of the current Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, the 2016 Census data was the primary and latest dataset available to the Planning Authority. Consequently, all data relating to population growth, housing data, and employment in the current Meath CDP is derived from 2016 census datasets.

Census 2022 took place on April 3rd, 2022, the results of which have been incrementally published since 30th May 2023 and shall conclude at the end of 2023. At the time of writing, data on population distribution, housing, households, health, place of work or education, and diversity has been

published. The publication of Small Area Population Statistics has been of particular significance to the Planning Department to support the internal datasets held by the Council and to confirm where population, housing, and employment growth has occurred within the county over the period of the plan.

1.3.1 2022 Population Data

County Meath experienced considerable population growth between April 2016 and April 2022 having grown from 195,044 in 2016 to 220,826 in 2022. This reflects a growth of 13.2% or 25,782 people in the intercensal period, equating to an average growth of 4,297 persons annually, well-beyond the projected increase of the RSES. This trend far exceeds the level of growth that took place between 2011 and 2016 where the county experienced population growth of 5.9%.

It is apparent that periods of economic prosperity and decline have had a significant influence on the population growth within the county and improving economic conditions combined with a high level of inward immigration and natural growth rates has cumulatively contributed to continued growth within the county. Over the same period, Ireland's population grew by 8% from 4,761,865 to 5,149,139.

1.3.2 Where Population Growth is taking place?

In accordance with the Eastern and Midlands Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy, growth has been substantially concentrated towards key designated settlements including the Regional Growth Centre of Drogheda and the key town of Navan. An analysis of the population growth at a settlement level has shown that growth has been guided towards key designated settlements such as the Southern Environs of Drogheda and Navan having grown by 25% and 12.3% respectively since 2016.

The influence of Dublin on settlement growth remains apparent with commuter-based settlements in the south and south-east of the County (including Ashbourne and the East Meath Settlements) experiencing the highest levels of population growth. Between 2016-2022, Ashbourne's population grew by 3,001 while Dunshaughlin's grew by 2,609. While Ashbourne is close to reaching its 2027 population projection, Dunshaughlin has exceeded its projected population growth by 2023. This is due to both settlements having the infrastructural capacity to absorb growth and their proximity to Dublin with higher demand. To facilitate further residential development in these areas, revised population targets should be released at a national level to recognise the unprecedented rate of growth in the county and accommodate any future growth.

The self-sustaining towns of Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington East in East Meath have had the fastest pace of growth having grown by 3,770 persons, reflecting an increase of 32% in the overall population. Growth within the Meath administrative area of Kilcock has also been significant having grown from 93 in 2016 to 972 in 2022.

Anomalies with the growth trajectories in Table 1 on the next page are evident in Dunboyne and Maynooth Environs where infrastructural constraints have restricted development. However, the resolution of such infrastructural constraints in Dunboyne and the high number of Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) planning applications (circa 2,500 units) currently under consideration, indicates that this metropolitan settlement is likely to grow substantially in the coming years and remaining plan period. In addition to this, Dunboyne is located within the Dublin Metropolitan Area with high-frequency rail and bus transport services into Dublin City. Given its proximity to Dublin, and potential to deliver compact and sustainable mobility, Dunboyne has been identified as a strategic location for Transport Orientated Development (TOD), a government initiative to deliver development at scale near public transport nodes. Southern Drogheda has also been identified as a location for 2 TOD sites also. These designations will add further growth potential to each strategic town.

While growth in small towns and villages is steady, growth in rural areas and the countryside is at a rate of three times above its annual average projected increase. Please refer to Figure 1, Figure 2, and Table 1 on the levels of population growth experienced at county and settlement level.

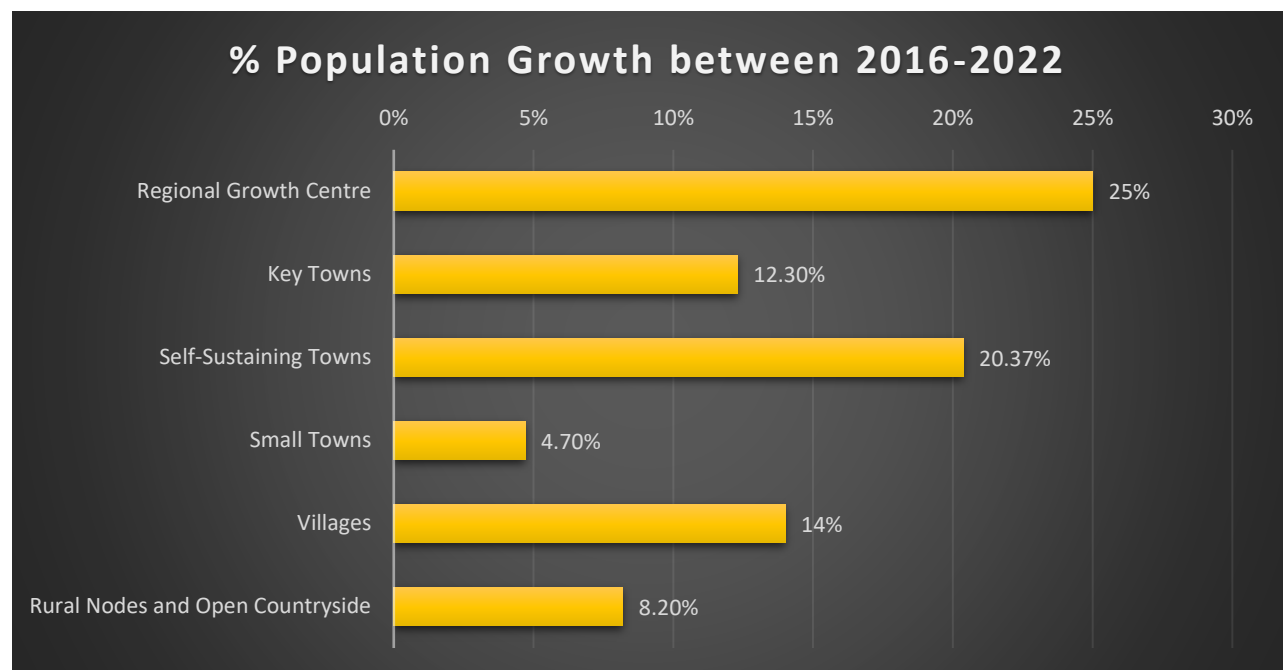


Figure 1: Percentage Growth between 2016-2022 by Settlement Category.

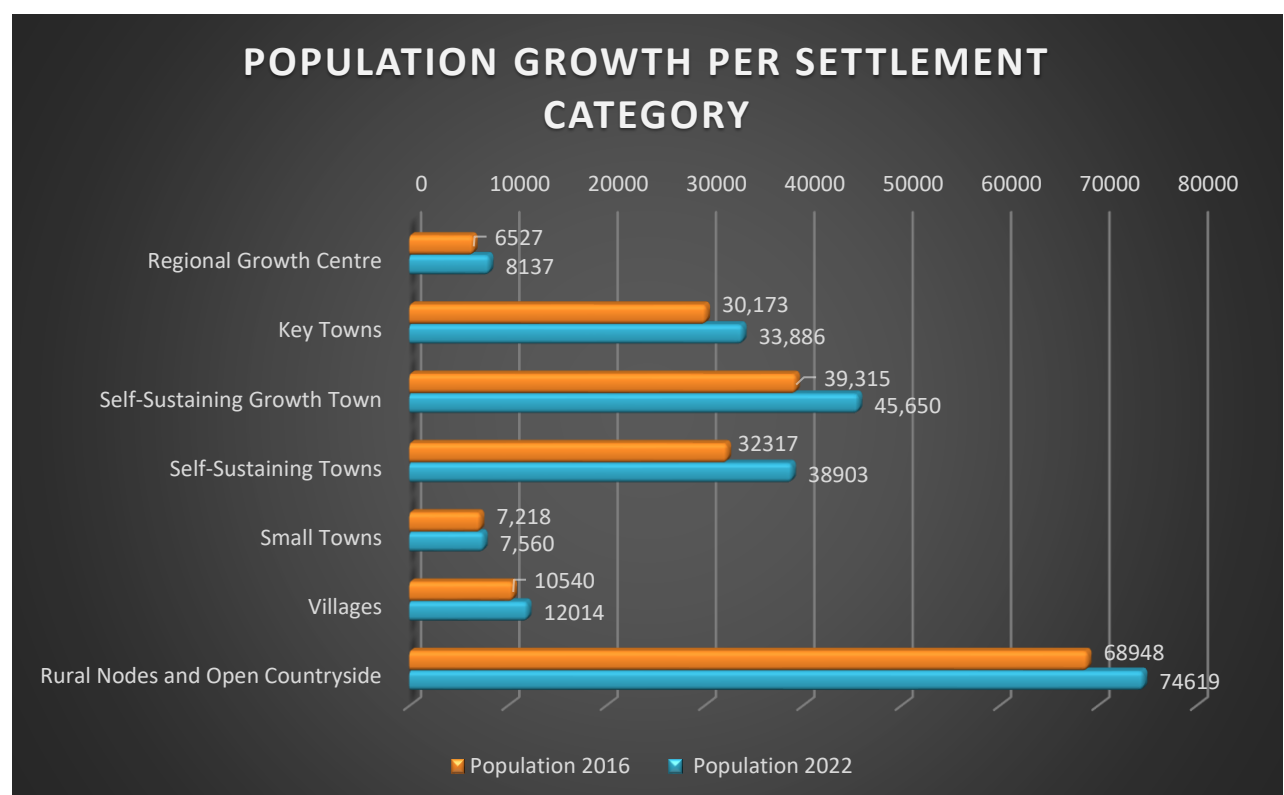


Figure 2: Population Growth Per Settlement Category

As outlined in Figures 1 & 2, growth has occurred in every settlement category and tier. Furthermore, growth has occurred in almost every settlement in Meath including all villages and rural areas.

