



# Meath County Development Plan 2019-2025

## STRATEGIC ISSUES PAPER

MEATH:  
EUROPE'S **BUSINESS**  
**READY** REGION



comhairle chontae na mí  
*meath county council*

*Population of just under 200,000*

*Highly skilled workforce: 100,000 of the population in the active labour force*

*A dynamic business environment*

*Vibrant communities*

*Great quality of life*

*Beautiful landscapes and historical settings*

*Great connectivity with the National Gateway and beyond: 4 major motorways running through the County*

*Higher than average high-speed broadband*

### What is a Development Plan?

A development plan is a document which details the overall strategy of the council for the proper planning and sustainable development of an area over a six year period. It generally consists of a written statement and accompanying maps. The plan covers areas such as housing, infrastructure and community facilities.

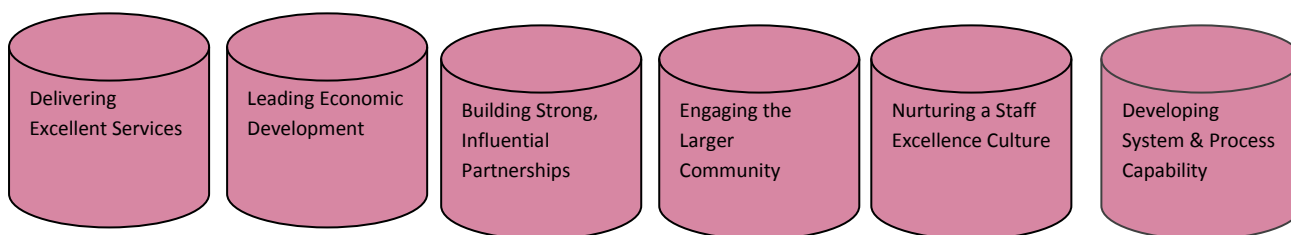
### Why get involved?

The development plan presents an opportunity to the general public to shape their County into the future and have their say when it comes to important issues such as housing, economic development, communities and heritage.

### Meath's Vision

The vision statement for Meath set out in the current County Development Plan 2013-2019 is 'Meath is a county that fosters sustainability throughout its vibrant communities, dynamic economic and unique cultural and natural heritage'.

The six strategic pillars of Meath County Councils Corporate Plan 2015-2019 are as follows:



Buvinda House- Meath County Council Corporate Headquarters

As part of this process we are seeking your views on **your vision for the County**.

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It's your County. Have your say.....!

- What kind of County would you like to see Meath become by 2025?
- What critical elements would need to be in place to achieve the kind of County we are striving for?
- What are the main challenges which would prevent this happening?
- How would you change the current vision statement for County Meath?

## Population and Housing

### Population Change

- County Meath has experienced significant population increase over the last twenty years growing from 109,732 in 1996 to 184,135 in 2011 and 195,000 in 2016.
- The population of Meath now accounts for 10.2% of the total population within the Greater Dublin Area.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest rate of population growth in the Country (2016 Census).

### Housing

- Ensuring sufficient, stable and sustained provision of housing that is affordable, in the right locations, meets peoples different needs and is of lasting quality is one of the greatest challenges facing the country at present.
- Meath has a significant role to play in addressing the current national housing crisis by providing solutions to housing shortages.
- There has been a strong increase in the number of commencement notices (16 received to date) submitted for residential schemes in 2016.
- The County Development Plan will contain a new housing strategy which will set out to identify the housing needs arising in the County over the period of the plan. It will address issues such as future need and availability of zoned land for housing, provision of a suitable mix of unit types to cater for all housing need requirements in all urban centres.

