

County Kildare Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2029



Kildare Local Economic and Community Plan is accompanied by, and should be read in conjunction with, the following documents available at:

<https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/Community/KildareLCDC/LocalEconomicandCommunityPlan/>

- **Co. Kildare LECP Socio-Economic Statement July 2023**– outlines the LECP draft vision and draft high-level goals.
- **Co. Kildare LECP Baseline Report July 2023** - provides data updates to inform the Socio-Economic Statement.
- **Co. Kildare LECP Policy Review July 2023** - reviews relevant EU, national, regional and local policies and plans.
- **Co. Kildare LECP Consultation report November 2023** - outlines the consultation process and outcomes to inform the final LECP vision and high-level goals.
- **Co. Kildare LECP Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Reports** – outlines the outcome of the screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment.¹
- **Co. Kildare Census 2022 reports** - from All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO) - provide updated datasets from Census 2022 which informed the final LECP.

¹ See appendix five.

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Glossary

AA:	Appropriate Assessment
AIRO:	All-Island Research Observatory
ASG:	Advisory Steering Group
CAP:	Common Agricultural Policy
CE:	Chief Executive
CKLP:	County Kildare LEADER Partnership
CYPSC:	Children and Young People's Services Committee
DEIS:	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DHLGH:	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
DRCD:	Department of Rural and Community Development
DZ:	Decarbonising Zone
EMRA:	Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
EU:	European Union
FDI:	Foreign Direct Investment
FRC:	Family Resource Centres
JT:	Just Transition
LAP:	Local Area Plan
KCC:	Kildare County Council
KCCC:	Kildare County Childcare Committee
Kildare:	Kildare is used to refer to the County of, or Local Authority area of, Kildare throughout this plan
KWETB:	Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board
LCDC:	Local Community Development Committee
LDS:	Local Development Strategy
LECP:	Local Economic and Community Plan

MASP:	Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan
MD:	Municipal District
NPF:	National Planning Framework
NPO:	National Policy Objective
PPN:	Public Participation Network
RSES:	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
SAC:	Special Areas of Conservation
SEA:	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SPC:	Strategic Policy Committee
UNSDG:	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

1 Introduction

This is County Kildare's second Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). The initial Kildare LECP (2016) was formulated during the stabilisation and initial recovery from the deep recession that began in 2008 and impacted all facets of Irish economic and community life. Since then, there has been significant economic growth, full employment and increased public spending nationally. However, the intervening period has also presented many challenges, including Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic and war in Ukraine. Therefore, the socio-economic context has changed significantly since the first Kildare LECP.² The following sections of the plan detail this evolution and include the priority goals and objectives to underpin the development of Kildare over the next six years. A two-year implementation plan, with prioritised actions is being finalised.

1.1 Context

The passing into law of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 resulted in a number of changes to the administration of local government in Ireland. Among the more significant of these developments was a new statutory requirement that local authorities should prepare an integrated Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), with specific community and economic elements. Local Economic and Community Plans are statutory plans, and the Local Government Reform Act 2014 also provides a stronger and clearer role for local government in community and economic development. It requires all Local Authorities to lead and oversee the development of LECPs in their areas.

The purpose of the LECP is to set out the objectives and actions to promote Kildare's economic and local/community development for a six-year period. The implementation of the plan will be led by Kildare County Council (KCC), directly, as well as in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders. It is a requirement that LECPs align with other key plans, including the County Development Plan. The LECP is the framework for a range of strategies and informs the priorities for community and economic development of the county. In addition, applications for funding to national funders are increasingly required to align with the LECP, e.g., EU Just Transition funding.

² It was agreed to delay the development of the second LECP nationally due to COVID-19 and the Ukrainian Crisis.

1.2 Kildare LECP Development

In February 2023, KCC commenced the LECP 2024-2029 planning process. It followed detailed national guidelines.³ The table below, taken from the guidelines, outlines the six distinct stages required to develop and implement the plan in Kildare:



The process of developing the Kildare LECP is outlined in further detail in section two of this plan.

³ Department of Rural and Community Development and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage *Local Economic and Community Plan Guidelines 2021*

1.3 LECP Principles

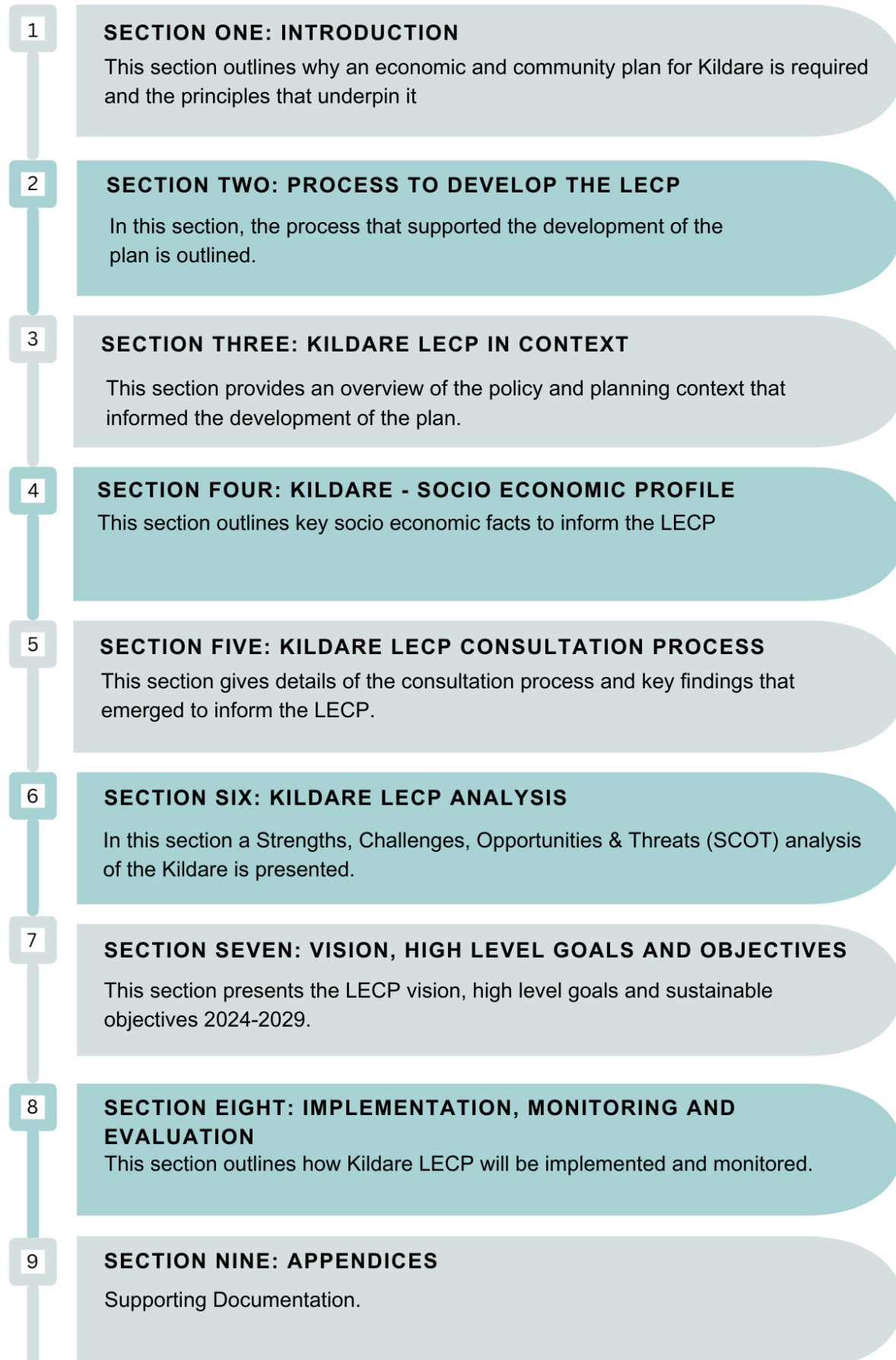
The following nine principles underpin the Kildare LECP⁴:

Respect	Commit to respect the diversity of knowledge, skills, views and lived experiences brought to the LECP by all stakeholders. In addition, bodies will make every effort to maximise the potential this diversity brings while managing, in a positive and inclusive way, any conflict or disagreements which may arise.
Subsidiarity	Recognise and facilitate the ability of communities, whether communities of interest or geographic communities, to influence and, where possible, take decisions and actions, promoting power sharing and the exercise of power as close to communities as possible.
Harmonisation	Ensure consistency with existing strategies and implement agreed objectives and actions. Support and facilitate approaches promoting harmonisation and common standards of good practice.
Value for Money	Promote and facilitate value-for-money approaches underpinned by a collaborative, partnership and whole-of-government ethos that prioritises societal value and community need.
Implementation	Make every effort to leverage the structures already in place locally and nationally, seeking to maximise the potential of these structures.
Collaboration	Work in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and communities to support sustainable approaches to policy and programme development and implementation.
Sustainable Development	Promote and support sustainable development, creating a sustainable and resource-efficient economy founded on a fair and just society which respects the ecological limits of the natural environment to mitigate climate change.
Social Inclusion	Prioritise the needs of communities experiencing social or economic exclusion, as well as develop strategies and mechanisms to promote and ensure inclusion.
Human Rights, Equality and Anti-Discrimination	A commitment to human rights, equality and anti-discrimination, involving its promotion and committing to address the multiple forms of discrimination experienced by many groups

⁴ Kildare LECP principles are informed by Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) guidelines and section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014

1.4 Format of the Plan

This plan is presented under the following nine sections:



2 Process To Develop The LECP

The process of developing the Co. Kildare LECP followed detailed guidelines from the Departments of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH). This section provides a short synopsis of the six stages undertaken to complete the plan.

2.1 Preparation

In February 2023, work commenced to ensure that there was a general awareness of the LECP, its role and its importance amongst key stakeholders in Kildare. This involved ensuring that senior management in KCC, all staff, other statutory agencies, community/voluntary sector groups and local businesses were aware of the plan through meetings, presentations and a video. In addition, a presentation was made at the five Municipal District (MD) meetings in March to inform the forty-elected representatives. A meeting with the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) also took place.

The guidelines clearly outline that the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC oversees the economic aspects of the plan and that the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) oversees the community aspects. However, stakeholders in Kildare agreed that a strongly integrated, collaborative approach, building on the pre-existing collaboration, was in the county's best interest. This is based on an agreed understanding that a strong economy and strong communities are mutually beneficial.

A senior, cross-sectoral and representative Advisory Steering Group (ASG) was established to oversee the development of this LECP.⁵

The work undertaken as part of stage one included:

- Reviewing Kildare LECP 2016-2021
- Updating the Socio-Economic Profile of Kildare (which has more recently been updated as Census 2022 data became available)
- Carrying out a review of key European, national, regional and local policies/plans.

This work culminated in the preparation of the Socio-Economic Statement that proposed the LECP draft vision and high-level goals.⁶ This statement was agreed by the Economic

⁵ Appendix One outlines the membership of the Kildare LECP ASG.

⁶ Reports, including the Co Kildare LECP Socio-Economic Statement and Draft High-Level Goals, are available on <https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/Community/KildareLCDC/LocalEconomicandCommunityPlan/>

Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC at their meeting on June 22nd, 2023, and by the LCDC at their meeting on July 5th, 2023.

2.2 Consultation

Engaging local people, businesses, service providers, community and voluntary groups, and other key interests in the planning process was critical to the validity of the plan in addition to their long-term commitment to implementing the LECP. While the guidelines outline that consultation is a distinct stage in the planning process, Kildare County Council views consultation as an embedded component of the entire plan. In other words, engaging with stakeholders happens during all stages of the plan, from conception right through to final implementation and planning for the third LECP.

The distinct consultation stage commenced in July 2023 and ran until November 2023. The methods of consulting were agreed in advance by the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC and LCDC. The following priority stakeholders were identified:



The methods used to consult with stakeholders included:

- A review of relevant recent plans
- An online survey
- Community and Voluntary consultation
- Employer and Business consultation
- Statutory Agencies
- Collaborative structure consultation

Over 1,300 individuals directly engaged in consultation as part of the Kildare LECP's development. A consultation report outlining the process and outcomes is available⁷, with a synopsis presented in section five of this plan.

This distinct consultation stage helped finalise the vision and high-level goals of this plan which were approved by the LCDC on November 29th, 2023, and by the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC on December 12th, 2023.

2.3 Developing Objectives and Outcomes

This third stage in the planning process, involved the finalisation of the objectives and outcomes of the LECP. Aligning the objectives to a wide range of key strategic plans, including the County Development Plan 2023-2029, Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and Kildare 2025 Economic Development Strategy, was pivotal at this stage. The Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC and LCDC approved the final objectives at their meetings in February 2024.

2.4 Finalising the Plan

The LECP was then forwarded to the EMRA, with whom there had been ongoing engagement, for their review. In addition, the draft plan was presented for feedback to the elected members at their Municipal District meetings in April 2024.

The role of both EMRA and the elected members was to ensure that:

- The LECP is consistent with the County Development Plan and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and that

⁷ Kildare LECP Consultation Report, November 2023, is available on <https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/Community/KildareLCDC/LocalEconomicandCommunityPlan/>

- There is consistency between the economic and community elements of the LECP.