Settlement Category	Settlement	Population 2016 (CSO)	Actual Population 2022 (CSO)	Projected Population 2027 (as per CDP)	Projected population 2027 based on continuation of growth rate in Census 2022
County	Meath	195,044	220,826	228,300	242,311
Regional Growth Centre	Drogheda (South Environs)	6,527	8,137	9,827	9,475
Key Towns	Navan	30,173	33,886	36,073	36,982
	Maynooth	0	0	500	0
Self-Sustaining Growth Town	Dunboyne	7,272	7,155	10,572	10,572
	Ashbourne	12,679	15,680	15,879	18,179
	Trim	9,194	9,563	11,444	9,876
	Kells	6,135	6,608	7,135	7,004
	Dunshaughlin	4,035	6,644	6,235	8,820
Self-Sustaining Towns	Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington East	11,872	15,642	13,372	18,780
	Ratoath	9,533	10,007	11,033	10,402
	Duleek	4,219	4,899	4,719	5,462
	Enfield	3,239	3,663	4,239	4,020
	Stamullen	3,361	3,720	3,861	4,021
	Kilcock	93	972	593	1,705
Small Towns	Athboy	2,445	2,596	2,795	2,720
	Oldcastle	1,383	1,409	1,733	1,427
	Ballivor	1,809	1,870	1,909	1,920
	Longwood	1,581	1,685	1,781	1,772
Villages		10,540	12,014	12,565	13,246
Rural Nodes and Open Countryside		68,948	74,619	72,079	79,344
Total		195,044	220,826	228,844	242,311

Population Change



Population

2016	195,044
2022	220,826

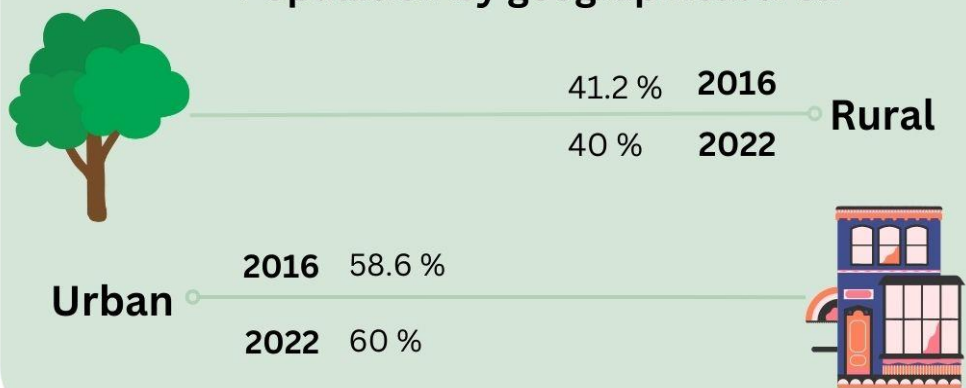
Gender distribution in 2022



Population by Town

Town	Population 2016	Population 2022
Drogheda	40,956	44,135
Navan	30,173	33,886
Dunboyne	7,272	7,155
Ashbourne	12,679	15,680
Trim	9,194	9,563
Kells	6,135	6,608
Dunshaughlin	4,035	6,644

Population by geographical area



Private households

2016	64,234
2022	72,977

Total housing stock

2016	70,649
2022	78,759



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council



Chapter 2

Core Strategy

Photo Credit: Glenveagh Homes – Baker Hall, Navan



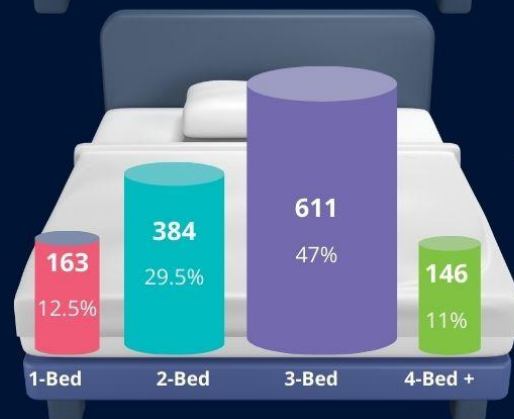
comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council



Zoned Residential Units Granted: Bedroom Breakdown



2021/2022
Total: 1,178



2022/ 2023
Total: 1,304



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Units granted by Zoning Type



2021/2022

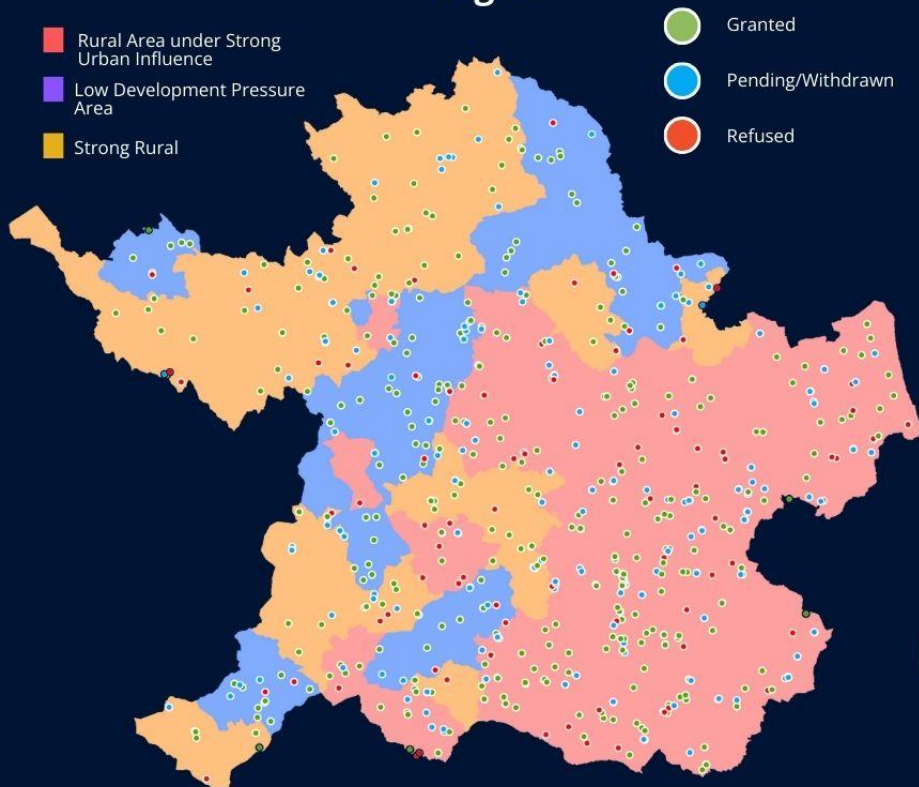


2022/2023

INFOGRAPHIC 2

2021-2023

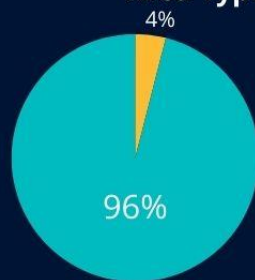
Where **One-Off** Housing Applications have been Lodged



One-Off Applications Lodged - Decision Breakdown By Rural Area Type (Total = 737)



One-Off Applications Lodged by Area Type (Total = 737)

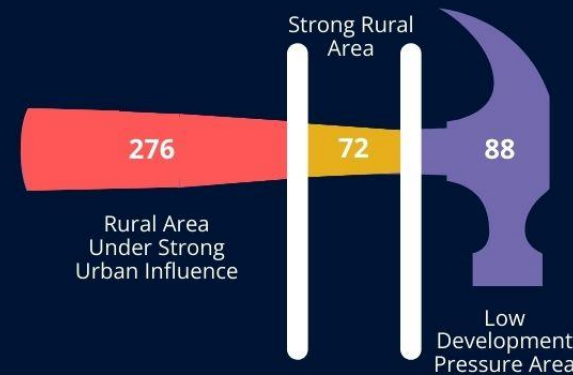


Rural Area (705)
Rural Node (32)



Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence (437)
Low Development Pressure Area (164)
Strong Rural (136)

One-off Home Completions (Total = 436)



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

INFOGRAPHIC 3

Chapter 2: Core Strategy

2.1 Introduction

The Residential Tracking Monitoring System for Co. Meath is the key quantitative data source used to analyse and report residential planning and construction activity. This internal dataset has been developed by the Planning Department and is supported by Building Control Management System (BCMS) and Central Statistical Office (CSO) data on population, housing completions and employment figures. A review of housing permissions, commencements and completion data collated in the first 2 years of the CDP are provided in the preceding infographics. The period breakdown is represented as follows:

- November 3rd 2021 – November 2nd 2022 = 2021 **or** 2021/2022
- November 3rd 2022 – November 2nd 2023 = 2022 **or** 2022/2023

2.2 Analysis

Infographic 1 details the total number of units permitted in Meath by housing type in 2021 (Year 1) and 2022 (Year 2) of the CDP. In 2021 there were 1,178 residential units granted permissions on urban zoned lands while in 2022 there were 1,304 units permitted (11 % increase in units)

Apartments saw the greatest increase at 137%, despite duplex units dropping by almost by 64%. One-Off Housing units granted were almost halved (371 units were permitted in 2021 while 199 units were permitted in 2022), while sheltered housing fell to 0 in 2022, from 102 units in 2021. Traditional housing units granted on zoned land remained relatively stable with an increase of 10%. In relation to compact growth, in 2021 there were 29 units granted on B1 Town Centre zoned lands while there were 169 units granted on A1 Existing Residential zoned lands. In 2022, there were 160 units granted on B1 Town Centre zoned lands and 373 units on A1 Existing Residential land use zonings. This is a significant increase in the number of units being granted in town centres and on lands in existing residential use. This move towards compact growth in County Meath is a key factor to achieving the National Planning Framework's Objective (NPO3c) of delivering at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements other than the five Cities and their suburbs, within their existing built-up footprints. Meath County Council achieved this in 2021 and 2022 with a percentage result of 53% and 59%, respectively.