### Settlement

Meath's settlement hierarchy is set out below:

Type of Settlement	Centres
Large Growth Town I	Navan, Drogheda Environs
Large Growth Town II	Dunboyne, Maynooth Environs
Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns	Ashbourne, Kells, Trim, Kilcock Environs, Dunshaughlin <sup>3</sup>
Small Towns	Athboy, Bettystown/Laytown/Mornington East, Duleek, Enfield, Oldcastle, Ratoath, Stamullen
Villages	Ballivor, Carlanstown, Carnaross, Clonard, Clonee, Crossakiel, Donore, Drumconrath, Gibbstown, Gormonston, Julianstown, Kentstown, Kilbride, Kildalkey, Kilmainhamwood, Kilmessan, Longwood, Mornington/Donacorney, Moynalty, Nobber, Rathcairn, Rathmolyon, Slane, Summerhill



A new National Planning Framework<sup>1</sup> is currently being prepared. Regional Spatial & Economic Strategies<sup>2</sup> for each region<sup>3</sup> which will influence settlement hierarchies within the region will be completed following publication of the National Planning Framework.

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## It's your County. Have your say.....!

- Do you think the settlement hierarchy should be changed and if so, how?
- For example Variation No 3 of the current County Development Plan identifies potential for the growth of Stamullen and Enfield from small towns to moderate sustainable growth towns within the County Settlement Hierarchy.
- Where should the increase in population within the County be directed to achieve balanced growth in accordance with regional guidance?
- How can County Meath contribute to addressing national housing issues?
- How can the Development Plan aid and facilitate the delivery of more homes in the right locations to increase supply?

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<sup>1</sup> The new National Planning Framework will provide a framework for national planning, pulling together relevant Government policies and investment on national and regional development. It will have a focus on economic development and investment in housing, water services, transport, communications, energy, health and education infrastructure.

<sup>2</sup> The objective of regional spatial and economic strategies shall be to support the implementation of the National Spatial Strategy and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the region for which the strategies are prepared which shall be consistent with the National Spatial Strategy and the economic policies or objectives of the Government.

<sup>3</sup> Meath is located within the Eastern Strategic Planning Area of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly along with Louth, Kildare and Wicklow.

- How and where can the housing needs of all sectors of our community be adequately accommodated?
- How can the Development Plan ensure that an appropriate mix of units to accommodate a suitable range of tenures is provided in the County?

## Economic Development, Enterprise and Employment

Since the publication of 'Putting People First' Meath County Council has taken a very proactive approach to leading economic development in the County with the setting up of the Meath Economic Forum in 2013 and the publication of the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath 2014-2022. This will ensure that Meath County Council is part of the national economic recovery and will play an active role in the wider region.

### Economic Strategy

- The Strategy contains 8 no. key actions/recommendations designed to achieve the projected level of employment growth in Meath by 2022 of an additional 7,500 jobs.
- Huge potential was identified due to the high levels of educational attainment among the County's residents. The challenge is to reverse unsustainable commuter trends with 54% of our working population commuting to work outside the county daily.
- Meath has an employment rate of 82% with 74,342 of its residents (available for employment) in employment.
- Meath has a strong base of indigenous companies, however the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) sector is not as prominent. The proactive approach taken by Meath County Council in relation to economic development over recent years has resulted in increased numbers of FDI companies setting up in the County.
- Challenges such as the potential impact on Foreign Direct Investment resulting from international uncertainty surrounding the fall out over 'Brexit' needs to be met head on.
- Meath is moving towards creating sustainable 'live-work' communities in a number of higher tier settlements.

### Retail

- Meath experiences significant leakage of retail expenditure to other counties in the area of higher order comparison goods.
- It is necessary to develop a quality shopping and commercial environment in the County in order to combat dereliction and vacancy.
- Encouraging town centre vibrancy is a challenge facing the County today.



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## It's your County. Have your say.....!

- How can Meath be promoted to attract inward investment in employment and enterprise?
- How can the County Development Plan best support new and evolving work patterns which reduce the demand to travel, including e-business and home based economic activity?
- How can the County reduce comparison retail leakage to other counties?
- How can we retain vibrancy in our town centres?
- How can we optimise the balance of traditional on-street retailing and newer forms of shopping?

## Tourism

Meath has a strong tourism product with very significant potential including:

- The UNESCO World Heritage site of Bru na Boinne;
- Trim Castle;
- Hill of Tara;
- Hill of Slane;
- Kells High Cross and Round Tower;
- Loughcrew Cairns;
- Fairyhouse Racecourse;
- Tayto Park



Boyne Valley Drive



Trim Castle, Co. Meath

Meath occupies a central role in the attraction of tourists Ireland as the County hosts some of the most important sites in the Ireland's Ancient East brand.