EMRA recommended that the draft plan include reference to the retail strategy for the county prior to adoption. This recommendation was taken on board. The elected members at their Municipal District meetings in April 2024 unanimously agreed to proceed to adopt the plan at their full council meeting. The plan was adopted by Kildare County Council at their full council meeting on 29th April 2024.

2.5 Implementation

A two-year implementation plan was developed in conjunction with the relevant KCC Departments, as well as statutory and voluntary sector organisations, and is currently being finalised.

2.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

The final stage in the process is to monitor and evaluate the ongoing implementation of the LECP over the next six years. Section eight of this plan outlines the structures and systems proposed by Kildare County Council to carry out this function.

3 Kildare LECP in Context

3.1 Introduction

Over the last decade, there has been significant change in the role and operation of organisations in the Irish public, private and voluntary sectors. Improved organisational performance and effectiveness are generally expected. The increasing reliance on information technology to enhance and improve efficiencies has become more embedded since the Covid 19 pandemic, and this has led to a more digitised way of working. Public sector organisations are expected to work more collaboratively with joined-up service delivery and planning. In addition, greater involvement and engagement with citizens in service delivery, and a belief that services can be delivered more effectively at local level, informs the development of this LECP.

The positioning of community and economic development as parallel and intertwining strands within this plan is important. Throughout the planning process for the Kildare LECP, it was noted that community and economic development are interdependent, and that the future development of Kildare depends on strong and interdependent community **and** economic growth.

The profile of Kildare is often not fully understood. It is often viewed outside of the county solely as a prosperous midland county with rural hinterlands. While overall, Kildare is a well-educated county with a renowned University in Maynooth alongside many highly skilled employment opportunities and a rich cultural heritage, Kildare's population, ongoing growth, alongside infrastructure and service demands are also important to understand.

Kildare has experienced almost unparalleled **population growth** over the past three decades.

- The population of Kildare has doubled from a population of 124,321 in 1991 to a population of **247,774** in 2022. This growth in population of 123,453 over the past thirty years is comparable to the current population of Waterford City and County.
- Kildare currently has the **fifth highest** population of any Local Authority in the State, with a population bigger than Limerick City and County, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, and Cork City. There are variations in the level of growth across Kildare, with the Naas and Clane/Maynooth MDs experiencing the fastest growth from 2016 to 2022.
- **Population projections** for County Kildare, outlined in the National Planning Framework (NDF), envisage that the county's population could grow to over 266,000

by the end of 2031. Census 2022 indicates that Kildare is on course to at least reach and perhaps even exceed this threshold.

- There has been major growth in urban centres in Kildare between 2016 and 2022. The county now has **seven settlements with a population greater than 10,000** (Naas, Newbridge, Celbridge, Maynooth, Leixlip, Athy and Kildare Town).

The number of **children and young people** in Kildare under 25 is 86,155. This is the 4th youngest proportion (34.8%) and 5th highest number of children/young people among the country's Local Authorities with only Dublin City, Cork County, Fingal and South Dublin having higher numbers. The number of children and young people in Kildare exceeds the populations of many counties. It must also be noted that while Kildare is a young county, population trends and increasing life expectancy will increase demand for older age-appropriate services/supports in the coming decades.

In line with national trends, Kildare is increasingly **multicultural**, with the last Census showing that non-nationals make up 11.4% of the population. This growth trend is likely to continue to increase as the impact of displacement from war and climate change on the poorest countries in the world increases immigration to wealthier Western nations.

This general population increase, alongside specific accessibility and deprivation needs in some parts of the county, raises immediate issues in terms of the provision of appropriate housing, education, childcare, youth, health, employment, transport and other **services** across the county.

Other aspects of life have also changed as Kildare has become one of the most **urban** counties in the State. According to Census 2022, approximately 70% of the population resides in urban areas (towns \geq 1,500 population). Only Dublin's three Local Authorities, Cork City and Galway City have higher urban rates. However, there is a very clear spatial pattern to the urban distribution in Kildare with the vast majority of this population in the north-east metropolitan area and in key settlements in close proximity to the motorway networks. The remainder of Kildare is classed as **rural**, with a total population of 74,509. This is the **11th highest number of rural dwellers** in the State. The total number of rural dwellers in Kildare is greater than the entirety of the population of counties such as Roscommon or Sligo. Rural Kildare is a regionally important agricultural base with dispersed populations and settlement patterns, primarily in the South and Southwest of the County.

Kildare is a **commuting** county with 41,688, or 36.5% of the workforce, travelling to work outside the county. This is slightly lower than the previous Census, mainly due to remote working with 14,000 resident workers in Kildare recorded as remote working in 2022.

However, it is the sixth highest rate in the country. For those who travel to work, car is by far the dominant mode of transport at 57%. The primary destination is Dublin.

These **lifestyle patterns** are important to consider as part of this LECP. Supporting the development of places that people are proud to live in, call “home”, where they can experience a healthy and positive lifestyle, work remotely, and access their base of work easily (ideally through public transport), is at the core of this plan. Given the proximity of Kildare to Dublin, the development of our capital city is also a consideration. The economic, social and environmental development of Dublin is likely to have a direct impact on Kildare. Coupled with this is the global challenge of addressing climate change. Kildare will be challenged to play its part in reducing carbon emissions and ensuring that the county develops in a sustainable way.

While Kildare is overwhelmingly a very **dynamic and positive** county, there are also challenges. Within the county there are **individuals and communities that struggle** to access services, experience unemployment, and significant disadvantage. While Kildare is relatively affluent overall, there are substantial pockets of deprivation particularly in the South and Northwest of the county and within pockets of urban areas. This poverty, in line with national experiences, is becoming more entrenched, and the gap between the most affluent and most deprived areas has increased. As well as the challenge of accessing services due to rapid population growth, additional barriers exist for people experiencing social exclusion within Kildare. Addressing these challenges is also central to this LECP plan.

The primary focus of this second LECP is one of **continued opportunity**. KCC will work in partnership with other stakeholders to maximise opportunities and respond to challenges, particularly in relation to service provision.

3.2 LECP and Spatial Planning

In accordance with the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the Kildare LECP is required to be consistent with the core strategy of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 and the Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES). As part of the preparation stage for this plan, an in-depth review of those policy frameworks took place.⁸

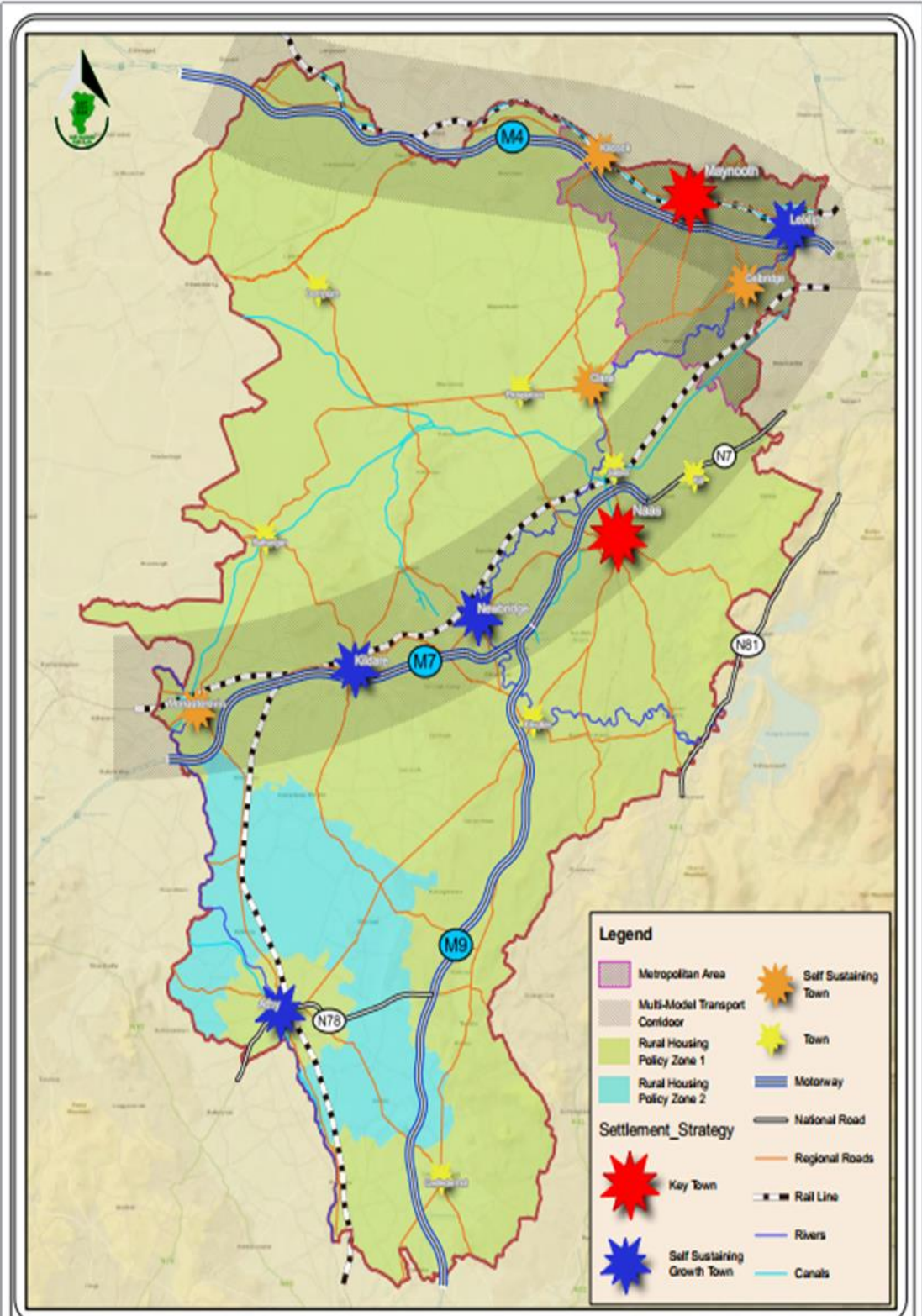
⁸ A detailed policy review document is available on <https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/Community/KildareLDC/LocalEconomicandCommunityPlan/>

The county’s current **core strategy** is set out in the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029. It provides the spatial framework for the growth of Kildare. This core strategy is also consistent with the National Planning Framework and the RSES for the Eastern and Midlands Region.⁹ The core strategy sets out the role of towns, villages and rural areas within the county by way of a settlement hierarchy. The settlement hierarchy defines the potential for each town and village to grow and includes population and housing targets aligned with land requirements. The Kildare settlement hierarchy 2023-2029 is presented as follows:

Settlement Hierarchy

Hierarchy	Description- defined by RSES	Locations
Key Towns	Key Towns are large economically active service and/or county towns (Naas and Maynooth) that provide employment for their surrounding areas and with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as growth drivers to complement the Regional Growth Centres.	Naas Maynooth
Self-Sustaining Growth Towns	Self-Sustaining Growth Towns are characterised by a moderate level of jobs and services, including sub-county market towns and commuter towns with good transport links and capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining.	Newbridge Leixlip Kildare Town Athy
Self-Sustaining Towns	Self-Sustaining Towns are characterised by high levels of population growth and a weak employment base which are reliant on other areas for employment and/or services and which require targeted ‘catch up’ investment to become more self-sustaining.	Celbridge Kilcock Monasterevin Clane
Towns and Villages	Towns and Villages are settlements with local service and employment functions	Castledermot Derrinturn Kilcullen Kill Prosperous Rathangan Sallins
Rural Areas	Rural areas are smaller villages and the wider rural region	E.g. Allen Nurney Rathcoffey

⁹ Refer to the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 for more information on Kildare’s core strategy.




