



Submission by Meath County Council on the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region

January 2019

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## 1.0 Introduction

Meath County Council welcomes the opportunity to provide further input into the preparation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region.

The Council acknowledges the importance of the RSES in supporting the implementation of the National Planning Framework and setting out a policy framework for future development, growth, and investment in the Eastern and Midland Region.

The submission is divided into 4 sections as follows:

- Section 1 sets out background information on County Meath.
- Section 2 provides a summary of the Council's participation in the process to date.
- Section 3 contains a detailed analysis of the Draft RSES in the context of County Meath.
- Section 4 provides a summary of the main conclusions of the submission.

In addition there are 3 no. appendices attached to the submission as follows:

- Appendix A contains supporting maps.
- Appendix B sets out in detail the recommended amendments to the text of the Draft RSES sought by the Council.
- Appendix C contains an Economic Analysis of the potential implications for the economy of County Meath of the Draft RSES prepared by Dr Pat McCloughan, Managing Director of PMCA Economic Consulting.

This is a joint submission by the Executive and Elected Members of Meath County Council.

### 1.1 Location and Context

Meath occupies a strategic location in the Eastern and Midland Region and is uniquely positioned along the national motorway network with 4 national motorways routed through the County including the E1 International corridor providing strong transport links to the 2 largest cities on the island, Dublin and Belfast.

Within Meath there is a strong network of towns that are well serviced with social and physical infrastructure. Navan, the administrative capital of the County, is located on the M3 economic corridor and has the potential to act as a driver of Regional growth.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) identifies the major settlement of Drogheda as a key Regional driver of the development for the North East Region. The NPF acknowledges that it will be necessary to prepare co-ordinated strategies for Dundalk and Drogheda at both Regional and town level to ensure that they have the capacity to grow sustainably and secure investment as key centres on the Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry cross-border network. The strong performance of the Southern

Environs of Drogheda from an economic and residential perspective to date has played a significant role in the achievement of this enhanced status for Drogheda. The National Development Plan (NDP) includes proposals for upgrades to the rail infrastructure serving Drogheda. The proximity of McBride station to the Southern Environs has enabled these lands to develop on a sustainable format.

Dunboyne, the only settlement in the County currently located within the boundary of the Dublin Metropolitan Area, is an access rich multi-modal settlement which has the potential to become a major employment and residential hub due to its proximity to Dublin City. Dunboyne's location has been instrumental in the attraction of major FDI investment by Facebook and Shire. The significant economic investment by Avoca has raised the profile and branding of the area.

Maynooth is an important university town on the M4 knowledge corridor which enjoys the benefits of multi-modal access. The NDP includes proposals for upgrades to the rail infrastructure serving the town. There are currently zoned lands in the Northern Environs of Maynooth that can deliver significant economic growth in the Metropolitan Area. The release of these lands is necessary to deliver a major orbital route (MOOR) for the town of Maynooth in partnership with Kildare County Council.

Ashbourne is the second largest town in the County and benefits from its proximity to Dublin Airport and is a key employment and population centre. Ratoath is the fourth largest town in the County with significant potential for employment growth based on the availability of a highly skilled workforce in the town allied to the internationally important equestrian hub at Fairyhouse and Tattersalls. Kells is a key employment and service centre in the north of the County. Kells and its surrounding catchment now benefits from a REDZ designation (Rural Economic Development Zone). Trim is an important heritage town with a solid economic base operating within an economic cluster alongside Navan and Kells.

Below these towns there is a network of small towns and villages that are important service centres to the rural area. The County also has a strong tradition in the agriculture and equine industries, and has some of the most valuable agricultural land in the country.

There is a wealth of natural and built heritage in Meath. This heritage includes the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne, the ancient seat of the High Kings of Ireland at Tara, the passage tombs of Loughcrew, the largest Anglo-Norman Castle in Europe in Trim, and the historic towns of Navan, Trim, and Kells.

## 1.2 Population and household growth

The proximity of Meath to Dublin has been a central factor in the growth experienced in the County over the last 20 years, which saw the population increase by 78% between 1996-2016 and the housing stock increase by 134%.

Notwithstanding the economic conditions of the recent past, the population of Meath has continued to grow strongly, and in 2016 remained one of the fastest growing counties in the country, with a

5.9% population increase from 184,135 to 195,044 between 2011-16. This represents 10.2% of the total population in the Greater Dublin Area and 14.7% of the population of the Eastern and Midland Region.

Meath remains one of the most active locations in the Eastern and Midlands Region for residential construction, with 398 units registered as completed in Q3 of 2018<sup>1</sup>. This residential activity is primarily concentrated in the southern and eastern parts of the County including Navan, Ashbourne, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, and Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington.