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## It's your County. Have your say.....!

- How can the County Development Plan support tourism?
- What can Meath do to attract more domestic and overseas visitors?
- Are we making best use of our existing World Heritage Site at Bru na Boinne and the Royal Sites of Tara and Kells, which are listed on the Tentative World Heritage Site List?
- How can a balance be achieved between protecting natural landscapes of Meath as a resource for tourism and residents of the county whilst accommodating development necessary to sustain the rural community?

## Urban and Architectural Design

Creating spaces for people to live and work requires good design. People will be encouraged to live in spaces that have a sense of place. Urban design is essentially a tool to assist in the craft of creating quality urban spaces; it is about how buildings are put together to shape and enliven our streets and civic spaces. Good urban design includes:

- Respecting the existing character;
- Creating a clear distinction between public and private spaces and ensuring that public areas are suitably supervised by adjoining buildings;
- Ensuring that an area is easy to navigate and is permeable;
- Facilitating diversity in terms of uses and appearance;
- Facilitating longevity, by designing streets and buildings that can be adapted to a variety of uses during their lifetime;
- Encouraging visual identity and interest and discourage functional anonymity.

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## It's your County. Have your say.....!

- How can we make our urban areas more attractive places to live in?
- How can we make our urban areas safer for more vulnerable members of our community?
- Why is it perceived that urban living is less attractive than living in the countryside?
- How can the County Development Plan encourage efficient use of land and appropriate densities in the right locations?
- How can the County Development Plan improve the quality of our built environment?

- What type of advice should be contained in the County Development Plan in relation to urban design?

## Transportation and Movement

One of the key roles of the County Development Plan is to implement national policy regarding road, rail and public transport generally. The provision of transportation infrastructure including road and rail together with public transport projects must be integrated within a sustainable settlement strategy. The existing motorway network functions as an engine for economic growth acting as arteries radiating outwards from the National Gateway.



### Integrated Land Use and Transportation Planning

Land use and the manner in which it is developed is the primary influencing factor for travel demand. National and regional transport policy emphasises the need to reduce the demand for travel and the reliance on the private car in favour of public transport, cycling and walking. The National Transport Authority has a wide range of roles and functions when it comes to transport planning and policy

development. In April 2016, the **Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), 2016-2035** was adopted and this document will guide decisions on transport throughout the GDA and will contribute to the economic, social and cultural progress of Dublin, Meath, Wicklow and Kildare by providing for the efficient, effective and sustainable movement of people and goods.

The principles of land use and transport integration are set down in the NTA's Transport Strategy as follows:

- Reducing the need to travel;
- Reducing the distance travelled;
- Reducing the time taken to travel;
- Promoting walking and cycling; and;
- Promoting public transport use.

### Rail and Road Infrastructure

In Meath, rail services are available at stations located in Dunboyne, Dunboyne North (M3 Parkway), Enfield, Laytown and a limited service provided from Gormanston. Stations located immediately adjoining the County are also used by Meath residents at Maynooth, Clonsilla, Drogheda and Balbriggan. The viability of a rail connection to Navan will be re-evaluated in the next NTAs Transport Strategy, taking into account the level of development that will have taken place over the

next six years, thus the approved line of the future rail link to Navan is to be protected from development intrusion.

There have been major improvements in the road network in the county over the last decade. The NTAs Transport Strategy for the GDA recognises the need to improve the capacity of the N3 between Mulhuddart and the M50 with junction upgrades and additional lanes required. Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and Meath County Council remain committed to a bypass of Slane as a means of enhancing safety in the town centre by removing through traffic, particularly HGVs while also improving journey times along the corridor. TII is also committed to facilitating the delivery of a network of distributor roads in our towns and villages.

### **Walking and Cycling**

Walking and cycling are the most sustainable forms of transport. Walking and cycling networks need to be continuous and cover large areas of towns with links to longer distance routes. The NTA Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 emphasises the importance of investment in this area.