 Kildare County Council
 Planning & Strategic
 Development Department
 Area Chill Dara,
 Denny Park, Naas, Co. Kildare

County Development Plan 2023-2029

Core Strategy Map

Stage	Date	Description
County Development Plan	20/06/2023	State the Municipalities into effect
County Development Plan	20/06/2023	Plan adopted by Elected Members

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Scale: N.T.S. Map Ref: V1-2.1

Date: January 2023 Drawing No: 20072/1128

Drawn By	Checked By	Approved By
M. O'Sullivan Date: 20/01/2023	J. Conboy Date: 18/01/2023	C. O'Sullivan Date: 20/01/2023

This drawing is to be read in conjunction with the written statement

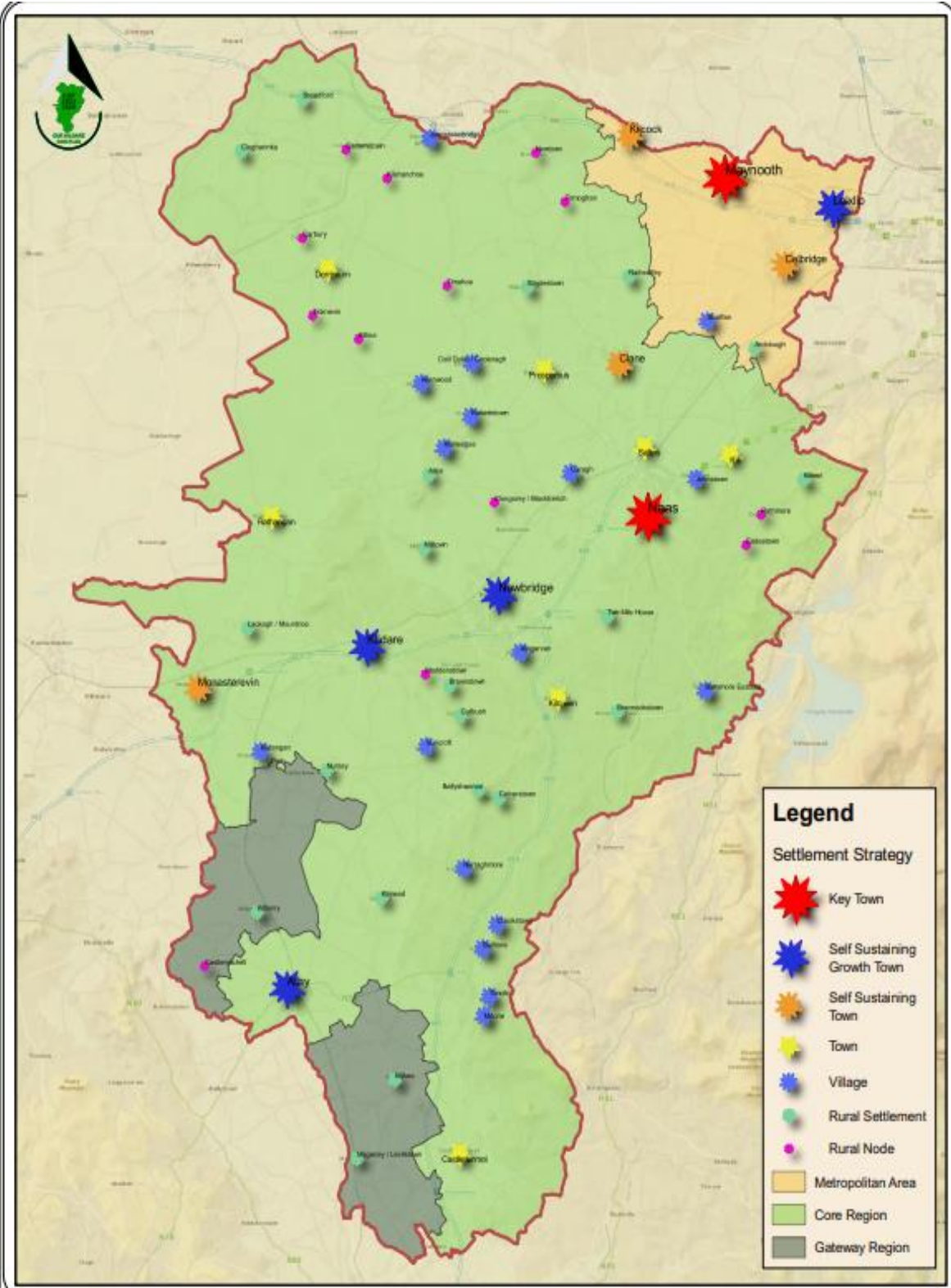


The RSES was developed having regard to the availability of suitably serviced land, resources, environment and infrastructure capacity. There are seven regional settlement levels, with Dublin City and Suburbs forming the top-level settlement for the region. County Kildare is predominantly located within the Core Region, with two exceptions: the northeast of the county is located in the Dublin Metropolitan Area and a portion of the southwest of the county forms part of the Gateway Region. It is therefore recognised that, since Kildare traverses the three designated areas, namely the Metropolitan Area, the Core Region, and the Gateway Region, it will be influenced by and have influence over future economic, social, and environmental trends across a number of areas in the Eastern/Midland's corridor.

The **Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)** identifies several large-scale strategic residential and economic development areas that will deliver significant development in an integrated and sustainable manner in the metropolitan area. Maynooth (which is a key town), Leixlip, Celbridge and Kilcock are all part of that metropolitan area. Therefore, these towns will develop in a way that is consistent with the MASP and is an important consideration for stakeholders in implementation of this LECP.

The **Core Region** includes the peri-urban 'hinterlands' in the commuter catchment around Dublin. As outlined above, this includes the majority of Kildare. Naas (as the second key town in the county) is in the Core Region. It is noted in the RSES that some areas have emerged mainly as commuting towns experiencing high rates of population growth but with a weak level of services for resident populations. These towns will require 'catch up' investment in local employment and services in order to become more self-sustaining and to improve sustainable mobility, particularly in those places where there are high levels of car dependency. The distinct characteristics of the towns that are part of this region is also a consideration for stakeholders of this LECP.

The **Gateway region** includes areas in the southwest of the County. These are largely more rural in nature. Stakeholders will also need to be cognisant of the distinct characteristics of the towns and villages within this region when implementing this LECP.



Kildare County Council
 Planning & Strategic
 Development Department
 Aras Chill Dara,
 Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare.

**County Development
 Plan 2023-2029**

Stage	Date	Description
County Development Plan	28/01/2023	Date the Plan comes into effect
County Development Plan	09/12/2022	Plan adopted by Elected Members

Scale: N.T.S. | Map Ref: V1-2.2

Date: January 2023 | Drawing No.: 200/02/1327

Drawn By: RGT/Loughlin Date: 26/01/2023	Checked By: C. O'Donnell Date: 26/01/2023	Approved By: C. O'Donnell Date: 26/01/2023
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**County Settlement
 Hierarchy Map**

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This drawing is to be read in conjunction with the written statement

As outlined in section 3.1, Kildare has experienced unprecedented population growth. The MASP Transitional Population Projections, adjusted to comply with National Policy Objective (NPO) 68, allocate an additional population of up to 10,000 persons to the Key Town of Maynooth up to the year 2031. The precise population allocation will be determined through the preparation of the Local Area Plan (LAP) for Maynooth. Preparation of the LAP will include detailed assessments and audits of available social and physical infrastructure. In accordance with Objective CS O10 of the County Development Plan, a Joint Local Area Plan for Maynooth and Environs is currently being prepared in conjunction with Meath County Council. Maynooth is the designated Decarbonising Zone (DZ) in the Kildare Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.¹⁰

The housing target for County Kildare by the end of the County Development Plan period is 9,144 housing units, which translates to an additional 25,146 persons. This points to ongoing population growth over the timeframe of this LECP.

The development strategy outlined in the County Development Plan will focus on:

- Achieving the critical mass in the MASP area (Maynooth, Leixlip, Celbridge & Kilcock) and in the Key Towns of Naas and Maynooth.
- Measured growth with emphasis on economic growth in the towns identified as Self-Sustaining Growth Towns and Self-Sustaining Towns.
- A hierarchy of smaller rural settlements to provide a range of services and employment for their local populations.
- Development in rural areas with a focus on agricultural diversification, appropriate rural enterprise (e.g., renewable energy production), and the strengthening of existing towns and villages.
- Protecting the environment by recognising the various environmentally sensitive zones within the county but not excluding appropriate and otherwise acceptable uses and development.

The County Retail Hierarchy provides the strategic policy framework for the spatial distribution of new retail development. The retail sector is a significant employer and economic contributor in the region and in county Kildare.

¹⁰ A DZ is a spatial area identified by the local authority in which a range of climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures and action owners are identified to address local low carbon energy, greenhouse gas emissions, and climate needs to contribute to national climate action targets

The RSES outlines level two and level three town centres while the county retail hierarchy identified in the Kildare County Development Plan outlines level four small towns and village centres. These are outlined as follows:

Level	Retail Hierarchy for Kildare
Level 2	Major Town Centres & County (Principal) Town Centres Naas, Newbridge, Maynooth
Level 3	Town and/or District Centres & Sub-County Town Centres (Key Service Centres) Celbridge, Kilcock, Athy, Kildare, Monasterevin, Clane, Leixlip, Kilcullen
Level 4	Neighbourhood Centres, Local Centres-Small Towns and Villages Small Town Centres Castledermot, Prosperous, Rathangan, Derrinturn, Kill and Sallins Village Centres Straffan, Allenwood, Ballitore, Ballymore-Eustace, Crookstown and Robertstown
Level 5	Corner Shops/Small Villages

The primary focus for employment growth in Kildare will be towards the Key Towns of Naas and Maynooth. This does not mean that business and general community development will not take place in other locations but given the designation of Naas and Maynooth as Key Towns, these towns will be prioritised. The County Development Plan also clearly states that it aims to co-locate employment centres near homes and communities, thereby reducing the need for unsustainable commuting patterns into, within or leaving the county.

It is important to note that this LECP is consistent with and respects the growth and development framework for Kildare. There was a high level of collaboration internally within KCC across sections responsible for developing both the County Development Plan 2023-2029 and the LECP 2024-2029. Both the County Development Plan and the LECP share broad objectives relating to promoting economic development and enhancing the quality of life for communities.

This LECP will specifically inform public expenditure planning as well as the operational plans of organisations involved in carrying out actions within this plan. Consequently, this will have the ability to support the progression of the objectives contained within the County Development Plan aimed at promoting economic and community development around the county.

3.3 Other Relevant Policies and Plans

As outlined in the previous section, a review of relevant international, European, national, regional and local policies was carried out to inform the LECP. The following outlines a brief description of how that review of those policies has informed the development of the LECP.

The **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** (UNSDG), also known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. These goals provide the overarching global framework for the policy context in which LECPs are situated.



Achieving these seventeen goals requires tackling complex challenges to address climate change, biodiversity loss and a fair/just transition to a post-carbon society. The principles and approaches of the UNSDG are reflected in a range of EU policy frameworks. Therefore, the UNSDG provide the external global over-arching policy framework and vision, which in turn shapes and guides policymaking at the EU and National levels.

There are several areas of EU policy that impact Kildare-based plans, including the LECP. Through EU policies and funding streams, these policies are enabling, encouraging and obliging members states to become more able to withstand current and anticipated shocks such as those caused by climate change. **The EU Green Deal** seeks to incentivise all sectors of the economy to be more ambitious in reducing their carbon footprint while increasing productivity and generating new employment and training opportunities. Similar

approaches are found in a range of other EU policies including the **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)**.

National plans are aligned with EU policies and, following the COVID 19 pandemic, the **National Recovery and Resilience Plan** is primarily about delivering strategies and actions to respond to three interlocking priorities:

1. Advancing the Green Transition.
2. Accelerating and expanding digital reforms and transformation.
3. Social and economic recovery and job creation.

It is important that the LECP objectives and actions are mindful of these priorities – including plans for supporting vulnerable groups.

The theme of **economic opportunity** is a key component in numerous Kildare-based strategies, including Kildare 2025 Economic Development Strategy, County Kildare Digital Strategy 2022-2025, Kildare Culture and Creativity Strategy, Kildare Local Enterprise Development Plan 2021-2024, and Kildare Hub Strategy 2022-2025.

The **Kildare 2025 Economic Development Strategy** provides the basis for the LECP's Economic Development priorities. It informed the County Development Plan and is a pivotal document in informing economic development in Kildare.

The **Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019-2031** outlines three interlocking and theme-based principles: a) economic opportunity, b) healthy placemaking and c) climate action. It also acknowledges the significant growth experienced in County Kildare over recent decades. The commuting-based nature of the county, outlined in section 3.2, shows that Kildare traverses the metropolitan, core and gateway regions.

The LECP has the potential to add value to and complement the **Mid East Regional Enterprise Plan (2022-2024)** and future such regional enterprise plans. This enterprise plan plays a key role in informing the work at local level through the Enterprise section of KCC and its partner organisations/industries. The current plan provides mechanisms to draw national funding into the region in pursuit of its five objectives – a) agri-food hubs, b) screen content creation, c) equine, d) transition to a low carbon economy and e) a positive enterprise ecosystem. These are strong elements of the economic objectives of this LECP.

Ireland's **Climate Action Plan** and associated legislation will have far reaching implications for the LECP. The Kildare Climate Action Plan was recently approved and is aligned with National and EU policies. While this is a county wide plan, Maynooth is designated as the decarbonising zone for the county. There were strong synergies and a high level of

collaboration in 2023 as the Climate Action Plan and LECP were developing. Indeed, the objectives in the Kildare Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 strongly informed High Level Goal 3 of this LECP – “*County Kildare promotes and prioritises **CLIMATE ACTION, CLIMATE JUSTICE and SUSTAINABILITY.***”

Our Rural Future - Ireland Rural Development Policy (2021-2025) offers a supportive framework for improved physical and digital connectivity. Given Kildare’s diverse nature and strong rural component, it was important to consider that policy when formulating the LECP.

The RSES emphasis on placemaking also feeds into several County Kildare based strategies including the **Kildare Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) Plan 2023-2027, Age Friendly Kildare Strategy 2023-2027, Kildare Play Strategy 2018-2028, County Childcare Committee Plan 2023-2026, Kildare Rural Development Programme Local Development Strategy 2023-2027** and the **County Kildare Integration Strategy 2021-2026.**

The **Kildare County Development Plan (2023-2029)** and associated **Local Area Plans (LAPs)** outline the importance of compact growth and the desire for locally accessible services as outlined in the “10-minute settlement” principles. This clearly impacts the LECP as planning, resourcing, providing and maintaining services to keep pace with the rapid growth experienced is a key challenge for all businesses as well as for statutory and voluntary sector providers.

The **Housing for All Plan** provides a significant investment for the construction of housing. County Kildare experiences continuous housing developments and therefore enabling both placemaking and community development is necessary to accompany any investment in physical infrastructure.

The **Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022-2026** outlines how KCC will reach the objectives to provide social and affordable housing, reduce vacancy and dereliction, and provide specific accommodation for older people, Travellers, and people with disabilities. This focus on social inclusion is an important consideration for the LECP.