It must also be noted that there are a significant number of residential units at various stages of the planning process at present in County Meath. As of 2nd November 2023, 521 units are under Judicial Review with 201 of these permitted by Meath County Council within the lifespan of this CDP. A further 478 units have been appealed to An Bord Pleanála following notifications of decisions to grant permission from Meath County Council. Furthermore, there are currently circa 2,500 units at various stages of the new Large Scale Residential Development (LRD) process while there is one SHD application with An Bord Pleanála for 702 units in Ashbourne (due for decision by 4th January 2024).

Infographic 2 gives a further breakdown of the residential units granted on zoned land in Meath during the plan period, excluding one-off development. This infographic demonstrates relatively stable proportions of 1, 2, 3, and 4+ bedroom units being granted across the county. Larger units saw the greatest decrease going from 19% to 11%. This proportional decrease appears to have re-distributed itself across the increase in 1-Beds (9% to 12.5%) and 3-beds (42% to 47%). This is an emerging trend in larger urban centres where fewer large residential units are being developed and built as the need for greater density and smaller unit types are in demand.

The average bedroom proportional breakdown over the two years of the CDP so far are as follows:

Table 2: Bedroom proportion breakdown 2021-2023

Bedrooms	1	2	3	4 +
Proportion	10.5%	30%	45.5%	15%

Rural development is a key issue for the council and the data associated with such is represented by Infographic 3. The Rural Area Type “Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence” was subject to the highest number of one-off housing applications, three times higher than Strong Rural Area and Low Development Pressure Area individually. Stricter criteria for the granting of one-off housing in this area type is reflected with a lowered grant rate and thus higher refusal rate. This continues to assist in the sustainable growth of the county and is reflected in the increase in houses being granted in Rural Nodes from 2021 to 2022.

Regarding completions, the Building Control Department of MCC carry out an annual survey of commencements and completions of multi-unit and one-off rural housing applications in May of each year. While the period does not exactly correlate with the CDP period, the data is verified and will be utilised for the purposes of this report. The survey shows that in 2021 there were 1,347 residential multi-units completed (please note that not all of these units were occupied) while 208 one-off rural houses were completed. In 2022, there were 1,576 multi-units completed (please note that not all of these units were occupied) and 228 one-off houses completed. Completion figures for 2021 and 2022 are below the core strategy target of delivering 1880 residential units per annum for the CDP 2021-2027. The current most significant challenges within the Development Plan are the fact that the future growth of the county is constrained by under delivery of residential units per annum and the lack of population growth figures available in the Core Strategy and thus housing targets and zoned residential land. Whilst awaiting new population growth figures in the NPF, the Council are proposing to address this issue via Variations to the CDP the content of which are outlined in the Conclusions and Recommendations to this Report.

Table 3: Housing Completions in Meath (Source: MCC Building Control Annual Survey)

	2021	2022
One-Off Houses completed	208	228
Residential units on urban zoned lands completed	1,347	1,576



Chapter 3

Settlement and

Housing Strategy



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Chapter 3: Settlement and Housing Strategy

Appropriate settlement growth and sufficient housing delivery are key goals for Meath County Council both within the CDP period and beyond. The Council have engaged in a multifaceted approach to achieve these goals which includes adherence to legislation and national and regional policy. The Council is also focused on the delivery of social and affordable housing during the plan period. During this time, there have been 955 social housing units delivered by Meath County Council via Part 8 schemes, Part 5 acquisitions, and co-ordination with Approved Housing Bodies.

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was introduced by the Finance Act 2021 with the aim to increase housing supply by activating zoned and serviced residential development lands for housing. In accordance with its obligations, Meath County Council published a Draft and Supplemental RZLT Map in 2022/2023. Minister for Housing Darragh O'Brien announced on 10th October 2023, that the Government have extended the liability date of the tax by one year to allow for the planned 2024 review of maps to take place. The Final RZLT Map has been agreed and will be published on 1st December 2023. The Council will continue to review the RZLT Map annually as required by the Finance Act 2021 and RZLT Guidelines 2022. The RZLT will replace the Vacant Site Register once lands become liable to the tax on 1st February 2025.

It is predicted that Draft Maynooth Local Area Plan will go on public display in Q1 of 2024 and the LAP will be adopted in Q3/Q4 of 2024. The preparation of the Joint Local Area Plan included pre-draft consultation with the local community and statutory agencies. The pre-draft public consultation extended over a six-week period (30th September – 11th November 2022) and was accompanied by the publication of an Issues Paper which identified the key planning and development matters that the Plan could and should address. The pre-draft process also included a public 'drop-in' event held on Wednesday 12th October 2022 at the Glenroyal Hotel in Maynooth and a targeted engagement was also carried out with the third level students within the town on 11th October 2023 during which 96 students took part in a survey.

Work has also commenced on the preparation of the Joint Urban Area Plan for Drogheda. A meeting of both Executives in November 2023 has agreed the envisaged timeline for the review which includes the publication of a Strategic Issues Paper in Q4 of 2023. Consultants have been appointed to carry out the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Draft Urban Area Plan. As part of this process a Local Transport Plan for Drogheda area is at an advanced stage of preparation.

The requirement for preparing LAP's in County Meath will be reviewed when the new Draft Planning Bill is adopted by Government. Preparation work for the ABTA which will inform the Navan LAP has commenced and the formal process for the preparation of the Navan LAP will commence in Q1 of 2024.

While Local Area Plans have not commenced for the remaining settlements, Public Realm Plans have been prepared for Slane, Bettystown/Laytown, Oldcastle, Athboy and Ashbourne. A Town Centre First Plan is currently being prepared for Enfield while a Heritage led Regeneration Plan is being prepared for Duleek. Masterplans have also been prepared and approved by the Council for strategic landbanks in many of these settlements, which is referred to in further detail in Chapter 11.

Chapter 3: Settlement and Housing

Public Realm Plans are being prepared and implemented for various settlements including:

Ashbourne
Dunshaughlin
Trim
Oldcastle
Kells
Slane
Athboy
Navan
Laytown/Bettystown



Joint Local/Urban Area Plans have commenced for Drogheda and Maynooth

Background work commenced for the Navan LAP

Draft consultation completed on the Enfield Town Centre First Plan



955 social housing units have been delivered since 2021

Settlement Capacity Audit (SCA) has commenced to identify fully serviced land which can deliver future zoning



Residential Zoned Land Tax

326ha of A2 New Residential and 68 ha of Town Centre/Mixed Use lands included on the Final RZLT map which will encourage the delivery of additional housing units in Meath.





Chapter 4

Economy and

Employment Strategy



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Chapter 4: Economy and Employment Strategy

Meath County Council is committed to realising the economic potential of the county via the delivery of significant growth in enterprise and employment. Significant actions have occurred in the first 2 years of the CDP with a new Economic Roadmap for future development of the County published in June 2023.

Since the adoption of the CDP in November 2021, the Council have been monitoring planning permissions for office, industry, retail and warehousing/logistics as required by Section 10.3 of the new Development Plan Guidelines 2022. The commercial floorspace granted permission in Year 1 of the CDP amounted to 110,607 m^2 while in Year 2 the corresponding figure was 74,548 m^2 . In Year 1 the Council estimates that 62,191 m^2 of commercial floorspace was completed and occupied while the figure in Year 2 was 41,208 m^2 (estimates based on data extracted from the BCMS system).

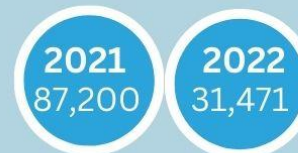
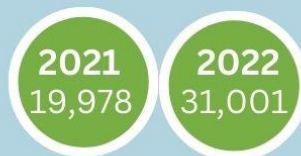
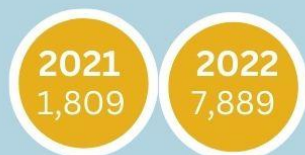
The Council granted 7,889 m^2 of office floorspace in the county in 2022, over a 300% increase from its 2021 figure. Industrial and Retail permissions both saw significant increases in floorspace granted (55% & 157%) while there was a 63% drop in warehousing and logistics floorspace being granted in the county between Year 1 and Year 2 of the CDP. Please refer to Infographic 4 for on the next page further detail. County Meath has seen high levels of economic growth already within the lifespan of this development plan. This has materialised throughout the county with the establishment and expansion of businesses such as Amazon, Boann Distillery, Boyne Valley Food Hub, and Ashbourne Film Studios.

In 2023, the Council also established the Meath Economic Forum, where business leaders in County Meath have been brought together by Meath County Council to guide and support the Council in developing and guiding the development of a new Economic Strategy and provide expert insight into guiding the future economic growth of the county. Meath County Council has also expanded resources dedicated to engaging with multi-nationals, local businesses, landowners, and various other stakeholders to achieve its goal of growing and supporting both indigenous and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) enterprises in the County. This expansion of resources has already resulted in the development and publication of a brochure dedicated to directing enterprise development in Meath to 12 Strategic Employment Sites. Further economic marketing has occurred with the creation of a series of promotional videos which showcase the economic potential of County Meath and several of its settlements. The Economic Development and Forward Planning team have also held a significant number of meetings with organisations and businesses to assist in the identification of potential sites for future investment and economic development.