### 1.3 Population distribution

Population growth in Meath over the past 20 years has primarily been concentrated in urban areas. This has resulted in the urban based population in the County increasing from 34% of the total population in 1996 to 59% in 2016. Further evidence of this transition is the settlement size and structure in the County. In 1996 Navan was the only settlement in Meath with a population greater than 10,000 whilst Ashbourne was the second largest town, with a population of 4,999. In 2016 there were 3 settlements with a population greater than 10,000<sup>2</sup> and 5 settlements with a population greater than 5,000.<sup>3</sup>

The most recent census confirms this trend is continuing, with an 8.9% population increase recorded in aggregate town areas compared to a 1.9% increase in aggregate rural areas.<sup>4</sup>

The influence of Dublin on settlement growth remains apparent in that settlements in the South and East of the County exhibit the highest levels of outbound commuting. Ashbourne is the fastest growing town in the County with the population increasing by 11.7% to 12,679 in 2016. This is twice the rate of growth recorded in Navan, which increased its population by 5.7% to 30,173. Laytown-Bettystown has also exhibited high population growth in this period with significant levels of outbound commuting.

### 1.4 Review of the County Development Plan

The Review of the County Development Plan 2019-25 commenced in December 2017. Under section 12 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 the review of the County Development Plan has been deferred. This process will recommence following the adoption of the RSES.

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<sup>1</sup> CSO New dwelling completions Q3 2018

<sup>2</sup> Navan, Ashbourne, and Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington

<sup>3</sup> Dunboyne, Kells, Trim, Ratoath, and the Southern Environs of Drogheda

<sup>4</sup> The census defines 'Aggregate Town Areas' as settlements with a population of 1,500 persons or more. 'Aggregate Rural Areas' refers to the population outside of 'Aggregate Town Areas'.

## 1.5 Economic Development in County Meath

Meath is the only County in the Greater Dublin Area to reach its population target as set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-22.<sup>5</sup> However the population and housing growth experienced in Meath over the last 20 years was not mirrored with employment growth in the County.

The 2004 Regional Planning Guidelines included an analysis of the distribution of jobs in the Greater Dublin Area. Only Dublin City had more jobs than resident labour force with all other Local Authority areas having more residents than available jobs. The Guidelines state that ‘*this imbalance between jobs and labour force outside Dublin City is not unexpected, as the pattern of commuting to the city centre is well established. However the scale of the imbalance between labour force is a matter of concern especially in relation to Meath and Wicklow.*’ The Guidelines go on to state ‘*from the viewpoint of economic and settlement sustainability, it would be highly desirable that the jobs ratio should not be allowed to fall further in the Mid East Local Authority areas, and increased if at all possible*’. The Guidelines set out at Table 6.9 A Jobs Growth Scenerio for the GDA. The low target set for Meath (0.57) reflected its position that at 0.49, Meath already had the lowest jobs to labour force ratio in the Region. In addition to these targets the Guidelines included a strong emphasis on the development of larger settlements in the County for economic development to assist with the necessary job creation in order to achieve the target. Notwithstanding robust discussion during the preparatory process for the 2010 RPGs as to the merits of retaining the targets, the jobs to labour force target approach was discontinued in the 2010 RPGs. The 2010 RPGs focus on the economic challenges facing the Region having regard to the prevailing economic conditions worldwide at time of writing. These challenges included growth in unemployment and manufacturing decline. The impacts of long distance commuting was also considered, as stated above, measurable targets for each County in respect of job creation were not included.

Having regard to the economic challenges already experienced by Meath as highlighted in the 2004 RPGs, the impacts of the recession further exacerbated the already challenging economic conditions for the citizens of the County. Urgent intervention was clearly needed to reverse these uniquely difficult conditions for County Meath. A new economic development model was clearly warranted.

The Government’s Action Programme for Effective Local Government, “Putting People First”, was published in October 2012 and sets out the following objective for local government reform: “Local government will be the main vehicle of governance and public service at local level - leading economic, social and community development, delivering efficient and good value services, and representing citizens and local communities effectively and accountably”.

In considering the role and function of Local Authorities the Action Plan outlines the following: “Local authorities should play as wide a role as possible in public service and administration, not only in the specific service areas that have traditionally been their main business focus, but also in contributing to national recovery and economic growth”.

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<sup>5</sup> Table 5 of RPGs 2010-22 ‘Population Target for Local Authorities’

In particular the document identifies that there will be a stronger role for local government in promoting economic development, thereby sustaining and creating jobs – building on the local initiatives already in train.

In January 2014 Meath County Council engaged a multidisciplinary consultancy team comprising PMCA Economic Consulting, FTI Consulting and John Spain & Associates to prepare a comprehensive evidence based Economic Development Strategy for County Meath to cover the period 2014 – 2022. This major report by the consultants builds upon the baseline work completed earlier by researchers at Maynooth University. Additional empirical analysis was undertaken in order to assess the structure and performance of the local economy of Meath, including indigenous enterprises and foreign direct investment (FDI). The extent of outbound commuting also formed part of this assessment.

The Council has promoted a change in the approach to Economic Development in Meath in recent years which has resulted in a shift from a more passive approach which considered that outward commuting for employment was acceptable, towards a ‘hands on’ proactive approach. The blueprint for this change in direction is set out in the Strategy which provides clear, concise, innovative and evidence-based measures aimed at accelerating the economic transformation, revitalisation and sustainable development of the County. The Strategy identified that the County was operating under a sub-optimal economic development model which was not working, a more innovative approach as set out above was warranted.