Finally, the **UNSDG** goal entitled “partnership for the goals” is based on the principle of collaborative working - globally, regionally, nationally and locally. Such collaboration will be fundamental to the success of the LECP’s implementation. Kildare has a strong track record of agencies across statutory, community, voluntary and business sectors working positively and collaboratively together towards agreed goals. The establishment of the LCDC has enhanced this approach. It is intended to continue to build on this collective working over the next six years.

4 Kildare – Socio Economic Profile

4.1 Introduction

The All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO) in Maynooth University was initially engaged to identify, analyse and collate sources of information and provide a detailed overview of the socio-economic characteristics of the county for the first Kildare LECP (2016-2021). AIRO have continued to support the work of Kildare LCDC and KCC by providing updated data. This data informs not only KCC-led planning processes, such as, County Development/Local Area Plans, Economic Development Strategy and LECP, but plans led by other statutory and voluntary sector organisations, e.g., Children and Young Peoples Services Committee, County Kildare LEADER Partnership.

In 2023, AIRO updated datasets available and provided a socio-economic baseline report to inform the preparation stage of developing this LECP. These baseline datasets were updated again in late 2023/early 2024 when Census 2022 became available. This up-to-the-minute data informs our LECP.¹¹

Kildare County Council's ongoing work with AIRO enables comparative assessment from successive Census relating to Kildare's demographic profile, education, health, economy, housing, environment, agriculture and deprivation. This provides a clear indication of progress and trends that affect ongoing development.

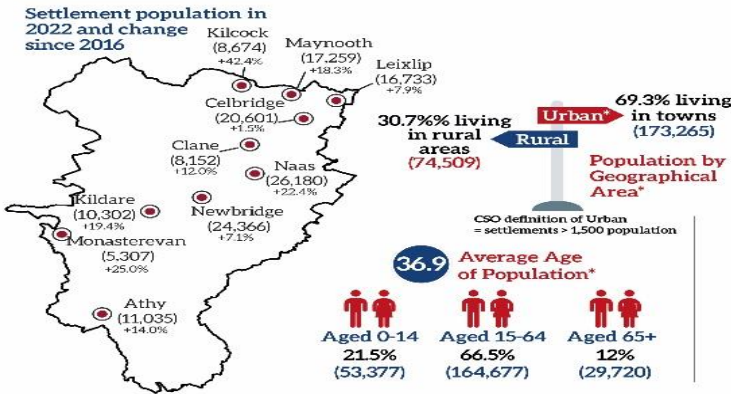
An infographic prepared as part of the analysis of Census 2022 is presented on the next page.

¹¹ AIRO datasets used to inform the Kildare LECP 2024-2029 is available on <https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/Community/KildareLCDC/LocalEconomicandCommunityPlan/>

4.2 Infographic-Census 2022



Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council



Population in 2022
247,774

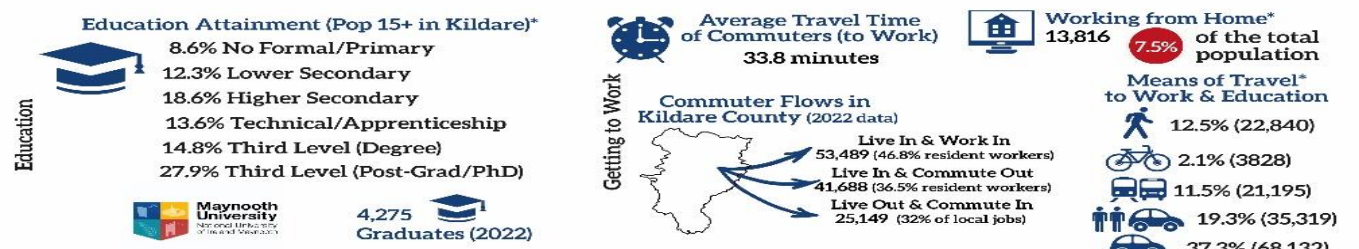
+25,644 (+11.5%) from 2016
+37,462 (+17.8%) from 2011

4.8% of State (5.14m)
4th highest Population in State

+18,726 (+7%) 2022 to 2031



Population estimates for 2026 and 2031 based on Kildare CDP and NPF Projections



* Data sourced from CSO Census 2022



5 Kildare LECP Consultation Process

5.1 Introduction

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 places citizens, local communities, businesses, and collaborative working at the heart of local government. Therefore, stakeholder involvement in the planning and implementation processes associated with this LECP is critical.

The Kildare Advisory Steering Group (ASG), composed of representatives from the LCDC, the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC and other key agencies, placed a strong emphasis on gathering the views of stakeholder groups to inform the LECP. This ensured that this plan is based on:

- a) Information
- b) Views
- c) Other plans and priorities.

The main aim of consultation in developing the Kildare LECP was to gather views to inform:

- A) The Vision and High-Level Goals.
- B) The objectives and actions of the LECP.

A draft vision and four draft high-level goals, outlined below, were developed as part of the socio-economic statement and formed the basis of all consultation.

Draft Vision LECP 2023-2029

**“ County Kildare; working together
as a sustainable, fair, healthy,
economically vibrant county for all. ”**

Draft High Level Goals LECP 2023-2029

HLG 1	County Kildare, is a PLACE with strong communities where people live full, healthy, integrated and inclusive lives.	
HLG 2	County Kildare, nurtures its PEOPLE to reach their full potential to enjoy and live a high quality of life.	
HLG 3	County Kildare, promotes and prioritises CLIMATE ACTION and SUSTAINABILITY .	
HLG 4	County Kildare, attracts the INVESTMENT to realise its vision.	

5.2 Consultation Process

Over 1,300 people engaged in consultation as part of Kildare LECP. This engagement occurred as outlined below:

5.2.1 Review of Other Recent Plans

It was recognised that many stakeholders linked to the community and economic aspects of the plan are experiencing consultation “fatigue”. Extensive consultation has taken place in recent years as part of Kildare-based planning processes. These include:

- The County Development Plan 2023-2029, Economic Development Strategy 2025
- Age Friendly Strategy 2023-2027
- Kildare County Childcare Strategy 2023-2026
- Children and Young Peoples Services Committee Plan 2023-2025
- Open Space Strategy

It was agreed that the views expressed in recent planning processes (from 2020 onwards) would be reviewed as part of the consultation for Kildare LECP. This provided an efficient

and effective way to build on in-depth consultation processes to ensure that views expressed in recently aligned processes were captured as part of the LECP.

5.2.2 Online Survey

A short online qualitative survey was developed to capture the views of all stakeholders - particularly the public. The approach to this survey meant that views could be expressed freely and openly. This survey was distributed widely through a variety of social media platforms, network organisations, communication channels, state agencies, community and voluntary bodies, and elected representatives. There were 869 responses to the survey, a very positive response rate. The survey was open for nine weeks.

5.2.3 Community and Voluntary Consultation

Kildare Public Participation Network (PPN) collaborated with the ASG to organise five in-person workshops – one in each of the county's five Municipal Districts (MD). The purpose of these workshops was to consult with member groups/organisations to identify priorities to inform the LECP and the PPN Community Wellbeing Vision Statements for the county.¹² Ninety-four community groups/organisations participated in the workshops. The approach taken by Kildare fits with the LECP guidelines (page 26) that *engagement with PPN wellbeing statements is important in order to support the development of the High-Level Goals and Sustainable Objectives for the LECP*.¹³ The collaborative approach used in Kildare is working to achieve this and again maximises consultation by using the views expressed to inform the development of both the LECP and PPN plans.

¹² Kildare PPN developed an overall vision for community wellbeing for Kildare, in addition to specific MD vision statements. Priorities under six themes, identified at national level, were also agreed upon for Kildare. A copy of the plan is available at www.kildareppn.ie/wellbeing/

¹³ Department of Rural and Community Development and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, *Local Economic and Community Plan Guidelines*, 2021

5.2.4 Employer and Business Consultation

In line with the overall principle of harmonisation and building on opportunities to engage with the employer/business community, a range of networking events were used to aid the development of the LECP. These included:

- An Employer Forum that engaged with ninety-two business owners.
- An FDI Roundtable with six FDI companies located in Kildare.
- Sectoral meetings with eighteen businesses.

5.2.5 Agency and Collaborative Structure Consultation

While the survey, community and voluntary workshops, and reviews of consultations held for specific planning processes actively reached out to include representatives of the most excluded, a series of targeted one-to-one meetings also took place throughout September/October 2023. These meetings aimed to ensure that the views of the most excluded, largely through their representative groups, organisations and forums, took place. This involved consultation with organisations/groups working directly with vulnerable children and young people, people with disabilities, Travellers, homeless people, immigrants including Ukrainians, unemployed, substance misusers, people with mental health challenges, lone parents, and older people. In total, two hundred and thirty-one individuals engaged through twenty-one different organisations/networks. The organisations consulted (and the number of interviewees in each) are outlined on the next page.¹⁴

¹⁴ Note: There are four independent Family Resource Centres (FRC) in Kildare. All participated in one round table consultation meeting. They are displayed on the following page under the national logo for FRCs.



Comhairle na nOg
(145)



Kildare Age Friendly
(4)



Kildare Access
Group (4)



In Sync (1)



County Kildare
LEADER Partnership (3)



Kildare Traveller
Action (2)



McVerry Trust (2)



Southeast Regional
Age Friendly (1)



Children and Young
Peoples Services
Committee (3)



Kildare County
Childcare Committee
(8)



Kildare South Dublin
Local Link (1)



Department of Social
Protection (2)



Tusla (3)



HSE-(26)



Kildare Wicklow
Education and Training
Board (3)



Kildare County
Council (17)



South West Regional
Drugs and Alcohol
Task Force (2)



Family Resource
Centres (4)

5.3 Consultation Findings

The Socio-Economic Statement prepared in Stage One (“Preparation”) provided the baseline that informed all consultation processes.

As outlined previously consultation with stakeholders had two main aims:

1. Informing the final LECP Vision and High-Level Goals.
2. Informing the Objectives and Implementation Plan Actions of the LECP.

The consultation findings are described in detail below:

5.3.1 Consultation Finding 1: Informing the final LECP Vision and High-Level Goals

Overall, there was broad agreement that the draft vision and four draft high-level goals presented provided a solid basis for the final LECP.

The vision was viewed as balanced, concise, clear and ambitious. Consultations highlighted some suggested word changes which were taken on board in discussions to finalise the Vision in November/December 2023.

Consultations also highlighted broad satisfaction with the four high level goals proposed. Views outlined that the goals fitted strongly with **placemaking** - putting the people of Kildare at the heart of the plan, climate change, and securing the resources and investment required to live and work in Kildare. In line with the vision, word change suggestions were made to strengthen the goals proposed as opposed to changing or amending them substantially.

The ASG at their meeting in November 2023 considered the findings from the consultation stage. A final Vision and High-Level goals were presented and approved at the LCDC and Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC at their meetings in November/December 2023. The final vision and four high level goals is outlined in section seven.

5.3.2 Consultation Finding 2: Informing the Objectives and Actions of the LECP

The following is a short synopsis of the key themes that emerged in consultation. The consultation report outlines the themes that emerged in greater detail.¹⁵

- The need for a range of **accessible, local amenities and public sector infrastructure** was consistently highlighted. Amenity and infrastructure development was noted as not keeping pace with growth.
- Challenges in **accessing universal and specialist public services** were strongly noted. These services, in particular school places, GP, mental health, childcare, disability, and access to alcohol/substance misuse services, were highlighted.
- Developing **cohesive and sustainable communities**, to support strong community and economic development and to support **integration**, was highlighted as a priority.
- **Sustainable transport** and **active travel** options to support the “10-minute town”, improve health, aid commuting and climate sustainability, were consistently raised.
- The need to identify **potential sites** for repurposing, reducing vacancy and combatting underutilized lands was raised for commercial and industrial development. In tandem, continuing to support Kildare as a **strong economic driver** was highlighted.
- The need to promote and support **healthy lifestyles** by targeting programmes at communities/groups with poor health outcomes and increasing accessible space to engage in healthy activities was highlighted. In addition, the requirement of employees to live and work in places that support healthy lifestyles was outlined as a growing trend.
- It was noted that Kildare’s **high-quality environment** be recognised, maintained and promoted, with climate change mitigation and adaptation measures at the heart of community and economic development.
- Responding to the increased **polarisation** between “rich” and “poor” being experienced nationally was highlighted as a concerning challenge for the county.
- **Policies and objectives** to support enterprise development, the Green and Circular Bio-Economy, Agri-Food and Beverage, Agriculture and Equine Industry. In particular, supporting sustainable tourism and enhance its potential in the County through heritage, Blueways/Greenways, Peatlands, inland waterways and Agri-tourism was highlighted.
- The need to continue developing **collaborative** approaches, to plan and work across agencies and sectors in order to maximise resource allocation was strongly highlighted through consultation.

¹⁵ The consultation report prepared as part of Stage Two is available on <https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/Community/KildareLDC/LocalEconomicandCommunityPlan/>

6 Kildare LECP Analysis

An assessment of key policy documents and plans, Kildare's socio-economic profile, the outcomes from the consultation process and learning from our first LECP highlights the strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats (SCOT) of Kildare's ongoing growth as a county.