Meath's economy will also benefit greatly from proposed public and private investments in the form of the Navan-Dublin rail line and the proposed Bremore Ireland Port. The Navan-Dublin rail line has been included in the NTA's Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022. Irish Rail have also published a public tender for the route selection and design of this rail line. The proposed Bremore Ireland Port, located just north of Bremore Point on Meath's east coast, was announced officially on October 11th 2023, is led by Drogheda Port Company and a consortium of private developers and will aim to develop a multi-modal energy port and a pioneering Innovation District, unlocking the significant economic potential for Meath and Ireland.

This combination of local, national, and international economic pathways will ensure strong economic growth with further investment for County Meath.

Commercial Floorspace Granted by Year and Category



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

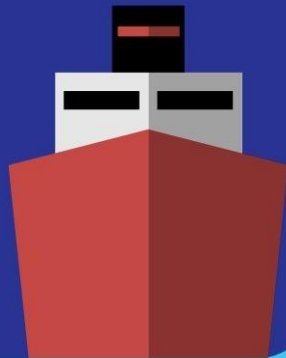
INFOGRAPHIC 4

Chapter 4: The Economy



Proposed Dublin-Navan Rail Line included in the NTA Strategy 2022 and out for design tender

Proposal for new 'world class' deepwater port at Bremore



Successful establishment and growth of enterprise including: Amazon, Boann Distillery, Boyne Valley Food Hub, and Ashbourne Film Studios.

10 Remote Working Hubs established in Meath since 2021



Establishment of the Meath Economic Forum to guide and steer the Economic Strategy

Production of a marketing brochure to promote the 12 Strategic Employment Sites

Further economic promotion via marketing videos



Engagement with local, national, and international businesses to assist in business establishment and expansion in the county



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council



Chapter 5

Movement Strategy



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Chapter 5: Movement Strategy

Movement and transportation are vital components of the County Meath Development Plan 2021-2027. Influenced by national and regional policy, this CDP aims to promote modal shift to more sustainable modes of transportation such as bus, rail, and active travel, while ensuring the necessary further delivery and maintenance of Meath's road network.

The expansion of rail usage and availability is a key feature in many objectives of the CDP. Alongside the proposed delivery of the Navan-Dublin Rail Line, the Council have also supported rail growth by making submissions to the Dart+ programme for the inclusion of a new train station at Bettystown, the expansion of DART services West and North to include Maynooth and Drogheda, and the All-Ireland Strategic Rail Review. The DART+ expansion west was lodged with An Bord Pleanála in July 2022 with a final decision expected in December 2023. The Dart+ Coastal North commenced its second round of public consultation in May 2023 with the Council and the application will be lodged in Q2 2024 to An Bord Pleanála.

Park and Ride facilities have also been developed as part of a multi-faceted approach to increasing bus usage and availability. Such facilities have been developed in Moatlands and Garlow Cross, Navan, with further sites to be identified in other settlements. A new bus interchange facility at Kennedy Place in Navan is nearing completion as part of Navan 2030 public realm scheme. Improvements have been carried out to bus stop facilities in larger settlements like Ashbourne but it is the new bus services and facilities in rural villages such as Kilmessan which demonstrate the desire to also increase connectivity in rural areas.

Active Travel has been another huge area of focus for Meath County Council in the lifespan of this CDP. An Active Travel Office was established in 2021 with the assistance of NTA funding. This office has the responsibility of transforming Meath's cycling and walking network. Significant work has already taken place in Navan, with a cycle scheme on Trim Road under construction. Cycle schemes on R147, between Marthas Bridge and Circular Road, and Poolboy to Blackwater Retail Park have Part 8 approval. Design work is also continuing on projects such as Academy Street, Flowerhill, Circular Road and Athlumney. Further schemes are being initiated and completed throughout the county such as the construction of segregated cycle tracks and footpaths in Ashbourne and Bettystown/Donacarney.

E-Bike schemes have also been established in Navan and Ashbourne. The Navan scheme, launched in August 2023, provided 25 push bikes and 25 electric bicycles at various locations around the town. Further active travel has been expanded via the support and construction of greenways throughout the county. The Royal Canal Greenway is completed along with the latest stage of the Boyne valley to Lakelands Greenway, the fourth finished out of six stages.

Road schemes are also progressing in every municipal district. This includes the schemes identified in Table 5.1 of the CDP, of which 60% are currently in various stages of project lifecycle. Key road scheme milestones include: the completion of the R150 Bettystown/Laytown Spine Road (Tara Road), Navan Distributor Road LDR1a (Trim Road to Dublin Road) is under construction, the LDR4 (Ratholdron Road to Kells Road) is at tender stage, Part VIII Planning process complete for new distributor road at Kells Frontlands and the successful grant of permission from both Meath and Kildare County Council's for the Maynooth Outer Relief Road (MOOR), the latter of which is presently under appeal to An Bord Pleanála.

Chapter 5: Movement

Royal Canal Greenway
Completed

Boyne Valley to Lakelands
Greenway will be completed
in 2023

Preferred Route for Boyne
Greenway announcement in
Q4 2023



60% of proposed road
schemes in CDP (Table 5.1)
at various stages of project
lifecycle including multiple
new distributor roads

Project completions include;
Bettystown/Laytown Spine
Road and
Realignment of the N51
between Blackcastle
Demense and Cruicetown



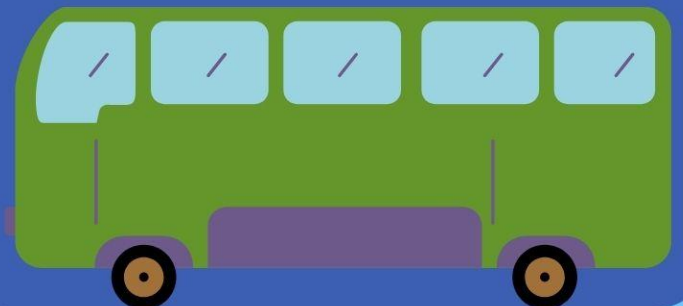
**Active Travel Office
Established**

Various Active Travel Schemes
progressing including Navan,
Ashbourne and East Meath

Navan 2030 - Construction
underway and at an advanced stage

Park and Ride facilities
provided at Garlow Cross and
Moatlands (Navan)

Bus interchange facility at
Kennedy Place nearing completion



Dart + Coastal North and
West progressing
towards enhancing rail
services in the county



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council



Chapter 6

Infrastructure Strategy



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Chapter 6: Infrastructure Strategy

Infrastructure provision and maintenance is a key deliverable for the Council. Water, Wastewater, Flood Risk Management, Energy, Climate Change, Information and Communication Technologies, Waste Management, and Pollution all fall within this chapter. Meeting the ever-increasing demands of such areas in a sustainable manner is vital to accommodate future growth and development both within this CDP and beyond.

Meath County Council continues its operation of 64 water treatment plants, 40 reservoirs, and 2,000km of pipe network, including active leak detection and repair work. The construction of a new Trunkmain to augment Navan will start in Q1 2024 ensuring the future growth of the town.

Regarding Flood Risk Management, the Ashbourne Flood Alleviation Scheme has been completed with the Mornington/Bettystown scheme commenced. Consultants have been appointed to prepare a coastal flood study which aims to identify high risk areas along the coast and recommend appropriate coastal defence measures. Meath County Council liaise with the OPW on Flood Risk and will continue to operate a sequential approach when zoning and developing land within the county.

There are other significant projects being developed along Meath's coastlines. The Mornington Dune Visitor Access and Conservation Management Plan is being prepared with engagement from the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Recommendations arising from the Beach Management Plan are being introduced on a phased basis. An application is also being prepared to achieve Blue Flag Status for Bettystown Beach for the 2024 Bathing Water season.

Pollution is another issue being tackled by Meath County Council with initiatives such as the Trim Air Quality Project. This project aims to improve air quality in Trim by assessing and disseminating clear data to stakeholders in the community. This is done via sensors in two locations which monitor an array of pollutants, with an emphasis on fine particles (PM2.5), due to its well-understood harm and links to both traffic and solid fuel use, and nitrogen dioxide (NO2) due to its effects on child health and its close relationship with vehicle use.

Pollution is being further tackled via litter management. Meath County Council have installed several drinking fountains throughout the county which double as refill stations. The provision of these stations aims to reduce the usage and subsequent discarding of plastic bottles in County Meath.

Work has substantially progressed on the National Broadband Plan as commercial operators continued their rollout of fibre broadband in urban areas of Ashbourne, Navan, Stamullen, Enfield and Duleek with work in Kells ongoing. The National Broadband Plan has delivered fibre to an additional 3423 premises (by 31st Oct. 2023), 16% of the Intervention Area in County Meath. Work is progressing to connect another 12,607 premises by mid-2025 with the remainder to be delivered by early 2027.

Infrastructure works are progressing well in County Meath. The continued provision and maintenance of all areas of infrastructure and support services will provide the county with the opportunity to grow and thrive for the remainder of the CDP and beyond.

Chapter 6: Infrastructure

National Broadband Plan has delivered high-speed internet to 3423 more premises.

Work is progressing to connect another 12,607 premises by mid 2025



Ongoing operation of 64 water treatment plants, 40 reservoirs and 2,000km of pipe network.

New Navan Water Main Project will begin in Q1 2024



Ashbourne Flood Alleviation Scheme complete



Mornington/Bettystown Flood Alleviation Scheme commenced.