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## **It's your County. Have your say.....!**

- How can the County Development Plan promote integration of land use and transport?**
- How can the Council promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport more?**
- How can rural living be more sustainable and would measures such as better bus stop accessibility achieve this?**
- How can we create successful streets that easily facilitate the needs of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians in our towns and residential areas?**
- How do we maximise and make best use of existing capacity in our road and rail system?**



- What are your views on funding mechanisms for necessary road improvements to access community facilities?

## Infrastructure

### Drinking Water and Wastewater

Since January 2014 Irish Water has responsibility for the development and operation of public water services in Ireland<sup>4</sup>.

The current daily water demand in County Meath is c. 40,000m<sup>3</sup>/day. There has been a substantial amount of capital investment over the past 15 years or so resulting in adequate capacity (water and/or wastewater) and security of supply in many areas of the County.

### Water Conservation



In spite of the sizeable 20% increase in population in the County in the period from 2006-2016 and the associated expected increase in water demand, Meath County Council has significantly reduced water distribution input from 50,000m<sup>3</sup>/day in 2006 to the current figure of 40,000m<sup>3</sup>/day. This has been achieved through active leakage control, demand management, pressure management and watermains rehabilitation. This commitment and investment has paid significant dividends, placing the County in an excellent position to facilitate future economic and population growth.

### Surface Water and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)

Surface water drainage is the responsibility of the Council and all new development sites must be managed through Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). SuDS aims to reduce the rate and quantity of surface water runoff, and improve water quality, from developed sites replicating, as closely as possible, the predevelopment 'greenfield' situation.

### Waste Management

The Eastern and Midland Regional Waste Plan 2015-2021 highlights the importance of minimisation and treatment of waste produced in the region. Meath County Council promotes waste prevention and minimisation through source reduction, producer responsibility and public awareness. In particular the Council has a strong role in the promotion of waste prevention through its network of recycling centres.

### Electrical and Gas Supply

The supply of electricity and gas throughout Meath is an important factor in the provision and location of employment and other development. The Council will continue to work alongside key energy providers in facilitating the further development of electricity and gas networks in the County. The County Development Plan provides policy for the sustainable development of energy infrastructure in Meath.

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<sup>4</sup> Water supply and wastewater

## Telecommunications and Broadband

Ireland continues to have a poor broadband performance relative to other European countries. Advancement in telecommunication infrastructure and performance represents one of the most critical steps in creating a more competitive economy. Meath County Council will endeavour to facilitate service providers in the development of key telecommunications infrastructure.

## Renewable Energy

Development of alternative energy sources is a priority at National and European level for both environmental and energy policy reasons. The context in Ireland is set by Government policies for the provision of electricity from renewable and indigenous sources in line with official European and United Nations targets for reducing dependency on fossil fuels and emissions of greenhouse gases.

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## It's your County. Have your say.....!

- How can we encourage water conservation?
- Are there significant factors contributing to deterioration in the water quality of groundwater or rivers?
- How can the County Development Plan support the relevant agencies in the provision of:
  - Electricity;
  - Gas;
  - Water and Wastewater;
  - Renewable Energy;
  - Telecommunication and broadband infrastructure?
  -
- Are there adequate recycling facilities in the County and if not where should they be located?
- What do we need to do to promote waste reduction in the County? Is there a need for additional recycling centres and bring banks?

## Environment

As part of the Development Plan review Meath County Council is required to carry out a number of environmental assessments of the Meath Development Plan 2019-2025. These include a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), an Appropriate Assessment (AA) and also a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of Development Plans is required under the EU SEA Directive 2001/42/EC. SEA is a statutory process, involving the evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the new Development Plan before a decision has been made to adopt it. The objective of the SEA process is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and promote sustainable development by contributing to the integration of environmental considerations with the preparation of statutory plans.

### Habitats Directive and Appropriate Assessment

The Development Plan will be subject to Appropriate Assessment, as required by the European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The Directive aims to create a network of protected wildlife sites in Europe through the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) collectively known as Natura 2000 sites. Appropriate Assessment is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of the Plan, separate from and in combination with other plans and projects, on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites in view of the conservation objectives of the sites. Within Meath there are 8 SAC sites and 3 SPA sites<sup>5</sup>.