Additional services, improved infrastructure, adequate resources, sustainability and inclusion emerged as priority issues from the consultation process. Continuing to build a strong economic base in line with regional and local plans is also a key priority.

The SCOT analysis set out below captures the main strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats for Kildare over the lifetime of this plan.

Strengths

- Rapidly growing county.
- One of the youngest counties with the 5th highest number of children and young people among all Local Authorities aged 0-24 years.
- Ability to offer citizens/residents a good quality of life.
- Highly educated population.
- Established university – Ireland's fastest-growing university.
- Located in the Greater Dublin Area.
- Motorway and rail infrastructure of national importance.
- Good public transport availability – both bus and rail through the county.
- High levels of participation in the workforce – particularly in areas that are well connected to Dublin.
- Very strong and established Foreign Direct Investment base offering high quality employment opportunities.
- Above average disposable income.
- Strong family businesses / Small Medium Enterprises in many communities.
- Good broadband connectivity, including from commercial providers.
- Strong agriculture and equine sector.
- Growing level of good quality housing stock with high BER rating .
- Natural resources that drive economic activities and offer citizens recreational spaces and a good quality of life.

Challenges

- Demographic and resource pressures associated with spill-over effects from being in the Greater Dublin Area.
- Infrastructure and local services unable to respond to rapidly increasing demand.
- Internal spatial imbalances in respect of demographic and economic vitality, with the Athy MDs and much of Southwest Kildare not as economically strong as the rest of the county.
- Growing dependence on a declining pool of volunteers to provide community services.
- Providing sufficient accommodation for arrivals from Ukraine, those seeking international protection, tourists and other visitors.
- Integrating foreign nationals successfully .
- Very high levels of car-dependent, out-bound commuting and long commutes.
- Lack of public transport options to service areas across the county.
- Increasing affordability issues within the housing sector - both owner occupation and rental.
- Reliance on HAP support through the private rented sector.
- High levels of household income dependence on both social welfare and State pension support - particularly in the south of the county.
- Persistent and inter-generational disadvantaged and distance from the labour market in some urban and rural communities.
- A narrow economic base and structural economic weaknesses in parts of South and West County Kildare – high dependence on primary and secondary industry (Agri, Manufacturing and Construction).
- Attracting and retaining skilled workers in some sectors.
- Biodiversity and climate challenges.

Opportunities

- Capitalising on the young and educated population base.
- Further harnessing of the county's cultural heritage and identity and fostering a greater sense of place, particularly among newcomers.
- Harnessing the increase in knowledge and cultural capital associated with inward migration - particularly foreign nationals.
- Capitalising on the skills, energy, experience and time available of our growing older population to support community development and increase volunteerism.
- Building on opportunities associated with rapid growth and brand recognition of Maynooth University as an innovative Irish university delivering educational opportunities for students from all socio-economic backgrounds.
- Maximising the opportunities associated with South and West Kildare MDs being part of the EU Just Transition Fund
- Continuing to develop a strong educational sector that responds to a broad variety of educational needs.
- Ongoing economic growth and opportunities associated with population growth.
- Leveraging investments under Ireland 2040.

- Building on existing rail infrastructure to increase access to public transport and active travel opportunities.
- Building on Kildare's strengths and become recognised as a key economic driver in the State.
- Growing renewables energy generation - both large scale and community.
- Developing solar farm renewable energy in the county.
- Circular and bioeconomy creating innovative jobs.
- Harnessing the potential of connected / remote working and the creative industries as part of a wider strategic approach to stemming and reversing population decline in rural communities.
- Promoting and protecting Rural Kildare.
- Growing and strengthening the County Kildare tourism brand and offerings (Ireland's Ancient East) – building on existing infrastructure and promotion of Greenways, Peatways and Blueways.
- Expanding farmers' participation in various ecological initiatives and the promotion of high-nature value farming with appropriate remuneration for ecological services.

Threats

- External perceptions of all parts of the county being affluent
- Public services (health, education, social services etc.) and infrastructure not keeping pace with population growth and demand.
- Impact of low level of service provision to attract and sustain people to live and work in Kildare.
- Lack of preparation, for the ageing population.
- Oversight of rural considerations and needs due to urban-generated demands and expectations.
- Limited north-south and east/west transport connectivity, especially public transport.
- Food and fuel poverty due to rising cost of living.
- Climate action leaving those least able to afford transition behind – becoming a further tool of inequality.
- Low incomes and poor public transport connectivity threaten many households' ability to make a just transition to zero carbon emissions.
- Ecological pressures due to resource demands elsewhere, most notably in the Greater Dublin Area.

This SCOT analysis provides an overview to inform the final vision, high level goals and associated sustainable objectives that are presented in the next section of the plan.

7. Kildare LECP Vision and High-Level Goals

7.1 Vision

The vision of the Kildare LECP 2024-2029 is as follows:

County Kildare; working together as a sustainable, inclusive, economically vibrant, healthy community for all.

Associated with this vision are four high level goals, outlined below.

7.2 High Level Goal 1

County Kildare is a **PLACE** with resilient communities where all people live full, healthy and inclusive lives.

Context

This goal focuses on ensuring that Kildare is a **PLACE** where its residents, employers and employees thrive.

This goal is consistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031, which prioritises **Placemaking**. The strategy also recognises the role social infrastructure plays in developing strong and inclusive communities where people have economic opportunities and want to live. The National Planning Framework also outlines the importance of education, childcare facilities and associated infrastructure in mitigating poverty and social exclusion.

This goal is also strongly linked to the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029, with its emphasis on the 10-minute town, as well as to the Kildare 2025 Economic Development Strategy, which highlights the need for continued investment to attract and retain industry.

Through the data analysis and consultation, the continued development of Kildare's infrastructure, services, connectivity and recreational spaces was continuously identified as a key priority. Prioritising areas of high growth and socially excluded communities was particularly highlighted. Therefore, progressing positive **Placemaking** is a core objective for the next six years in Kildare.

7.2.1 High Level Goal 1- Sustainable Objectives

There are eighteen objectives in total under this goal. Seven are specific to community, five to economic development, and six are shared as both community and economic development.

Sustainable Community Objectives

- 1.1 To advance the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 to progress a range of universally accessible, multi-use and inclusive social facilities. This includes community, arts/cultural, museums, enterprise, sports, family resource centres, childcare and recreational facilities in close proximity to the communities that they serve.¹⁶ These facilities will also support and promote social inclusion and enterprise development.
- 1.2 To increase the provision of children's play facilities, teen spaces, sports fields, civic spaces, outdoor gyms, open space and adult exercise equipment in central locations that are accessible to all and promote social inclusion.¹⁷
- 1.3 To support the ongoing development and upgrading of existing library facilities in central accessible locations and encourage their use as key facilitators of community, arts, educational, social and cultural activities.
- 1.4 To cater for the needs of all school-going children and young people across the county, particularly targeting high-growth areas, by actively planning for the expansion and building of centrally located schools that support sustainable transport access through continued collaboration with the Department of Education and Children, Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board and other applicable patrons.
- 1.5 To increase the range and types of childcare facilities across the county, particularly in high-growth areas, to enable children to develop equitably and to support parents to return to employment, education/training and caring duties.
- 1.6 To increase the provision and range of healthcare and eldercare facilities/ services across the county, particularly in areas of high growth and where service deficits are

¹⁶ Linked to 10-minute town outlined in the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 and Town Centre First.

¹⁷ *ibid*

identified. These will respond to general healthcare requirements across the lifecycle and to specific health needs such as mental health, addiction and disability.

- 1.7 To continue to work with central Government, relevant State Agencies, local organisations and communities to support the provision of accommodation and other services for International Protection Applicants and Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection from Ukraine and to support their longer-term economic and community inclusion.

Sustainable Economic Development Objectives

- 1.8 To establish a comprehensive and integrated network of remote working hubs and identify suitable locations and support existing co-working facilities, digital hubs/e-hubs and e-working centres across the county, targeting city-based employers and promoting flexible, local working.
- 1.9 To promote and support economic development across the county, particularly targeting areas where economic engagement is weak and where traditional economic activity is no longer viable/sustainable, e.g., due to the closure of the peat industry.
- 1.10 To facilitate and support the expansion and sustainment of the retail offering in County Kildare.
- 1.11 To develop and promote Kildare as an attractive and age-friendly retail destination.
- 1.12 Encourage promotion of mixed-use developments and support dwellings over shopfront buildings to regenerate urban living and increase housing availability in towns and villages.

Sustainable Shared Community and Economic Development Objectives


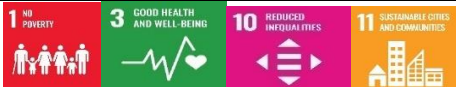





- 1.13 To provide high quality, accessible, sustainable and environmentally friendly housing to respond to the varied and strong housing demands in Kildare, particularly responding to those with specialist accommodation needs.¹⁸
- 1.14 To progress policy outlined in Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 through the provision of appropriate infrastructure to promote sustainable development through facilitating movement to, from and through the county that is accessible to all and that prioritises walking, cycling and public transport.
- 1.15 Encourage and support Irish Rail and other transport agencies in the delivery of sustainable transport projects in the county such as Dart+West and Bus Connects projects.

¹⁸ Older people, people with disabilities, homeless people, Travellers, people in need of emergency accommodation, people experiencing domestic violence.

- 1.16 To continue to develop the infrastructure and use of the Greenways/Blueways/Peatways and their surrounding towns/villages across the county to support employment, tourism and healthy lifestyles.
- 1.17 To support the safety of our citizens through the provision of Gardaí, fire and emergency services that are in line with the requirements of a county of our size.
- 1.18 To increase high-quality broadband and telecom infrastructure across the county.



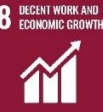



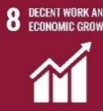

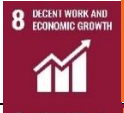


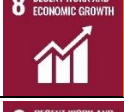















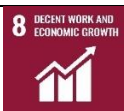







Sustainable Objective Ref	Community- LCDC	Economic- Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC	Shared- Community/Economic Development
1.1	✓		
1.2	✓		
1.3	✓		
1.4	✓		
1.5	✓		
1.6	✓		
1.7	✓		
1.8		✓	
1.9		✓	
1.10		✓	
1.11		✓	
1.12		✓	
1.13			✓
1.14			✓
1.15			✓
1.16			✓
1.17			✓
1.18			✓

Alignment of High Level Goal One with key plans and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

LECP Objective Ref	RSES	Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029	Kildare 2025 Economic Development Strategy	Kildare Climate Action Plan 2024-2029	Other Plans ¹⁹ (Based on up to five most relevant local plans)	UN Sustainable Development Goals (Based on up to four of the most relevant goals)
1.1	RPO 9.13, 9.14, 9.17, 9.20, 9.24	SC P2, P3, P5		Goal 2	-Age Friendly Kildare County Strategy 2023-2027 -Arts Strategy for KCC 2023-2027 -Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025 -Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027	
1.2	RPO 9.16,9.17	SC P4			-Age Friendly Kildare County Strategy 2023-2027 -Healthy Kildare Plan 2022-2026 -Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025 -KCC Play Strategy 2018-2028 -Kildare Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2022-2023	
1.3	RPO 9.14,9.24	SC P10, P11			-Arts Strategy for KCC 2023-2027 -Kildare Library Development Plan 2024-2028	
1.4	RPO 9.21	SC P12			-KWETB Statement of Strategy 2020-2024 -Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025	
1.5	RPO 9.20	SC P13			-Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025 -KCCC Strategic Plan 2023-2026	
1.6	RPO 9.12,9.13,9.23	SC P6, P14			-Age Friendly Kildare County Strategy 2023-2027 -Healthy Kildare Plan 2022-2026 Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025 -HSE CHO7 Plan	
1.7	RPO 9.3,9.6	HO P8			-Co Kildare Integration Strategy 2020-2026 -HSE- CHO7 Plan -Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025 -KCCC Strategic Plan 2023-2026	

¹⁹ In cases where there are a number of aligned plans the four most pertinent are outlined.

Kildare Public Participation Network, Vision for Community Wellbeing Kildare, 2023, aligns with a large number of the objectives across the four goals. The collaborative approach to community consultation supported synergies across both planning processes see section 5.2.3.

1.8	RPO 4.51, 6.5, 6.6, 6.29, 6.30, 6.31	RE P5,P6, P8	Goals 1, G3	Goal 2	-Kildare Connected Digital Strategy 2023-2025	   
1.9	RPO 6.2, 6.4, 6.5, 6.7, 6.38, 7.25	RE P1, P2, P3, P4, P7, RD P1	Goals 1, G3,G6	Goal 4	-Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027	   
1.10	RPO 4.27, 4.34, 6.10, 6.11	RET P1, P2,	Goal 7			  
1.11	RPO 4.27, 4.34, 6.10, 6.11, 9.12, 9.13	RET P1, P2, P4	Goal 7		-Age Friendly Kildare County Strategy 2023-2027	   
1.12	RPO 4.36,6.14	RET P1, P2 HO P5				   
1.13	RPO 5.4, 5.5, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6	SC P7, HO P3, P7, P8		Goal 2	-Age Friendly Kildare County Strategy 2023-2027 -Mid East Region Homeless Action Plan 2021-2023 -Co Kildare Integration Strategy 2020-2026 -Co Kildare Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023	   
1.14	RPO 5.3, 8.2 ,8.3, 8.13, 9.1, 9.10	TM P1, TM P3	Goal 8	Goal 2	-Age Friendly Kildare County Strategy 2023-2027 -Healthy Kildare Plan 2022-2026 -Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027 -Kildare Sports Partnership - Strategic Plan 2022-2023	   
1.15	RPO 5.2, 8.8, 8.9	TM P3		Goal 2	-County Kildare Tourism Strategy 2022-2026	   
1.16	RPO 7.24, 7.25	TM P1, P2, P3, RE P21 RE P19,P20, P21	Goal 6	Goal 3, Goal 4	-County Kildare Tourism Strategy 2022-2026 -JT Plan for West Kildare 2022 -Kildare Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2022-2023	   

					-Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027	
1.17		SC P15			-Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025	  
1.18	RPO 8.25	EC P22	Goal 3	Goal 2	-Age Friendly Kildare County Strategy 2023-2027 -Kildare Connected Digital Strategy 2023-2025	   

7.3 High Level Goal 2

County Kildare nurtures its **PEOPLE** to reach their full potential and to enjoy a high quality of life at all stages.