Coastal Flood Study underway to assess risk and recommend defence measures

Mornington Dunes Visitor Access and Conservation Management Plan on public display

Blue Flag Application underway for Bettystown 2024



Four derelict properties acquired within CDP lifetime



2022 Derelict Site Levies - €34,291



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council



Chapter 7

Community Building

Strategy



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Chapter 7: Community Building Strategy

The Meath Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) was prepared and adopted by the Council in 2023. The Plan is a 6-year statutory plan which sets out the objectives and actions needed to promote and support economic and community development in a county. The LECP covers all aspects of the community and economy and an integrated plan has been developed following consultation with all sectors of the communities. The implementation of the LECP will require ongoing cooperation between all agencies to ensure that all the identified actions for both economic and community development can be delivered.

Meath County Council have taken a direct approach to community infrastructure provision in the county. Community projects include the completed Trim Library and Cultural Centre, Enfield Library and Working Hub, St Kenneth's Church community facility in Ballivor and Kells Courthouse Tourism & Cultural Hub. The future Bettystown Library is projected to be completed by Q3 2024. The Council have also begun the Part 8 application process for the renovation and repurpose of the old courthouse in Dunshaughlin to a community facility. Dunshaughlin has also seen upgrade works completed for its fire station with a similar project occurring in Nobber.

Outdoor amenity has been another key focus of the Council. There are a variety of projects at various stages of project lifecycle for parks and playgrounds in the settlements of Duleek, Dunboyne and Stamullen. A planning application has been lodged with An Bord Pleanála for a new public park in Laytown while a new park and playground is also under construction in Clonee and is expected to be completed in Spring 2024.

In the first 2 years of the CDP, there were an additional 13 planning applications granted for the extension of existing and new educational facilities across the county. Construction is also underway on new schools previously permitted, such as a primary school and secondary school in Ashbourne and Enfield, respectively. There are also advanced proposals to develop a new third-level educational facility for Dunboyne College of Further Education at a new site within the town of Dunboyne.

A significant number of new sports facilities has also been granted. Key permissions include five new playing pitches for Torro United in Rathcoon, an Astroturf pitch for Newtown United F.C., a sports hall for Na Fianna CLG and a Handball Court for Kells Handball Club.

There has also been significant progress in relation to the provision of new burial grounds and the expansion of the existing burial grounds. Construction on a new burial ground in Trim commenced in September 2023 and will take circa 40 weeks to complete. Stamullen burial ground has gone through the Part 8 process and the Council are in the process of engaging consultants to prepare detailed design. An extension to Rooske Road Cemetery in Dunboyne has been completed. The Council are also initiating a procurement process in respect of the provision of 5 Columbarium Walls in existing cemeteries.

Community Health was another strong category with an additional 15,500 m^2 of floor space permitted, including a new nursing home in Moygaddy which is currently under appeal with An Bord Pleanála and a residential care facility in Gormanston. Community infrastructure delivery in Meath is on track to rise with its growing population. This delivery will allow local communities to thrive in an inclusive and sustainable manner.

Chapter 7: Community

Official opening of Trim Library and Cultural Centre

Completion of Enfield Library and Working Hub

Bettystown Library to be complete in Q3 2024

5 existing branches upgraded to provide 'My Open Library' access at;



Ashbourne, Kells, Nobber, Slane and Trim.

Kells Courthouse Tourism & Cultural Hub capital works complete with funding under RRDF



Sawmills Studios acquired for development as Kells Printing Works & National Centre for Typography.

New education facilities permitted including;



New primary school in Ashbourne which is near completion



New secondary school in Enfield under construction

Advanced Proposals for new Dunboyne College of Further Education facility



Replacement burial grounds in Trim and Stamullen and extensions in Dunboyne and Navan

Provision of Columbarium walls is being pursued in 5 burial grounds

Upgrade works to Nobber and Dunshaughlin Fire Stations completed



Funding received for the design of a linear park in Duleek

Refurbishment of Dunboyne playground and skatepark

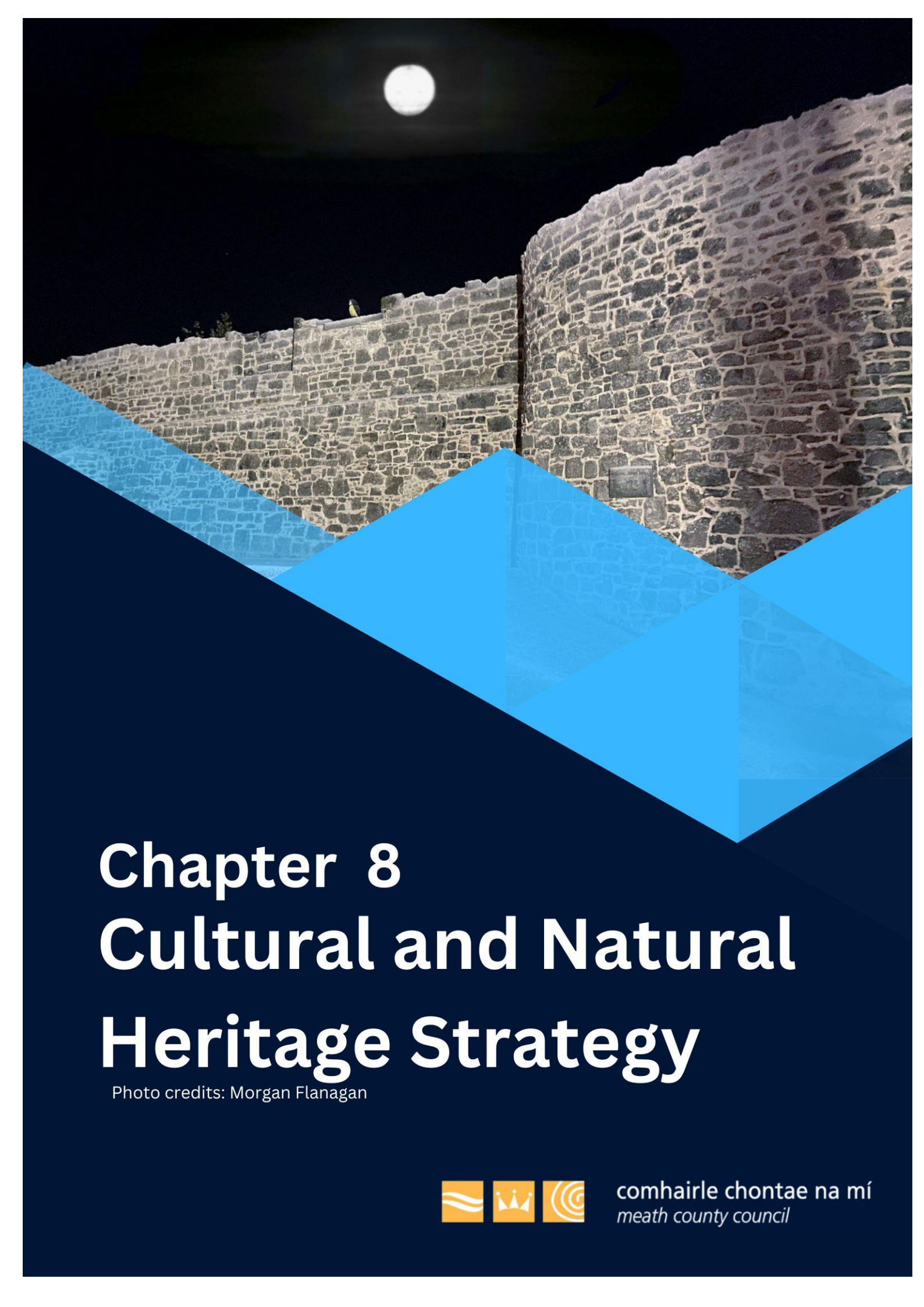
Completion of community facility at St. Kenneth's Church, Ballivor

Approval for new playground in Stamullen

Laytown Public Park application lodged

New park and playground in Clonee





Chapter 8

Cultural and Natural

Heritage Strategy

Photo credits: Morgan Flanagan



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Chapter 8: Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy

The County Meath Heritage Forum, facilitated by the Heritage Office of Meath County Council, recently prepared a *Draft Meath Heritage Strategy 2023-2030*. The aim of the strategy is to identify key priorities and increase awareness, appreciation, and enjoyment of the built, natural, and cultural heritage of Meath for all. The Draft Strategy was placed on public display from 6th September to 4th October 2023 and 8 submissions were received. The Heritage Strategy will be adopted in the coming months.

Since 2021, 100 heritage projects (built, natural and cultural) have been delivered through grant allocations of over €2 million awarded to Meath County Council from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Heritage Council.

In relation to heritage awareness, Meath County Council facilitated 65 Heritage Week Events in 2023 and 55 events in 2022. Meath County Council is also working in partnership with DKIT and Blackfriary Archaeology Field School to provide accredited certificate courses in archaeology at Black Friary in Trim while funding has been received under the Town and Village Scheme for the installation of interpretation displays at the George Eogan Cultural Centre in Nobber.

Meath County Council have also appointed a Biodiversity Officer in 2023 who will co-ordinate a review of the County Biodiversity Action Plan. Urban Biodiversity Audits for Kells, Navan and Trim are also in preparation.

A significant number of heritage plans and studies have been completed or are in progress since the adoption of the CDP including the Meath Industrial Heritage Survey, Tara Conservation Management Plan and Survey of Holy Wells which were completed in 2022. A Thatched Structure in Meath Survey was also completed and is awaiting publication. A Conservation Management Plan was published for Navan Town Walls and the upstanding section of the wall in the Meath County Council yard has been restored. Duleek was selected by the Heritage Council under the Historic Town Initiative for a Heritage-led Regeneration Plan and this plan will be finalised in Q4 of 2023.