### Flood Risk Assessment

The EU Floods Directive (FD) 2007/60/EC on the 'Assessment and Management of Flood Risks' requires member states to assess and manage flood risks. The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) & Office of Public Works (OPW) prepared the 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DECLG & OPW, 2009) in order to integrate the assessment and management of flood risk into the planning process. The Guidelines indicate that Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be integrated into the SEA process. Whilst the review of the Development Plan will be informed by national planning policy such as the Guidelines on Flood Risk Management and also regional planning guidelines, they must take all practicable steps to ensure the identification of any areas at risk of flooding and flood zones.

### Climate Change

Climate change is recognised as a significant global environmental problem. Evidence of this can be seen in the changes to our average temperature, rainfall intensity / patterns, increased flooding

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<sup>5</sup> Full details of the SACs and SPAs in Meath can be obtained from the National Parks and Wildlife Service ([www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie)), where detailed descriptions including Qualifying/Feature Interests and Site Specific Conservation Objectives can be sourced

and extreme weather events. It is accepted that this is likely to continue and that we need to adapt to these changes. In December 2012 the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG) published the “National Climate Change Adaptation Framework”. The framework requires local authorities to integrate climate change adaptation into development planning. Climate change adaptation will inform policies and objectives throughout the plan process with increased emphasis on sustainable development and travel patterns, energy use and the protection of green infrastructure.

This will be the first time that a Climate Change Strategy has been prepared for the County.

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## **It’s your County. Have your say.....!**

- How can the Council achieve a balance between the growth of the County and the protection of the Environment?**
- Are there any methods the Council should utilise to maximise renewable energy provision?**
- As a maritime County how can the County Development Plan increase awareness and assist in reducing the impacts of climate change in Meath?**

## Rural Development

### Agriculture

Rural areas within Meath are home to a diverse range of uses including agricultural and equine industries, centres of food production, recreational and tourist activities and established villages and one-off housing. Agriculture remains an important economic activity in the County; however with a limited amount of the labour force now working in agriculture, diversification and other employment opportunities are encouraged in order to sustain rural communities.

### Forestry

Forests and woodlands have a significant recreational and amenity value; however County Meath has one of the lowest ratios of planted area in the state. The introduction of large scale forestry areas can have negative impacts and thus must be appropriate in terms of scale and location, so as to not be visually obtrusive.

### Equine Industry

Meath is one of the country's most important centres for the bloodstock industry. The equine industry is a valued asset and is hugely important to the economic performance of the County. There are a number of other associated enterprises, dependent on the bloodstock industry, that have been established in the County and which provide employment and wealth creation.

### Extractive Industry

Aggregates are a significant natural resource. By their nature, aggregates can only be worked where they occur. It is important that these resources are developed with the principles of sustainable development and environmental management in mind.



### Rural Housing

Meath County Council recognises the long tradition of people living in rural areas and promotes sustainable rural settlements as a key component of delivering balanced regional development. The Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 identified three area types in the County following an assessment of the socio-economic profile of the County. Rural housing poses a number of significant challenges for rural Meath which will be examined as part of the Development Plan review. In particular there is significant pressure for rural housing proximate to Dublin and other urban centres.

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## It's your County. Have your say.....!

- What type of development and services are required in rural areas in order to support existing rural communities?
- Are rural areas experiencing too much pressure to accommodate rural housing at the cost of allowing our villages to decline?
- Can the amenities and economic resources of the countryside be protected while providing for sustainable rural housing?
- How can the Council support sustainable agriculture, the equine industry and rural based industry?
- What can we do to ensure the retention and maintenance of existing essential rural services?
- Are there any rural settlements within the Metropolitan area with the potential to accommodate rural type housing as a means of easing the pressure on rural areas for one-off housing?
- How can we improve the design of rural dwellings and buildings in County Meath?



## Social, Community and Cultural Development

The Regional Planning Guidelines require Planning Authorities to adopt objectives that facilitate the social, community and cultural needs of all persons and communities through the provision of well dispersed and easily accessible social and community infrastructure, which contribute positively to an enhanced quality of life. The review of the County Development Plan presents an opportunity to review existing provision across the County in the context of settlement and population characteristics and to plan for future needs.

### Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

Under the Local Government Reform Act 2014, each Local Authority was directed to set up a Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). The LCDC was established for the purpose of developing, coordinating and implementing a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development in the county. In Meath the LCDC consists of 19 members from the public and private sectors. The LCDC has responsibility for the preparation of a 6 year Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) along with monitoring and overseeing the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and Leader programmes. This Plan sets out economic and community objectives that will promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the County. The LECP addresses a wider range of community issues, including developing infrastructure to address social exclusion, poverty and disadvantage, reverse social and economic decline and to realise growth potential and the sustainability of communities. The Meath LECP was completed in 2015.

### Education and Childcare

Educational facilities have an important role to play in developing sustainable and balanced communities and encouraging families to live in the county. The Council will continue to work with the Department of Education and other stakeholders in the provision of educational facilities. The provision of childcare facilities is an important factor for economic and social wellbeing. Quality childcare can also make a significant contribution to healthy development in the early years of a child's life. While the Council is not directly involved in the provision of childcare services, the Development Plan should ensure that sufficient facilities are provided particularly in newly developing areas and sustained where possible in existing towns and villages.

### Healthcare

Healthcare and medical facilities are provided by public, private and voluntary agencies within the County. The primary role of Meath County Council in relation to healthcare is to ensure that there is an adequate policy framework in place and that healthcare facilities are permitted subject to good planning practice. Meath County Council continues to be committed to facilitating the provision of the regional hospital site at Nevinstown, North Navan.

### Nursing Homes

For people in need of residential care for any number of reasons, the location of facilities is extremely important. Nursing homes for the elderly can be an important part of the community, and are encouraged to be located in built up areas close to shops and other community facilities convenient for residents to avoid social exclusion and isolation.

## Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is about the wellbeing of individuals, families, social groups and communities. Creating a more socially inclusive society by alleviating social exclusion, poverty and deprivation is a major challenge. The Development Plan has a role in facilitating such initiatives through promoting good placemaking, for example ensuring new developments are designed with good connectivity and permeability for all. Social inclusion will continue to be a cross cutting theme within the new Plan.

## Arts and Culture

The arts and cultural sector in Meath is a vibrant one, which encompasses a broad range of activities and is of benefit to the diverse population of the County. The County Council seeks to increase access to, awareness of and participation in the arts by all sectors and has a strong promotional role in events such as the Hay Festival, Spirits of Meath festival and various events in the Solstice Arts Centre. The Development Plan has a role in terms of continuing to explore possibilities for the development of further cultural facilities across the county and to encourage the creative sector to continue to contribute to the prosperity of the County.

## Libraries

Meath County Council manages and operates the county public library service from its headquarters in Navan. In addition there are 12 branch libraries throughout the County. Meath County Council encourages groups and individuals to use the library service facilities for a wide range of activities from exhibitions to adult education classes etc...

## Fire Service

There are 71 retained firefighters and 1 full-time Station Officer throughout the county, based at 7 stations in Navan, Trim, Kells, Oldcastle, Nobber, Dunshaughlin and Ashbourne. The cost of operating the Fire Service is approximately €4 million annually.

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## It's your County. Have your say.....!

- How can the Council work with Education stakeholders to facilitate current and future educational requirements in appropriate locations?
- How can the County Development Plan assist the library service to continue to play an active role in all communities?
- Are the needs of different cultural, ethnic, youth, elderly and persons with a disability being accommodated in our community?

- Are there adequate healthcare facilities in your area, readily accessible to the people that they are intended to serve?
- How can we increase volunteerism in the County?
- How can we address commuting issues in terms of building sustainable communities?
- How can the County Development Plan maximise the potential of the diverse culture of the County, which is emphasised by the fact that 37 languages are spoken by citizens of the County?
- What policies can the County Development Plan include to encourage the creative sector to continue to contribute to the prosperity of the County?

## Landscape, Heritage and Green Infrastructure

### Landscape

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended states that landscape has the same meaning as in Article 1 of the European Landscape Convention (ELC), i.e. *“a landscape is an area, as perceived by local people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”*.

The ELC under Article 5(d) requires landscape to be integrated into:

- Regional and town planning policies;
- Cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies;
- Any other policies with possible direct and indirect impacts on landscape.