Context

National and regional policies/plans increasingly recognise that quality of life is crucial to supporting sustainable regional development. This is evident in the current Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 and Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy 2019-2031, which has as an aim to “*create a sustainable and competitive Region that supports the health and wellbeing of our people and places, from urban to rural, with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunities for all.*” In addition, our Kildare Economic Development Strategy 2025 outlines *Investing in People* as one of its priorities.

As our socio-economic profile highlights, Kildare is one of the largest, fastest growing and youngest counties in Ireland. Therefore, it is not surprising that consultations highlighted the need to support all **people** in Kildare, to participate fully and enjoy a high quality of life.

The challenge of ensuring newly arriving residents to Kildare, particularly those from outside the country, reach their potential and enjoy a high quality of life were highlighted throughout this planning process.

7.3.1 High Level Goal 2: Sustainable Objectives

There are fifteen objectives in total under this goal. Four are specific to community, six are economic development, and five are shared as both community and economic development.

Sustainable Community Objectives

2.1 Through networks, including the Kildare Public Participation Network, Comhairle na nÓg, Older Persons Council, Disability Access Groups, Kildare Traveller Action, Kildare Volunteer Centre, Town Teams and other representative voluntary groups, meaningful engagement will be encouraged and supported to inform local community initiatives, planning and decision-making, as well as to promote social inclusion in line with national policy.²⁰

²⁰ Department of Rural and Community Development, “Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making” 2023

- 2.2 To support people of all ages across Kildare, particularly in newly developing, socially excluded and expanding communities, to meet and engage in social, educational, health, employment, recreational, arts and cultural opportunities through a range of community development, social inclusion, community arts, education, health and other targeted programmes. This will develop local leadership, ownership, inclusion and a sense of pride and belonging in local communities.
- 2.3 To fully utilise libraries, museums and arts opportunities across Kildare to engage people, particularly those least likely to use them, in order to learn, develop new skills, meet new people, and build strong, inclusive communities.
- 2.4 To promote, encourage and support volunteering and to recognise its role in developing communities across Kildare.

Sustainable Economic Development Objectives

- 2.5 To establish an ongoing awareness of the skills required by local enterprises. This will help educators and trainers to proactively support people into employment opportunities - particularly people and areas experiencing unemployment.
- 2.6. To encourage and support businesses across Kildare to become more accessible and proactively employ groups who experience challenges to engage in the labour force, e.g., long-term unemployed, older people, people with disabilities, people with low educational attainment, lone parents, ethnic minorities and Travellers.
- 2.7 To promote local entrepreneurship through models of clustering and support their ongoing development through integrated, accessible support services targeting micro, small business and social enterprises across the county.
- 2.8 To increase the competitiveness and productivity of small and micro enterprises and support the ambition of local businesses to scale and compete internationally.
- 2.9 To promote Kildare as the Thoroughbred County through the discovery, sharing and application of new knowledge that will enhance the health, performance and management of horses.
- 2.10 To encourage and support upskilling, job mobility and enterprise creation management.

Sustainable Shared Community and Economic Development Objectives

2.11 To recognise, increase awareness of and embrace minority ethnic groups by listening and responding to their distinct needs. This will promote and support full inclusion in community and economic development across Kildare.

2.12 To develop and promote locally based festivals and cultural events across Kildare to support community engagement, pride and inclusion. Larger festivals such as *Brigid 1500* will also serve to promote and support Kildare's tourism potential.






2.13 To ensure that the developing smart economy and digital upskilling impacts towns and villages across the county, benefiting all communities - particularly areas and people that are traditionally excluded from technology (e.g., older people, people with low education levels, Travellers).





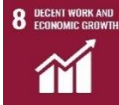




















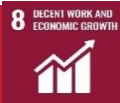

2.14 To progress the Kildare Climate Action Plan to embed the principles of sustainability and the circular economy through empowering local people, state agencies and businesses, particularly more vulnerable communities within the county, to make informed, sustainable, circular and climate-positive choices.









2.15 To promote and support the full utilisation of public transport and active travel as a means of accessing employment, education, recreation and other day-to-day activities.

	Community- LCDC	Economic- Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC	Shared- Community/Economic Development
2.1	✓		
2.2	✓		
2.3	✓		
2.4	✓		
2.5		✓	
2.6		✓	
2.7		✓	
2.8		✓	
2.9		✓	
2.10		✓	
2.11			✓
2.12			✓
2.13			✓
2.14			✓
2.15			✓

Alignment of High Level Goal Two with key plans and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

LECP Objective Ref	RSES	Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029	Kildare 2025 Economic Development Strategy	Kildare Climate Action Plan 2024-2029	Other Plans (Based on up to five most relevant local plans)	UN Sustainable Development Goals (Based on up to four most relevant goals)
2.1	RPO 9.18	SC P1, P3, , P7, P8 UD P1		Goal 4	-Age Friendly Kildare County Strategy 2023-2027 -CKLP Strategic Plan 2023-2028 -Co Kildare Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023 -Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025 -JT Plan for West Kildare 2022	
2.2	RPO 9.14, 9.15, 9.18	SC P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9			-Age Friendly Kildare County Strategy 2023-2027 -CKLP Strategic Plan 2023-2028 -Healthy Kildare Plan 2022-2026 -HSE CHO7 Plan x -Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025 -KCC Play Strategy 2018-2028 -Kildare Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2022-2023	
2.3	RPO 9.24 9.25	SC P10, 11			-Arts Strategy for KCC 2023-2027 -Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025 -Kildare Connected Digital Strategy 2023-2025 -Kildare Library Development Plan 2024-2028	
2.4	RPO 9.18	SC P1			-Age Friendly Kildare County Strategy 2023-2027 -CKLP Strategic Plan 2023-2028 -Kildare Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2022-2023	
2.5	RPO 6.25, 6.27, 9.22	RE P2, P3, P4	Goal 1		-CKLP Strategic Plan 2023-2028 -Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025 -KWETB Statement of Strategy 2020-2024 -JT Plan for West Kildare 2022	

2.6	RPO 6.28	RE P2, P3, P4	Goal 1		-Age Friendly Kildare County Strategy 2023-2027 -CKLP Strategic Plan 2023-2028 -Co Kildare Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023 -Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025 -KWETB Statement of Strategy 2020-2024 JT Plan for West Kildare 2022	   
2.7	RPO 6.31	RE P1, P2, P5, P7	Goal 1	Goal 2, G 5	-Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027 -KCCC Strategic Plan 2023-2026	  
2.8	RPO 6.31	RE P4, P7	Goal 1			  
2.9	RPO 6.34	RE P14 RD P3, P4	Goal 4		-County Kildare Tourism Strategy 2022-2026 -Thoroughbred County Destination Experience Plan 2023	  
2.10	RPO 6.21,6.25	RE P1, P2, P4 RD P1	Goals 1, G3		Arts Strategy for KCC 2023-2027 Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027	  
2.11	RPO 6.25,6.26	SC P3, P8	Goal 1		-CKLP Strategic Plan 2023-2028 -Co Kildare Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023 -Co Kildare Integration Strategy 2020-2026 -Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025 Kildare Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2022-2023 -KWETB Statement of Strategy 2020-2024	   
2.12		RE P23	Goal 6		-Arts Strategy for KCC 2023-2027 -Brigid 1500 Business Plan -KCC Play Strategy 2018-2028 -Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027 -County Kildare Tourism Strategy 2022-2026	  
2.13	RPO 6.25, 6.27, 6.30	RE P8	Goal 3	Goal 5	-Age Friendly Kildare County Strategy 2023-2027 -Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027	   

					-Kildare Konected Digital Strategy 2023-2025	
2.14	RPO 7.32, 7.33	RD P8		Goal 4, G5	-Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027 -County Kildare Tourism Strategy 2022-2026	   
2.15	RPO 8.2, 8.7, 9.10	TM P1, P2, P3, P4		Goal 2, G4	-Age Friendly Kildare County Strategy 2023-2027 -Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027	   

7.4 High Level Goal 3

County Kildare promotes and prioritises **CLIMATE ACTION, CLIMATE JUSTICE and SUSTAINABILITY.**

Context

The need to prioritise climate change and accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy and society is a key priority of all national, regional and local plans. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031, Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 and Economic Development Strategy 2025 have clear priorities in this regard. The Kildare Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, developed in tandem with this LECP, approved in December 2023, provides a clear analysis to connect relevant strategies and objectives to inform the climate priorities for Kildare.

While climate action and justice are goals of this LECP, it is intended that **all** goals and associated actions consider climate change. Consultations carried out to develop this LECP highlighted the need for climate justice to be particularly considered. This specifically highlights the challenge for all stakeholders in Kildare to ensure that communities, people experiencing poverty and exclusion, and businesses struggling to survive are not left behind or disproportionately impacted by our transition to a more carbon-neutral county.

7.4.1 High Level Goal 3: Sustainable Objectives

There are nine objectives in total under this goal. One is specific to community, one to economic development, and seven are shared as both community and economic development.

Sustainable Community Objective

3.1 To increase the awareness and understanding of local communities to build their capacity for climate action and a just transition for economic and community development, particularly targeting more excluded groups/communities.

Sustainable Economic Development Objective

3.2 To support local businesses to become leaders in sustainable energy through the provision of energy efficiency training and supports. This will result in increased competitiveness.

Sustainable Shared Community and Economic Development Objectives

3.3 To progress the implementation of the County Kildare Climate Action Plan with Kildare County Council as leaders in mitigating climate emissions and mainstreaming climate action in conjunction with the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office (CARO).

3.4 Support the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan to ensure that the public transport network encourages and supports changes in demand for transport, improves regional connectivity, and provides an enhanced alternative to the private car.

3.5 To progress the objectives in the County Kildare Climate Action Plan to protect and enhance the natural environment and green infrastructure by supporting biodiversity and natural water systems, reducing the risk of negative impacts of climate change, and enhancing the health and wellbeing of all citizens.

3.6 To promote the design and delivery of environmentally sustainable and energy efficient housing, including through the refurbishment and upgrading of existing local authority housing stock.






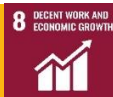
















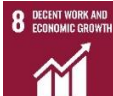







3.7 Promote and support the development of eco-tourism, particularly in rural Kildare, to diversify farm income, increase use of the Barrow Blueway and Greenways, and increase employment opportunities in line with planning and environmental considerations.





3.8 That Kildare will be a leader in low-carbon development, with a focus on sustainable sectors including the circular/green economy, land use diversification and the potential of the bioeconomy, and that this leadership be recognised nationally and internationally.

3.9 That the Agricultural sector will be supported and will continue to be an important part of the county's economy while transitioning to reduce emissions and become more sustainable.

	Community- LCDC	Economic- Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC	Shared Community/Economic Development
3.1	✓		
3.2		✓	
3.3			✓
3.4			✓
3.5			✓
3.6			✓
3.7			✓
3.8			✓
3.9			✓

Alignment of High Level Goal Three with key plans and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

LECP Objective Ref	RSES	Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029	Kildare 2025 Economic Development Strategy	Kildare Climate Action Plan 2024-2029	Other Plans (Based on up to five most relevant local plans)	UN Sustainable Development Goals (Based on up to four most relevant goals)
3.1	RPO 7.32, 7.33	RE P12		Goal 4, G5	-National Climate Action Plan 2024 -JT Plan for West Kildare 2022 -Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027	   
3.2	RPO 6.23, 7.35, 10.19	RE P5, P6, P12	Goal 8	Goal 4, G5	-National Climate Action Plan 2024 -JT Plan for West Kildare 2022	   
3.3	RPO 7.32, 7.33	RE P12		Goal 1	-National Climate Action Plan 2024 -Age Friendly Kildare County Strategy 2023-2027 -KWETB Statement of Strategy 2020-2024 -Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027	   
3.4	RPO 8.13	TM P1, P2, P3		Goal 2		  
3.5	RPO 7.16, 7.32, 7.33, 7.34	BI P1		Goal 3	-National Climate Action Plan 2024 -JT Plan for West Kildare 2022 -KCC Play Strategy 2018-2028 -Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027	  
3.6	RPO 7.40, 7.41	HO P7 UD P2		Goal 2	-National Climate Action Plan 2024	   
3.7	RPO 6.16, 6.23, 6.24, 7.24, 7.25	RE P19		Goal 3	-National Climate Action Plan 2024 -JT Plan for West Kildare 2022 -Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027 -County Kildare Tourism Strategy 2022-2026	   
3.8	RPO 6.23, 6.24	RE P12	Goal 8	Goal 5	-National Climate Action Plan 2024 -Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027	   

3.9	RPO 6.23, 6.24	RE P13	Goal 5	Goal 3	-Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027				
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7.5 High Level Goal 4

County Kildare attracts the **RESOURCES** and **INVESTMENT** to be a sustainable, inclusive, economically vibrant community for all.