Meath County Council supports the maintenance of historic graveyards through the delivery of an annual burial ground grant scheme which is accompanied by a workshop on care and conservation of historic graveyards. Over €31,000 was allocated by Meath County Council for historic burial ground grants in 2023. Conservation works on the medieval tower at St. John's Graveyard in Nobber was also completed under the Community Monument Fund 2022 and 2023.

In relation to heritage trails, a Feasibility Study is currently being funded under Shared Island Fund regarding developing the Turas Columbanus walking trail in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders and neighbouring Local Authorities. The Columbanus Annual Cultural and Heritage

Chapter 8: Heritage

Since 2021, 100 heritage projects (built, natural and cultural) have been delivered through grant allocations of over €2 million awarded to Meath County Council from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Heritage Council.

Conservation Management Plan published for Navan Town Walls

The Columbanus Annual Cultural and Heritage Festival was held in Clonard in 2022.



Meath County Council working in partnership with DKIT and Blackfriary Archaeology Field School to provide accredited certificate courses in archaeology at Black Friary Trim

Tara Conservation Management Plan published in September

Biodiversity and Habitat Management Plan for Balrath Woods has been completed

Draft Meath Heritage Strategy 2023-2030 was published



Appointment of Biodiversity Officer in 2023



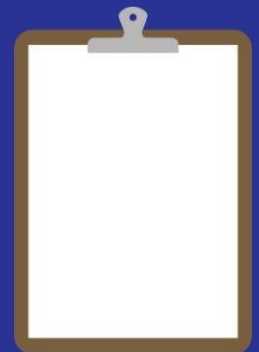
National Heritage Week Awareness Events
2023 – 65
2022 – 55

Heritage Surveys Completed in 2022:

Meath Industrial Heritage survey

Survey of Holy Wells

Thatched Structure survey



Burial Grounds Grants

€31,759.07 allocated in 2023



Proposed Brú na Bóinne National Park announced

40,000 attendees for Púca Festival 2023



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council



Chapter 9

Rural Development

Strategy



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Chapter 9: Rural Development Strategy

Data in relation to rural housing, rural commercial applications and grants of permission has been provided in Chapters 2 and 4. The Serviced Sites Initiative was launched on 21st September 2022, under the 'Ready to Build Scheme', and funded under Croí Cónaithe (Township) Fund. An assessment of suitable sites located in Townships, Villages and Rural Nodes is currently underway by the Forward Planning Department. Under the Initiative, suitable sites must have access to public water and wastewater and the local authority can develop existing site(s) in their control or purchase site(s) and make them available for residential development. Several land parcels are currently being assessed in Tier 5 and 6 Rural Villages and the Rural Nodes with a view to the council purchasing same and providing affordable serviced sites. Meetings have been held with the Department in November 2023 in relation to the process for the Local Authority to obtain funding under this Initiative and the Forward Planning Department will keep the members updated at this project progresses into 2024.

In March 2022, meetings took place between the Local Enterprise Office and Údarás na Gaeltachta to discuss schemes and supports available through Údarás for companies based in the Meath Gaeltacht. In September 2023, the Irish Language Officer had further discussions with Údarás regarding how to best support and sustain companies based in the Meath Gaeltacht. The Rath Chairn/Baile Ghib Gaeltacht is currently recruiting for a Language Planning Officer. This will accelerate the development of a Gaeltacht na Mí Economic Development Forum in consultation between Meath County Council Irish Language Office, Local Enterprise Office, Gaeltacht na Mí, Údarás and other stakeholders such as Foras na Gaeilge.

In 2021 & 2022, the Council Irish Language Officer ran several educational and cultural events through Irish that were directed toward the communities of the Gaeltacht district of Rath Chairn & Baile Ghib and the local community in Navan. Both the townships of Navan and Athboy are listed Gaeltacht service townships. Events that ran over 2021 and 2022 included pop up Gaeltachts for families which took place in the Solstice Arts theatre; Irish language classes run by the Irish language office in cooperation with LMETB, and Ciorcal Comhrá Mór events which brought together all Irish conversation groups in the county together for music, song, and conversation events. The Irish Language Officer in cooperation with the Irish Language Planning Officer for Rath Chairn and Baile Ghib Gaeltacht also ran competitions with an Irish language theme during Seachtain na Gaeilge in March for all schools in the county. The Irish Office intends on building on this going forward into 2024 and to expand the cultural events to include the township of Athboy, as the other listed Gaeltacht service township.

Meath County Council and the Local Enterprise Office have also launched "*Meath Made*", a craft and creatives collective strategy. The collective aims to promote Meath as a high-quality craft destination and assist its members to develop their business. There are currently 38 members of the collective with a new open call for membership in January 2024.

Chapter 9: Rural

Meath Made Craft and Creatives Collective Strategy launched, promoting Meath as a high-quality craft destination and assisting its members to develop their businesses



Native Tree Area Scheme - Engagement with Teagasc and landowners to support the creation of small native forests on farmland

Successful reuse of former NEC site in Ballivor by Gaelform

39,680 sq.m. of commercial Floor Space granted permission in rural areas since 2021



The Kilcloon Community Development won the 2023 Irish Planning Award for the Sustainable Communities and Placemaking category

Serviced Sites Initiative - project has commenced, assessing potentially suitable sites for affordable housing in Tier 5 and 6 Villages and Rural Nodes



Meath Co.Co. participated in National Hedgerow Week event with Teagasc at Grange in September 2023



Irish language pop up events, classes, and Ciorcal Comhrá Mór events

Ongoing consultations between Meath County Council and Údarás na Gaeltachta regarding schemes and supports available through Údarás for companies based in the Meath Gaeltacht.



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council



Chapter 10 Climate Change Strategy



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Chapter 10: Climate Change Strategy

Local authorities are best placed to work alongside communities and businesses to drive the change necessary to address climate change. Meath County Council has established a dedicated Climate Action Team to deliver on the goals and objectives of the 'Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030' Plan which include achieving our carbon emissions and energy efficiency targets for 2030 and 2050. We are facilitating six Sustainable Energy Communities throughout the county. With the support of the Council, these communities have come together to improve how energy is used and to develop a sustainable energy system for the benefit of their community.

Meath County Council has also prepared a Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 to set out how the local authority can help tackle climate change and promote a range of mitigation, adaptation, and other climate action measures, to help deliver on the national climate obligations and the Government's overall National Climate Objective. In order to ensure evidence-based climate action planning, the following reports were commissioned by Meath County Council:

1. **Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA)** that evaluates the current and future climate related impacts and risks faced by Meath County Council and the community of County Meath.
2. **Baseline Emissions Inventories (BEIs)** which detail the current sources of greenhouse gas emissions in Meath County Council, County Meath and 9 Decarbonising Zones across County Meath (Trim, Dunboyne, Duleek, Kells, Laytown- Bettystown, Ratoath, Navan, Ashbourne and Dunshaughlin).

The Meath County Council Draft Climate Action Plan is on public display from 17 November 2023 to 8 January 2024.

Meath County Council have started the implementation of ISO50001 within the organisation and its activities. The international standard ISO 50001 specifies requirements for establishing, implementing, maintaining, and improving an energy management system setting the Council on a pathway to achieving 50% energy efficiency by 2030 and net zero by 2050. This target is already engaged with the installation of 6 EV charge points in the car park of Buvinda House. The charge points will be for use by the public and Meath County Council current and future EV fleet vehicles. The charge points are AC chargers, with a capacity to charge at a rate of 22kW. The infrastructure is in place to allow future installations for up to 18 charge points as demand arises.

Buvinda House also saw the installation of Meath County Councils first Solar PV roof project, completed in August 2023. The 345 panels installed are anticipated reduce our consumption from the national grid by approx. 30%, resulting in an annual CO₂ reduction of 31 tonnes.

Chapter 10: Climate Change

Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 currently on display and to be adopted February 2024

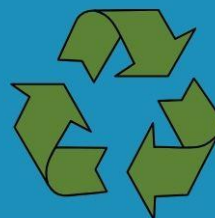
The plan aims to create decarbonising zones throughout Meath and improve the county's climate resiliency



A dedicated Climate Action Team has been established to strengthen energy management across the Council

Trim Air Quality Project commenced to raise awareness of the importance of air quality

6 sustainable communities established and supported by Meath County Council



Housing Department are converting 40-50 houses per annum to Air-Water Heat Source Pumps

All new builds by the Housing Department are using Air-Water Heat Source Pump systems



Sustainable Development Goal Workshops with primary schools

Energy Expo Event hosted by the Council

New water filling stations installed in Ashbourne, Trim, Navan and Ratoath.