The new Development Plan will seek to maintain the protection afforded to landscapes in the current development plan and to incorporate any new or emerging requirements

### Natural Heritage

Our natural heritage includes everything from people, plants and animals and it underpins important economic sectors such as agriculture and tourism. Meath hosts a wealth of wildlife including many threatened habitats and plant and animal species which are protected by law. Habitat fragmentation and loss are the most important factors causing the decline of habitats, plant and animal species in Ireland and also in Meath. It is vital as Meath develops that not only the designated nature conservation sites and their surrounding lands are protected, but that the habitats in the wider landscape and the connections between them are protected. The core nature conservation areas are the European designated sites, which are part of the Europe-wide Natura 2000 network. There are a number of internationally and nationally important sites designated for nature conservation in the County. These sites have been designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. The new Development Plan will seek to maintain the protection afforded to the designated sites and the ecological network in the current Development Plan.

### Cultural Heritage

The historic story of the people of Meath is contained within the archaeological sites, monuments, and historic buildings that cover the county and formulate the cultural heritage of historic settlements in Meath. The survival of the cultural heritage of Meath is a priority for Meath County Council. Protection is provided for this by the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2014. Our cultural heritage is an important part of what makes Meath special and is an asset we should protect.



The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bru na Boinne contains many outstanding archaeological features and lies in the lower plain of a river valley in which the watercourse defines a large 'U Shape'. The site is comprehensively identified in the Archaeological Inventory of County Meath and is given legal protection in the Record of Monuments. Meath County Council is committed to the protection and conservation of the World Heritage Site.

## Green Infrastructure

Our natural capital is contained in networks of green space and water capable of delivering ecosystem services and an enhanced quality of life to people. This resource is commonly referred to as green infrastructure, and is as important as any other form of infrastructure which benefits our communities. The multifunctional role of green infrastructure enhances opportunities for recreation and tourism, encourages new business to invest in the county and has a role in climate change adaptation. The current Development Plan identifies green infrastructure as a key strategic asset for the county. The Meath Development Plan 2019-2025 can build on this by further integrating green infrastructure approaches into policy, plans and strategy and by seeking to mobilise investment in key green infrastructure projects and places.

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## It's your County. Have your say.....!

- How can change to the quality, character and amenity value of our landscapes be managed?
- Are there any buildings or structures of special interest in your area or anywhere in Meath that should be added to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS)?
- How can the County Development Plan encourage the reuse of Protected Structures that have fallen into disuse?
- Should we change any of our existing Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) or can you identify any new ones?
- How can natural heritage and biodiversity be enhanced?
- How can greater access to the natural, built and archaeological heritage be facilitated, while having regard to the sensitive nature of many sites?

# How to Make a Submission

Meath County Council invites any interested parties to make submissions in respect of the review of the existing County Development Plan and the preparation of a new Development Plan to the Planning Department, Meath County Council, Buvinda House, Dublin Road, Navan, C15 Y291, **before 3.30 pm on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2017.**

In respect of the making of submissions/observations please note the following:

- Submissions/observations regarding objectives and policies to deliver an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the development plan may be made.
- Children or groups or associations representing the interests of children are entitled to make submissions or observations regarding objectives and policies to deliver an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the development plan.
- The Planning Authority intends to review the zoning of the area of the development plan for the purposes of developing objectives and policies to deliver an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the development plan and the core strategy.
- **Requests or proposals for the zoning of particular land for any purpose shall not be considered at this stage. (Any such submissions will be returned)**

Please make your submission by one medium only i.e. in hard copy or via the website. This will avoid the duplication of submission reference numbers and will streamline the process. Please include your name and address on a separate page to the content of your submission in order to assist Meath County Council in complying with the provisions of the Data Protection Act. Your assistance on these issues is appreciated.

Submissions or observations in electronic format can be made on the website at <http://countydevelopmentplanreview.meath.ie/>, **before 3.30pm on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2017.**

Copies of the Strategic Issues Paper are available for purchase from the Planning Department, Buvinda House, Dublin Road, Navan, C15 Y291. Please contact 046-9097000 or email [cdpquery@meathcoco.ie](mailto:cdpquery@meathcoco.ie)