Context

The continuing increase in Kildare's population, over the past thirty years, presents considerable challenges in ensuring that adequate services, facilities, infrastructure, and staffing, to foster sustainable community and economic development, is in place. It is important, particularly in areas that have experienced or are targeted for extensive expansion, that resourcing and investment are secured. In addition, more vulnerable communities, are often more acutely impacted and require prioritisation.

Throughout the development of this LECP, the question of resourcing was frequently raised. It is recognised that Kildare is a very strong, exciting, vibrant county and, for this to remain the case, investment is required. This mirrors the high-level goal of the Kildare 2025 Economic Development Strategy which outlines the need to *Strengthen Kildare's Bidding Capacity for Funds*.

Local Economic and Community Plans are not allocated a specific budget to implement priorities. Therefore, resourcing and investment are required to ensure that the actions agreed for Kildare over the next six years can be implemented. Securing, appropriately directing and maximising existing public and private sector funding is extremely important for the future community and economic development of Kildare.

7.5.1 High Level Goal 4: Sustainable Objectives

There are six objectives in total under this goal. Three are specific to community, one economic development, and two are shared as both community and economic development.

Sustainable Community Objectives

- 4.1 To fully utilise recently developed strategic plans highlighting the need for additional resourcing to respond to the needs of children, young people, older people, vulnerable communities, Family Resource Centres, Travellers, and other groups.
- 4.2 To highlight and seek resourcing to expand education provision, particularly targeting secondary provision in the north and high-growth areas of the county. In addition to increasing the number of DEIS schools in the county.²¹
- 4.3 To continue to highlight the need for ongoing, committed and sustainable resources to reduce social exclusion and to prevent further increases in the gap between affluence and poverty in the county.

Sustainable Economic Development Objective

- 4.4 To promote Kildare as the location of choice for new Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and support existing FDI companies in sustaining and expanding their business.












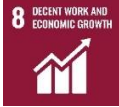


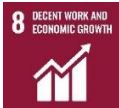



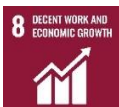



Sustainable Shared Community and Economic Development Objectives

- 4.5 To utilise the social infrastructure audits carried out as part of KCC Local Area Planning to allocate existing resources and work with Government Departments and Agencies to identify funding opportunities to inform funding applications to support community and economic development across the county.
- 4.6 To ensure that the systems are in place to collate and analyse accurate and timely data to inform resource priorities and allocations for business and community development across the county. This includes data to supplement the Haase deprivation index for Kildare.

	Community- LCDC	Economic- Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC	Shared Community/Economic Development
4.1	✓		
4.2	✓		
4.3	✓		
4.4		✓	
4.5			✓
4.6			✓

²¹ DEIS stands for Delivering Equality of Opportunity In Schools. It aims to address educational disadvantage by providing additional resources and supports to schools in socio economically disadvantaged areas.

Alignment of High Level Goal Four with key plans and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

LECP Objective Ref	RSES	Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029	Kildare 2025 Economic Development Strategy	Kildare Climate Action Plan 2024-2029	Other Plans (Based on up to five most relevant local plans)	UN Sustainable Development Goals (Based on up to four most relevant goals)
4.1	RPO 6.35, 9.13, 9.14, 9.15, 9.17, 9.19, 9.20, 9.21, 9.23	SC P1, P2, P8, P10, P11, P13, P14			-Age Friendly Kildare County Strategy 2023-2027 -CKLP Strategic Plan 2023-2028 -Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025 -JT Plan for West Kildare 2022 -Kildare Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2022-2023	   
4.2	RPO 9.18, 9.21	SC P12			-Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025 -KWETB Statement of Strategy 2020-2024	  
4.3	RPO 6.35, 9.18, 9.19	RE P3			-Co Kildare Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023 -HSE CHO 7 Plan -Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025 -Kildare Rural Development Programme LDS 2023-2027 -KCCC Strategic Plan 2023-2026	   
4.4	RPO 6.34, 6.35	RE 054	Goal 2	Goal 2		  
4.5	RPO 6.35, 9.18, 9.19	RE P3	Linked to enabling action- Bidding Capacity for Funds		-Age Friendly Kildare County Strategy 2023-2027 -Kildare CYPSC Plan 2023-2025 -Kildare Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2022-2023 -JT Plan for West Kildare 2022	   
4.6	RPO 6.35, 9.18	RE P3	Linked to enabling action- Bidding Capacity for Funds			   

8. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1 Introduction

The high-level goals and associated actions identified in the Kildare LECP are ambitious. However, it is critically important to strive forward, respond to opportunities and address challenges. This is agreed by stakeholders in Kildare. This LECP aligns clearly with other agreed plans and, therefore, provides the framework and mechanism to track progress of the community and economic development in the county.

The process of developing this plan over the last twelve months has been highly participatory:

- A senior and representative Advisory Steering Group of nine members has met eight times to date. All members have actively engaged in ensuring that this LECP is clear, relevant and achievable.
- Kildare LCDC has nineteen senior-level representatives from statutory and non-statutory bodies. The LECP was an agenda item for discussion at the eight meetings that took place since February 2023 when planning for this LECP commenced.
- The Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC has nine active members. The LECP was an agenda item for discussion at the six meetings that took place since February 2023.

This engagement and commitment amongst stakeholders in Kildare provides a strong platform to implement, monitor and review progress of this LECP. While further national guidance on LECP implementation and monitoring would be welcomed, the following is proposed:

8.2 Implementation

A two-year implementation plan is currently being finalised. This sets out the specific priority actions for Kildare 2024-2026. These actions will be led by appropriate agencies/bodies, including but not exclusive to KCC. A highly collaborative approach is proposed, in keeping with working through the LCDC and SPC to date.

It is recognised that the majority of actions within the plan will require funding streams. Central government funding is available through a wide range of agencies and non-departmental public bodies. The objectives and actions proposed in this plan are presented

to align with current and possible future funding. KCC and the other stakeholders leading out on actions will focus on identifying and maximising public funding for Kildare over the lifetime of this plan. In addition, this LECP aims to direct existing resources into the agreed priorities.

Implementation of the LECP shall conform with the provisions of the Kildare County Development Plan and various Local Area Plans, including those responsible for the protection and management of the environment. The preparation of any lower-tier plans or strategies will be subject to SEA and AA screening as appropriate.

8.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

This LECP includes high-level goals and associated objectives. Those objectives, in turn, have explicit actions. The level of progress being made in achieving the actions and associated objectives will be assessed by close monitoring and evaluation.

Continued sourcing, analysis and monitoring of up-to-date datasets will create an evidence-based framework to assess the progress of this plan. Continued work with AIRO in Maynooth University will be critical to support this, as will strengthening data collation, monitoring systems and data sharing within Kildare based organisations.

Following the adoption of the LECP, the membership of the ASG will be reviewed to establish an LECP Monitoring and Implementation team. This will ensure that the skillset required to oversee the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the LECP over the next six years is in place. In order to maximise synergies and avoid duplication, it will be important that existing structures and monitoring systems in place to oversee the progress of plans such as the County Development Plan (2023-2029), Climate Action Plan (2024-2029), CYPSC Plan (2023-2027) and other plans is considered. The Monitoring and Implementation Team will be supported in their role by KCC staff.

The key roles of the Monitoring and Implementation team are to be finalised but will include:

- a) Liaising with the lead and supporting partners, bodies and agencies responsible for the delivery of actions identified in the plan.
- b) Monitoring and reviewing progress.
- c) Writing reports and presenting updates.
- d) Amending the implementation plan as appropriate.

LECP progress will be included as a standing agenda item at all LCDC and Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC scheduled meetings. An annual review of all actions will also be presented alongside a short, published progress report.

These annual updates will provide a platform to amend, adapt and close out on actions as they are completed. Following the end of the two-year implementation period, a more extensive review will take place to inform the second implementation plan. This will allow for a more realistic and flexible plan that remains aligned with the social and economic realities and needs of the county over the next six years.

Appendices

Appendix One: Kildare Advisory Steering Group membership

Marian Higgins (Chairperson)	Director of Services Climate, Community, Environment and Water, LCDC Chief Officer-Chairperson of ASG
Alan Dunney	Director of Services Planning, Enterprise, Economic Development and Emergency Services
Cllr Suzanne Doyle	LCDC Chairperson
Cllr Rob Power	Economic Development Enterprise and Planning SPC-Chairperson
Alan Kerry	LCDC representative (PPN Social Inclusion rep)
Sinead Ronan	County Kildare Chamber of Commerce (also LCDC member)
Paula O Rourke	KCC - Climate Action Co-ordinator
Karl Duffy	County Kildare LEADER Partnership - Rural Development Manager
Paula O Brien	KCC - Senior Executive Officer- Community Section
<p>Meetings to date:</p> <p>28th March 2023, 15th May 2023, 14th June 2023, 18th September 2023</p> <p>6th November 2023, 11th December 2023, 22nd January 2024, 22nd April 2024.</p>	

Supported by: Susan Bookle, KCC LCDC Co-ordinator and Jacqui McNabb KCC Head of Enterprise

Appendix Two: Kildare LCDC Membership January 2024

Statutory Representatives (Nine)		
Councillor Suzanne Doyle (Chairperson)	Member of Kildare County Council	Local Authority
Sonya Kavanagh	CE Kildare County Council	Local Authority
Councillor Tracey O' Dwyer	Member of Kildare County Council	Local Authority
Councillor Aidan Farrelly	Member of Kildare County Council	Local Authority
Jacqui McNabb	KCC Head of Enterprise	Local Authority
Ken Seery	Director of Further Education and Training	Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board
Ruth Langan	Area Manager	Department of Social Protection
Margaret McQuillan	Head of Health and Wellbeing	HSE
Audrey Warren	Area Manager	Tusla
Non-Statutory Members (Ten)		
Mary O' Connor	Board Member	County Kildare LEADER Partnership
Evonne Boland	Community Development	PPN
Michael Kenny	Community Development	PPN
Alan Kerry	Social Inclusion	PPN
Jide Sadiq	Social Inclusion	PPN
Liz Deniffe	Environmental	PPN
Sinead Ronan	Chief Executive Officer	Co Kildare Chamber of Commerce
Lisa Baggott	Co-ordinator	Southwestern Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force
Tom Malone	Representative	Irish Farmers Association
Vacant		McVerry Trust

Supported by: Marian Higgins, KCC Director of Climate, Community, Environment and Water and LCDC support staff.

Appendix Three: Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC Membership

Councillor Robert Power (Chairperson)	Member of Kildare County Council	Local Authority
Councillor Padraig McEvoy	Member of Kildare County Council	Local Authority
Councillor Michael Coleman	Member of Kildare County Council	Local Authority
Councillor Kevin Duffy	Member of Kildare County Council	Local Authority
Councillor Peggy O'Dwyer	Member of Kildare County Council	Local Authority
Councillor Ivan Keatley	Member of Kildare County Council	Local Authority
Councillor Seamie Moore	Member of Kildare County Council	Local Authority
Gerry Prendergast	Member	Business/Commercial Pillar
Majella O'Keeffe	Social Inclusion	PPN
Vacant	Environmental	PPN
Vacant	Member	Development/Construction Pillar

Supported by: Alan Dunney, KCC Director of Services Planning, Enterprise, Economic Development and Emergency Services and SPC support staff.

Appendix Four: Kildare LECP Implementation Plan Template 2024-2026

Sustainable Objective:				
Action	Outcomes	Cost/Source of finance	Lead and Support Partners	Timeframe

Appendix Five: SEA and AA Screening

The SEA and AA screening determination letters are outlined below. Full reports are available on:

<https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/Community/KildareL/CDC/LocalEconomicandCommunityPlan/>.

Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council



Screening Determination for Strategic Environmental Assessment under SEA Directive 2001/42/EC as transposed into Irish law under S.I. 435/2004, as amended

Concerning the proposed Kildare County Council Local Economic and Community Plan

Kildare County Council as the Competent Authority for the Local Economic and Community Plan (the Plan) has undertaken screening for SEA under Directive 2001/42/EC. The screening assessment was carried out using the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects as set out in Schedule 1 of S.I. 435/2004, as amended.

Following assessment of the criteria and having regard to the nature of the Plan and the potential for likely significant environmental effects from implementation of the Plan, Kildare County Council determined that the Plan will not give rise to likely significant effects on the environment.

This determination has been made following consideration of the information contained in a SEA Screening Report and the criteria set out in Schedule 1 to S.I. 435/2004 as amended,

The principal reasons the Plan does not require an SEA are as follows:

- The Plan does not set the framework for consent or land use change. The supports provided will work within existing land use operators and all plans/projects arising from the implementation of the plan will be subject to compliance with the Kildare County Development Plan (CDP) 2023 - 2029 and all other relevant plans. There are no sources for impacts that are not already considered within the CDP and other relevant plans and their associated environmental assessments.

Signed on behalf of Kildare County Council:



Marian Higgins, Director of Service, Climate, Community, Environment and Water

Alan Dunney, Director of Service, Planning, Enterprise, Economic Development and Emergency Services

Date: 15th April 2024.