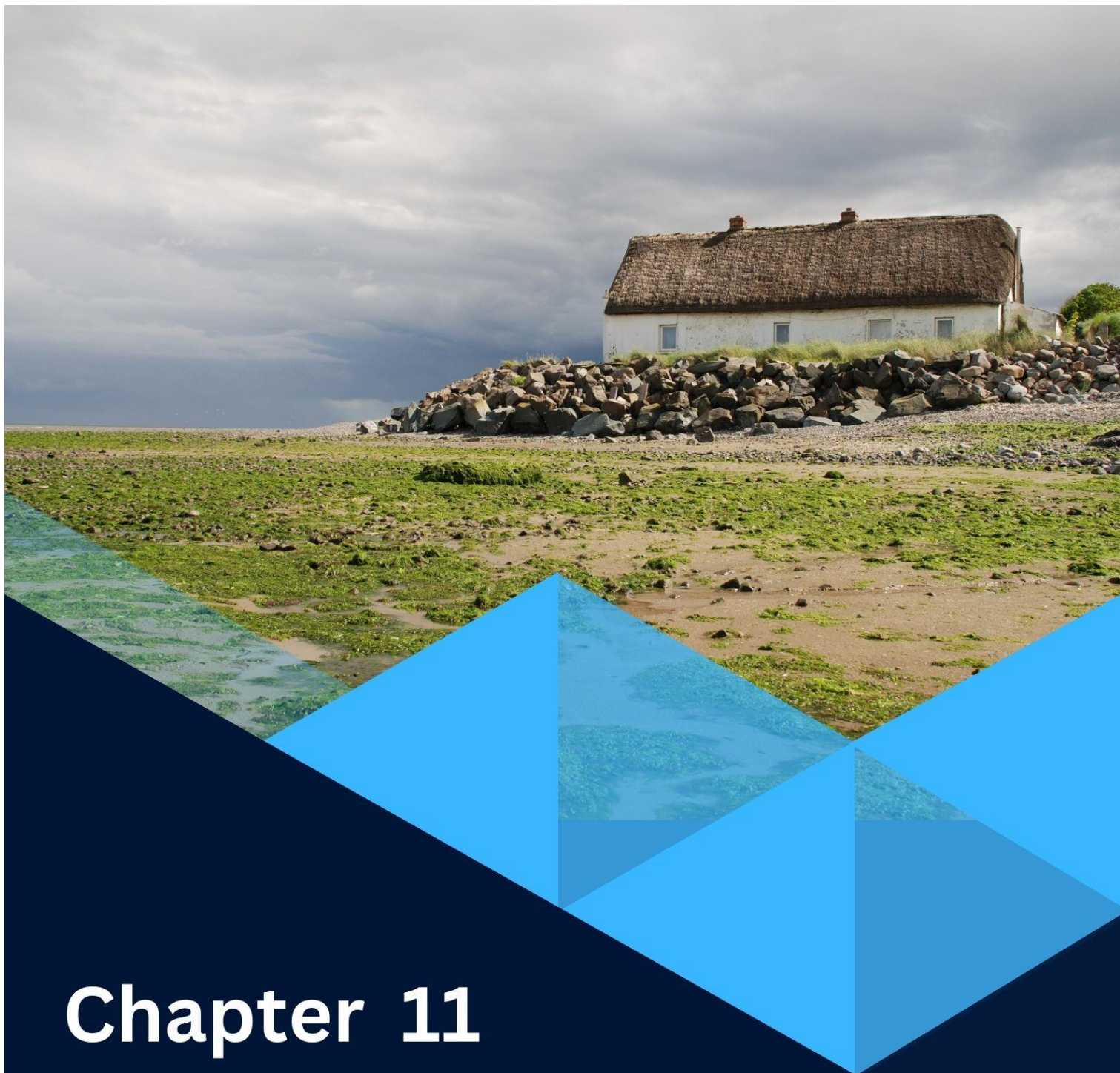


THE GLOBAL GOALS

MCC has erected 345 solar panels on the roof of Buvinda House which reduces the council's demand on the national grid by 30%



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council



Chapter 11

Development

Management Standards

and Land Use Zoning

Objectives



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Chapter 11: Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives

Meath County Council is committed to the sustainable growth and regeneration of Meath's urban settlements. This commitment involves detailed forward planning, development management, and enforcement of development standards across the county in accordance with its development plan and relevant legislation. This commitment also involves the preparation and implementation of Public Realm Plans, Town Centre First Plans, and Master Plans for the county. Several of our Public Realm Plans and Town Centre First Plans and key projects are financially supported through funds such as Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) and Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF).

The following table outlines progress made in relation to the preparation of the Public Realm Plans, Town Centre First Plans, Streetscape Enhancement and Regeneration Plans since the adoption of the County Development Plan in 2021.

Table 4: Schedule of Works

No.	Project Name	Sub Project	Current Project Status	Detail
Laytown Bettystown MD				
1	Slane Public Realm Plan & Implementation Strategy	N/A	Completed	Approved August 2022.
2	Bettystown and Laytown Public Realm Plan	N/A	Completed	Approved 2021.
3	Bettystown and Laytown Public Realm Plan	Laytown Park	Ongoing	Part 10 Application submitted to ABP July 2023. Awaiting Decision
4	Heritage Led Regeneration Plan for Duleek	N/A	Ongoing	Draft Plan submitted to Heritage Council November 2023.
Trim MD				
5	Enfield Town Centre First	N/A	Ongoing	Preliminary Plan prepared. November 2023.
6	Streetscape Enhancement Scheme	Market Street, Trim	Completed	Completed Oct 20203
7	Trim Library and Theatre	N/A	Completed	Opened May 2023
Kells MD				
8	Kells Public Realm and Regeneration Strategy	N/A	Ongoing	Consultants appointed. 2 no. public Consultation Events have taken place.
9	Oldcastle Public Realm Plan	N/A	Completed	Approved
10	Oldcastle Public Realm Plan	Oldcastle Square	Ongoing	3 rd party referral of Part 8 to ABP, decision awaited
11	Athboy Public Realm Plan	N/A	Completed	2021
12	Athboy Public Realm Plan	Relocation of Bus Stop	Ongoing	Active Travel to provide detail.

13	Amenity and Recreation Plan for Tower of Lloyd	N/A	Commenced	Ongoing- Consultants appointed (BDP) and initial public consultation has taken place. -Draft Sketchbook of proposals prepared.
Navan MD				
14	Flower Hill and Abbeylands Urban Design Plan	N/A	Completed	November 21
15	Flower Hill	Project D-Building Frontage Scheme	Ongoing	Currently at procurement stage for the appointment of the Consultants.
16	Renovation of St. Pat's Classical School	N/A	Part 8 approved	
17	Redevelopment of Former Spicers Bakery & Andy Brennan Park	N/A	Ongoing	Part 10 application submitted to ABP-Dec 2022. Awaiting Decision.
18	Johnstown Village Project	N/A	Ongoing	Consultants appointed-TPHC. 1 st Consultation Event with Community Group scheduled for November 2023
19	MP 6 Navan	N/A	Commencing	Consultants appointed- BDP
20	Co. Hall Regeneration Project	N/A	Commencing	Consultants appointed- Sheridan Woods.
Ratoath MD				
21	RRDF-Dunshaughlin Courthouse & Public Realm	N/A	Ongoing- Almost complete	Part 8 published. CE report currently under consideration by Ratoath MD members
Ashbourne MD				
22	Ashbourne Public Realm Plan		Completed	2018
23	Ashbourne Cycle Network Scheme	Cycle network main street	Complete	Active travel to confirm

Table 5 details the progress made in relation to the preparation and agreement of Masterplans within the county within the first 2 years of the CDP period. A Masterplan is identified and designated within the County Development Plan and sets out a vision for an area undergoing or due to undergo significant change and details a coordinated response to implementing that vision. Prior to the adoption of the CDP, 14 Masterplans had been prepared and approved by the Council (MP 2, MP 4, MP 5, MP 8, MP 9, MP 12, MP 14, MP 15, MP 19, MP 23, MP 26, MP 30, MP 37 and MP 38). Owing to zoning changes between the previous CDP and current CDP updates will be required to a number of the previously approved Masterplans. During the first 2 years of the CDP, three Masterplans have been prepared and approved while 6 Masterplans are currently being drafted following pre-planning meetings between landowners and the Council.

Table 5: Masterplan Summary

Settlement	CDP 2021-2027 Reference	Address/Location	Status 02-11-23
Navan	MP 1	Abbeylands/Blackcastle Demense, north of the River Blackwater and the R147, east of the N51 at the bottom of Flower Hill, Elliott's Mill	Awaiting preparation (draft currently being prepared)
Navan	MP 3	Abbeylands, located between Blackwater Public Park and former Kingscourt Rail Line	Awaiting preparation (draft currently being prepared)
Navan	MP 6	Townparks, located between Carriage Road, Trim Road and Dan Shaw Road	Awaiting preparation (draft currently being prepared)
Navan	MP 11	Nevinstown/Windtown, south of Ratholdron Road and north of River Boyne	Awaiting preparation (draft currently being prepared)
Ashbourne	MP18	Milltown, south of Ashbourne, off the N2	Agreed August 2022
Dunboyne Clonee	MP22	Dunboyne North	Agreed January 2023
Kells	MP27	East of Kells Business Park	Awaiting preparation (draft currently being prepared)
Trim	MP31	Lands to the west of Trim which include the OPW building and buildings which front onto Emmet Street	Awaiting preparation (draft currently being prepared)
Ratoath	MP33	Fairyhouse/Tattersalls and lands to the north	Awaiting preparation - (draft currently being prepared)
Ratoath	MP34	Commons/Ratoath, southwest of Ratoath	Agreed November 2022

Conclusions and Recommendations

Significant progress has been made in the implementation of the Meath County Development Plan 201-2027. The Two-Year Review has facilitated an overview on the policy and objectives within the CDP and further engagement with other sections of the Council in order to establish the usefulness, effectiveness and added value of policy and each of the objectives that are detailed in Appendix 1 of this report. There are over 1200 objectives within the CDP and it is the view of the Planning Department that this vast number of priorities and objectives can be streamlined in the next CDP based on the information currently being gathered through monitoring and implementation and being outlined in this report. The Planning Department will further utilize this review and issues and trends emerging to inform the next review of the CDP which will commence in 2 years time (unless Development Plans become 10 year plans as outlined in the Planning and Amendment Bill 2022).