**Screening Determination for Strategic Environmental Assessment under SEA
Directive 2001/42/EC as transposed into Irish law under S.I. 435/2004, as
amended**

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Signed on behalf of Kildare County Council:

Marian Higgins, Director of Service, Climate, Community, Environment and Water

Alan Dunne, Director of Service, Planning, Enterprise, Economic Development and Emergency Services

Date: 15th April 2024.

Appendix Six: Kildare Some Key Facts

This extract is taken from analysis provided by AIRO Maynooth University

- **Growth-** The population of Kildare in 2022 was 247,000 growing by 11% or 24,500 people since 2016. This equates to growth comparable to the entire population of Kilkenny City becoming resident in Kildare over a six-year period. Kildare is the **5th most populated Local Authority in the country**. In the past thirty years the population of Kildare has doubled from a population of 124,321 in 1991. This increase alone is comparable to the entire population of Waterford City and County. There are variations in the level of growth across the county with the Naas and Clane/Maynooth MDs experiencing the fastest growth in the 2016-2022 period. The growth of Kildare is evenly balanced between natural increase (birth minus death) and inward migration. It is projected that over the next twenty years the population of Kildare will continue to increase substantially by about 18.6%.
- **Urban/Rural** – In terms of its population distribution, Kildare is one of the most urban counties in the State. According to Census 2022, approximately 70% of the population in the county reside in urban areas (towns >= 1,500 population). Only Dublin Local Authorities, Cork City and Galway City have higher urban rates. However, there is a very clear spatial pattern to the urban distribution in Kildare with the vast majority of this population in the north-east metropolitan area and in key settlements in close proximity to the motorway networks. The remainder of Kildare is classed as rural with a total population of 74,509 (30%, 7th lowest rate) – this is the 11th highest number of rural dwellers in the State. **The total number of rural dwellers in Kildare is greater than the entirety of the population of counties such as Roscommon or Sligo**. Rural Kildare is a regionally important agricultural base with dispersed populations and settlement patterns, primarily in the South and Southwest of the county.
- There has been a major growth in **urban centres** in Kildare between 2016 and 2022. The county now has seven settlements with a population greater than 10,000 (Naas, Newbridge, Celbridge, Maynooth, Leixlip, Athy and Kildare Town). Several settlements have witnessed population increases of more than 25% in the five years since Census 2016 – Naas (+23%), Kilcock (+42%, the 2nd largest growth rate in the State), Straffan (+34%), Johnstown (+33%), Rathangan (+27%), Derrinturn (+27%), Monasterevin (+25%).
- **Children and Young People-** In 2022, Kildare had the 4th youngest population in the State at 34.8% (86,155 people aged 0-24). This number is the 5th highest in the State

and represents an increase of 4,600 additional children and young people living in the county since 2016. The numbers and levels of children, young people and young families are key characteristics of Kildare. This results in high levels of demand for childcare, schools, recreational facilities and specialist supports to respond to the needs of children. Specific challenges exist for low-income families, including 4,482 lone parent families with children under 15 in 2022. Childcare costs in County Kildare are the eighth highest in the State.

- **Age-** The average age of the population in Kildare in 2022 was 36.9 years (State = 38.8). This is the second youngest average age of all counties in the State. Only Fingal has a younger average age.
- **Projected Aging-** While the population of Kildare continues to grow it will also age considerably. According to the NPF, it is projected that the number of people aged over 65 will increase from 28,010 in 2016 to 59,000 in 2040. This means a **doubling** of the older population. 2040 may seem like a long way away, but planning to respond to this change in profile needs to commence in the short term to ensure that services, facilities and infrastructure are fit for purpose in the future.
- **Economic-** Kildare's economic profile exhibits **significant structural strengths** relative to other parts of Ireland. Participation in the labour force and workforce is higher in Kildare compared to national and regional levels. The county has the second-highest rate of FDI nationally, and this has contributed immensely to the strong economic profile. However, the SME and the micro-Enterprise sector represent approximately 92% of all active businesses in Kildare. This is significant and highlights the balanced employment structure of the county. While economic opportunities exist, unemployment remains a significant challenge, particularly intergenerational unemployment in the South and Southwest of the county.
- **Commuting-** Census 2022 highlighted that 36.5% (41,688) of Kildare's workforce commute to work outside the County. **This is the 6th highest rate in the State.** While the rate of external commuting has declined marginally in Kildare since Census 2016, much of this decline can be attributed to the major increase in home working. Approximately, 14,000 resident workers in Kildare were recorded as working from home in 2022. For those who travel to work, transport by car is by far the dominant mode and accounts for over 57% of all workers. In contrast, public transport (bus or train) only accounts for 8% of resident workers. While transport infrastructure is relatively strong to the major urban centres in the region, public transport across the county as a whole is a challenge – as is the switch to sustainable transport.

- **Housing-** There were over 11,000 housing completions in Kildare between 2016 and 2022, of which 2,630 occurred in 2022. This is the third highest level of completion in the State. The majority were scheme houses. The county records the fourth lowest housing vacancy rates nationally, with rates generally higher in rural than urban areas. The vast majority of Kildare's housing stock is conventional owner-occupied houses with a high proportion with a mortgage. This is particularly prevalent in the North and East of the county. In line with neighbouring counties, property prices are high in Kildare with an average of €374,359 in December 2022 compared to €359,529 nationally. There are regional variations with prices East of the county significantly higher than South Kildare. A rental rate comparison in 2022 highlights that rent in the county (average €1,395) is the third highest after Dublin and Galway City. While there are internal regional variations, it should be noted that rental prices in Athy, the lowest in the county at €1,046, are still higher than the average for 19 other counties and cities including Waterford City (€908). Finally, homelessness remains a significant challenge nationally, and this is mirrored in Kildare.
- **Deprivation-** According to the Pobal Haase Deprivation Index 2022, Kildare is categorised as an affluent county. However, there are significant regional variations. In 2022, almost 21,270 people were classified as being disadvantaged (8.6% of the population). Deprivation is generally more pronounced in South and Southwest Kildare. However, pockets exist in all urban areas. Recent Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) data highlights that Athy, Newbridge, Kildare Town and Naas have the highest number of households in receipt of HAP. Therefore, poverty and disadvantage are spread around the county while being more pronounced in pockets and urbanising communities.
- **Diversity-** Kildare is becoming more diverse and up to date data is awaited. In 2022 ,the proportion of non-Irish nationals living in the county (11.4%) was lower than regional levels and slightly lower than the State average.
- **Travellers-** Kildare has traditionally had a lower-than-average number of Travellers living in the county. However, the KCC annual Traveller survey in 2022 outlines an increase in the number of Traveller families - particularly in clusters on the periphery of towns. Approximately 70% of families live in standard housing.
- **Education-** Kildare has one of the highest levels of education attainment amongst adults nationally. In 2022, 42.6% of those who completed education and residing in the county had a 3rd level qualification. This is the 6th highest rate in the State and only surpassed by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Galway City, Fingal, Dublin City and Cork City. This is particularly prevalent in the Northeast of the county. However, the South and West of the

county experience much lower education levels. Of the 101 primary schools in the county, 15 have DEIS status - the third lowest in the country. This is mirrored in the post-primary schools with only seven DEIS secondary schools in the county. The additional supports afforded by DEIS play an important role in breaking cycles of low education and disadvantage.

- **Health-** While Kildare largely experiences positive health (86% reporting good/very good health in Census 2022), there are challenges in accessing health services such as GPs due to the substantial growth within the county. Access to specialist health services such as disability, addiction and mental health is also a challenge.
- **Broadband-** Kildare has a high level of access to commercial broadband in all main urban areas. However, the National Broadband Plan has identified a number of areas for intervention. Some of these areas are very poorly served with no commercial provider in place. The West of the county is a particular concern.
- **Income levels-** The median gross household income in Kildare is in line with regional levels at €54,472, but higher than national levels of €45,256. However, there are regional variations, with Athy (€42,054) and Kildare/ Newbridge (€50,433) MDs lower than county and regional levels. It is notable that costs such as childcare (highlighted above) and rent (29% of disposable income) are high in the county. Therefore, high incomes can often be used to pay for higher than average housing, childcare and commuting costs.
- **Environmental-** Kildare contains several Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) a basic designation for wildlife and important for the habitats they present. The north of the county contains the Carbury and Hodgestown Bogs. There are other proposed NHAs published on a non-statutory basis in 1995. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are prime wildlife conservation areas considered important on a European and Irish level. These include Ballinafagh Bog, Ballinafagh Lake, Polardstown Fen, Mouds Bog, and the Barrow and Nore rivers. There are no wind farms in Kildare, but 13 solar farms are planned.
- **Agriculture-** There are very diverse farming practices in Kildare from the thriving horse industry to the traditional peatlands in the West. The average farm size in Kildare is above the national average, especially in the South of the county. Almost 43% of farms in Kildare are specialist beef production farms, with over 15% of them being specialist tillage. There is a clear spatial pattern with the highest rates of tillage farms in the South of the county. The median standard per farm was the tenth highest nationally and in line with neighbouring commuter belt counties.

Local Authorities, 2022

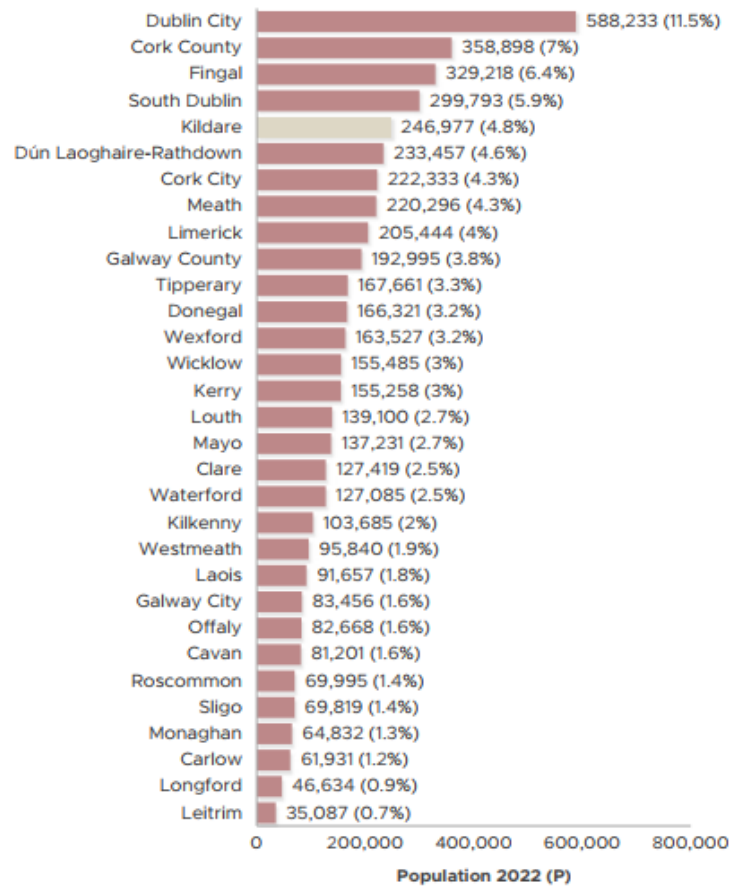


Figure 1.1 - Total Population 2022, by Local Authority, 2022 (Source: CSO)

Municipal District, 2022

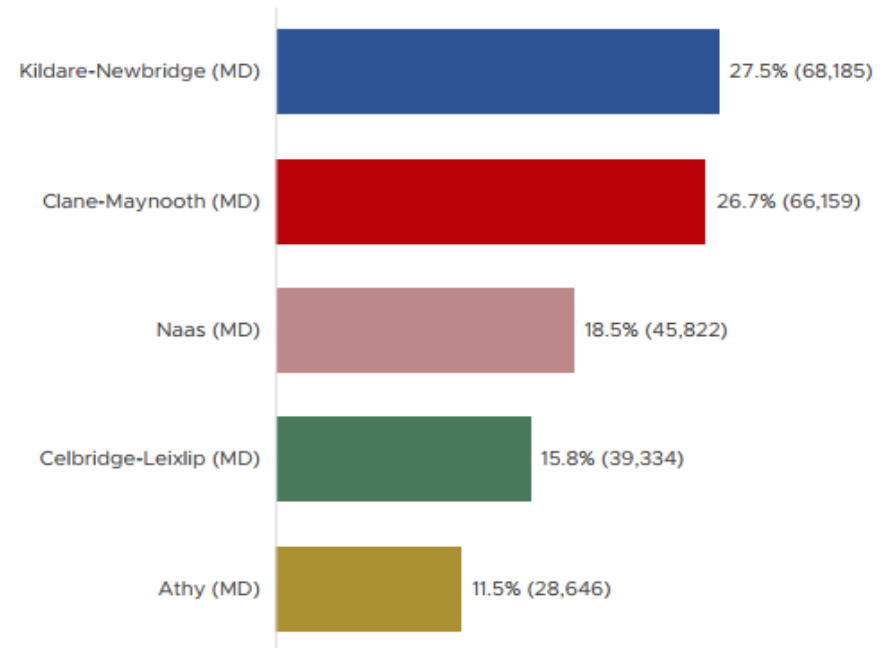


Figure 1.2 - Total Population 2022 MD, 2022 (Source: CSO)