A significant issue that emerged within the Planning Department over the past two years was the additional commitment of valuable scarce resources required to defend the five judicial reviews that were taken against the Development Plan following its adoption in November 2021. The details and updates on the five judicial reviews are outlined in Appendix 4. Apart from 2 cases that are decided in favour of the appellants, the three remaining cases still require additional inputs from the Planning Department and legal team. Two of the cases being 2021/959 JR (Killgeland Estates Ltd v MCC) and 2021/964 JR (Mc Garrell Reilly Homes Ltd / Alcove Ireland Ltd v MCC) are currently awaiting a decision of the Supreme Court following hearings held in October 2023.

At the time of writing this report, the Dolent Properties LP v Meath County Council 2021/970 JR had previously been deferred by the High Court pending the completion of the Ashbourne Flood Works Scheme to establish and verify the impact the flood alleviation scheme would have on the subject lands that were zoned F1 Open Space in the current Development Plan. A planning application was submitted to Meath County Council on 07 September 2023 (Planning Ref 23861) for a nursing home development and is the subject of a proposed material contravention of the plan under Section 34 (6) of the Act. The material contravention shall be presented to the Members of the Authority on Monday 04 December 2023 seeking a resolution to approve the development. Should this resolution be agreed, it will trigger a response from the applicant where they will likely seek to withdraw their existing JR challenge to the CDP.

One further case to note is the Protect East Meath v Meath County Council 2021/958 JR where the outcome of the case was that the majority of existing zoned residential land in Southern Environs of Drogheda was rezoned to White Land due mainly to the lack of an infrastructure assessment that was required to inform the zoning in the preparation of the CDP. The consequence of this decision by the High Court is that there is now a shortage of zoned residential lands in the Southern Environs of Drogheda and consequently the settlement cannot envisage the growth assigned to it under the NPF and RSES as a Regional Growth Centre. Following the order of the High Court, MCC must carry out an infrastructure assessment and subsequently vary the MCDP 2021-2027 under Section 13 of the Act. MCC have now progressed the infrastructure assessment (now labelled Settlement Capacity Audit (SCA) under the new 2022 Development Plan Guidelines) and is almost complete and shall inform proposed variation 02 to the MCDP whereby all lands in the Southern Environs of Drogheda will be reassessed and evaluated with a view to all lands being appropriately rezoned and additional lands being identified and zoned residential. Variation no 02 shall be published in draft in Q1 2024 and will be agreed and adopted in Q2 2024. This variation will further inform assist, guide and pave the way

for the progression of the Drogheda Joint Urban Area Plan currently being developed between Meath and Louth County Council as required in respective CDPs.

The current most significant challenges within the Development Plan are the fact that the future growth of the county is constrained by under delivery of residential units per annum and the lack of population growth targets being available in the Core Strategy and thus housing targets and zoned residential land. This is despite the fact that County Meath experienced the second highest growth rate in the state at 13.2% and now faces further challenges due to the constraints of the Core Strategy. Despite being only 2 years into the CDP Implementation, the following is a summary of the challenges facing Meath County Council in Housing delivery:

- 5 settlements have reached their population and housing growth targets as set out in Table 2.12 of the CDP;
- A further 4 settlements have almost reached their population and housing targets.
- Some of the remaining zoned residential land within respective towns and villages may not be released during the plan period thus further constraining residential development.
- A county wide SCA is required to identify those residential and economic lands which are serviced and serviceable within the plan period and shall be completed in accordance with NPO 72 and the revised Development Plan Guidelines July 2022. Once complete, the SCA will inform a proposed variation No 03 to the MCDP

Emerging from the above issues is the fact that Meath County Council need to focus on housing delivery and not on population and housing targets e.g. potential delivery versus actual delivery. These issues were discussed with Senior officials within the Department Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) at two meetings over the summer of 2023. This resulted in the DHLGH issuing Meath County Council with a letter that is provided within Appendix 5 of this report. The letter confirms the need for MCC to focus on housing delivery and not on the potential or likelihood of residential units being delivered over the plan period. In parallel with these meetings, the work in preparation of the 2 year report underlines the importance of continuous development plan monitoring and developing appropriate response to such issues emerging. MCC Planning Department have developed two new portals which are online Residential and Economic Monitors which are effectively 2 dashboards that reflect real time information from the Local Authority regarding residential and economic activity within the county. The outcome of all this work is that the Settlement and Core Strategy have been reviewed in detail and the evidence base that has been developed and outlined in this report requires 3 proposed variations to the MCDP 2021-2027 which are outlined below.

All other emerging issues from the 2-year review that require a Planning Department response or action is detailed in the Forward Planning Programme for 2023 /2024 (Appendix 3) and shall be further reviewed in 2025. All other issues emerging shall be communicated amongst all other sections of the Council and responded to accordingly with additional variations to the CDP under S13 of the Act, where required.

Key Recommendations

Chapter 2 Core Strategy

Three proposed variations are currently being prepared to the MCDP 2021-2027, all of which shall contribute positively to further housing delivery within County Meath.

1. **Variation No. 01 to the Meath CDP 2021-2027** – Proposed Variation No.1 will aim to incorporate core strategy flexibility guidance from the ‘*Development Plan Guidelines for Local Authorities 2022*’, into Chapter 2 ‘Core Strategy’ to ensure an adequate supply of housing can be delivered to meet demand in the county. Variation No. 1 will go on public display in January 2024. The proposed variation also includes a number of rezoning and new zonings to reflect current / existing and regularisation of non-confirming uses on subject lands.
2. **Variation No. 02 to the Meath CDP 2021-2027** – Proposed Variation No 02 will include a revised written statement and zoning map for the Southern Environs of Drogheda to respond to the High Court Order of Protect East Meath v Meath County Council 2021/958 JR. This will also ensure that Drogheda fulfils its role as a Regional Growth Centre as identified in NPF and RSES for EMRA area. The proposed variation will be informed by the Settlement Capacity Audit that is almost completed for the Southern Environs of Drogheda.
3. **Variation No. 03 to the Meath CDP 2021-2027** – Work is well under way on the Settlement Capacity Audit (SCA) to identify existing and unzoned contiguous lands which are serviced or are serviceable within the plan period and should be zoned to provide further residential development, employment, community or other required land uses. It is envisaged that the completion of the SCA will coincide with the NPF review and provision of new revised housing targets in March/April 2024. The SCA will also identify settlements that require additional zoned lands to meet demand for housing, employment or community development. It will also assess lands which have been zoned for a significant period and where it is confirmed that such lands will not come forward for development, rezoning of such lands will be considered.

Chapter 3 Settlement & Housing

4. The Council will continue progressing the Local Area Plan (LAP) work programme for 2024 (Appendix 3) which will include finalisation of the Joint Maynooth LAP, Joint Drogheda UAP and Navan LAP. Local Area Plans for other settlements will commence in order of the settlement hierarchy and where resources are available. The LAP work programme will be reviewed when the new Planning Bill is enacted by Government.
5. The Council will also continue progressing all relevant Public Realm and Town Centre First Plans and apply for funding to implement actions arising from these plans.

Chapter 4 Economic & Employment Strategy

6. The Council will publish the brochure on the 12 Strategic Employment Sites in County Meath and further promote economic development through promotional Videos for County Meath, Dunboyne and Navan.

7. The Planning and Economic Development Section will work together with the recently established Economic Forum in the development of a new Economic Strategy for County Meath in 2024
8. A marketing brochure for the remaining employment zonings will be prepared in 2024 to outline further the potential of the county to accommodate expanding and new businesses looking to develop within the County.

Chapter 5 Movement

9. The Council will continue the roll-out of active travel projects across the county and progress work on future cycle schemes, park and ride facilities and greenways. Work will continue on the identified road projects in Table 5.1 of the CDP and the Council will liaise with Irish Rail in relation to the Navan Rail Line and Dart + Programme.

Chapter 6 Infrastructure

10. The Council will continue to work closely with Uisce Eireann regarding the future servicing requirements of the county. Uisce Eireann will work closely with the Forward Planning Department in the preparation of the Settlement Capacity Audit to identify lands that are serviced or serviceable within the plan period and can be zoned in future variations.
11. The Council will also continue their work with National Broadband Ireland to connect another 12,607 premises to high speed broadband by mid-2025.

Chapter 7 Community Infrastructure

12. The Council will continue to liaise closely with the Department of Education in relation to future school requirements arising from significant housing planning permissions in all settlements in the county.
13. The Forward Planning Department have been monitoring social and community infrastructure grants of permission since the adoption of the CDP and will publish this information on the online monitoring dashboard in 2024.

Chapter 8 Heritage

14. The Council will continue to build on the success of the 100 heritage projects which have been delivered via grant allocations since 2021 and continue to apply for grant funding from Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and allocate for appropriate heritage projects across the county.

Chapter 9 Rural Development Strategy

15. The Council will continue to advance the Serviced Sites Initiative Project for potential suitable sites in Tier 5 and 6 Rural Villages and Rural Nodes. A number of pilot schemes will be presented to Senior management and the Members with a view to purchasing land and developing affordable housing schemes over the coming years. This work will be done in conjunction with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage under the Croi Conaithe Initiative.

Chapter 10 Climate Change

16. The Climate Action Plan will be adopted in early 2024 and will detail appropriate actions to facilitate and enable effective climate action at a local and community level. The Climate Action Team will work with other Council Departments and stakeholders to implement the actions. Any implications or outcomes of the strategy that have land use implications, shall be considered accordingly and incorporated into the MCDP 2021-2027 by way of a S13 Variation.

Appendices

Appendix	Title
1	Meath County Council Development Plan 2021-2027 Objective Progress List
2	SEA Report
3	Forward Planning Work Programme 2024
4	Judicial Review Summary 2021-2023
5	Correspondence from Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to Meath County Council on 4 September 2023