The strategy isolates existing trends within the County which impact on the economic performance including:

- A narrow base of economic activities in largely traditional areas;
- A Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) deficit;
- Low penetration of knowledge-orientated activities; and
- Substantial skills leakage due to commuting trends out of the County.

The Strategy was formally launched in June 2015 with the target of the creation of 7,500 jobs by 2022.

The Economic Strategy integrates spatial planning, economic development, and marketing and is reflected in the current CDP 2013-19<sup>6</sup> and the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). The key objectives of the Strategy are as follows:

- i) Provide more employment in the County, particularly in knowledge-oriented professional services (such as IT, financial services, life services) to address outbound commuting and broaden the economic/employment base of the County
- ii) Promote the creation of ‘live work’ communities where people have less distance to travel between home and work and where families and communities are well served by essential infrastructure
- iii) Increase the jobs to population ratio in the County, which would ultimately result in the creation of more sustainable communities.

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<sup>6</sup> Following a variation to the CDP (Variation no.3 which was adopted on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

An analysis of the implementation of the Economic Development Strategy carried out in December 2017 identified that the targets are on course for being achieved. The key targets are as follows:

- i) Target 1 – Achieve a jobs growth of 7,500 between 2011-22 – on track for being achieved however will require higher employment growth between 2016-21 in comparison to 2011-16
- ii) Target 2 – Reverse the downward trend in the ratio of self-employed income per head in Meath in comparison to the State – on track for being achieved
- iii) Target 3 – Maintain or widen the gap in favour of Meath of the proportion of all employment accounted for by agency assisted Irish owned enterprises – on track for being achieved
- iv) Target 4 – Narrow the gap between Meath and the State with regard to the proportion of all employment accounted for by FDI firms – this remains a challenge however the figures analysed do not include the recent investments by Facebook, Shire Pharmaceuticals, and Avoca.

Supported by the IDA and Enterprise Ireland, Meath County Council is today successfully prioritising economic development and articulating a positive and dynamic pro-employment culture throughout the organisation from which all citizens and stakeholders are already benefitting. The Council recognised it needed to become more proactive and business like in the way it interacts with the private sector and state job creation agencies in driving economic growth and now operates a ‘one point of contact approach’ to incoming investors, facilitates extensive pre planning consultations and guarantees decisions in the shortest possible time.

## 1.6 Outbound commuting in Meath

As stated above one of the central objectives of the Economic Development Strategy is to address the high rate of outbound commuting in the County. As set out in Appendix C, Meath remains the local authority area with the highest rate of outbound commuting in the State, outside of the Dublin Region (within which one would expect the rates of commuting among the four parts of the capital Region to be high in any event). In 2011, there were almost 33,000 people living in the County but working outside of Meath, implying an outbound commuter rate of 54% in that year. In 2016, the outbound commuter rate from the County was 55%. Most (76%) of the outbound commuters worked in the Dublin Region, with 37% of the outbound commuters working in Dublin City and 28% in Fingal, which are the two biggest employment destinations for the outbound commuters (South Dublin and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown accounted for 8% and 4% of the outbound commuters from Meath in 2016 respectively). The settlements in Meath that experienced the highest level of outbound commuting are as follows:

Settlement	No. of workers	No. of workers travelling to Dublin City and Suburbs	% of workers travelling to Dublin City and Suburbs
<b>Navan</b>	12,193	2,505	20.5
<b>Ashbourne</b>	6,142	2,486	40.5
<b>Ratoath</b>	4,260	2,107	49.5
<b>Dunboyne</b>	3,295	1,653	50.2
<b>Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington-Donacarney</b>	4,710	1,574	33.4
<b>Trim</b>	3,737	910	24.4
<b>Dunshaughlin</b>	1,842	797	43.3
<b>Stamullen</b>	1,497	530	35.4
<b>Enfield</b>	1,424	530	37.2

Table 1: Settlements in Meath with highest outbound commuting in 2016

As set out in Appendix C, such high and growing levels of outbound commuting are problematic because they (1) entail typically 3-4 hours commuting time per day, (2) detract from economic impact in the County, (3) reduce community engagement/volunteerism and social capital due to time spent travelling and (4) create negative environmental impacts as the predominant mode of transport to work is by car.

## 2.0 Overview of participation in the RSES and MASP process

The Elected Members and officials of Meath County Council have actively participated in the process to date. The County's Oireachtas Members, Elected Members at full Council and the Planning and Economic Development SPC have been fully briefed at every stage of the process. Meath County Council has engaged in a significant level of correspondence with the Regional Assembly and has made detailed submissions in respect of the RSES and MASP documents. Council officials engaged fully in the Technical Working Group meetings and workshops for the RSES and MASP and provided feedback and essential data to assist in the preparation of these documents at all stages in the process. In addition the Council commissioned an independent economic consultant to provide analysis of the economic aspects of the MASP with particular reference to analysis of POWSCAR data.

## 3.0 Review of Draft RSES

The RSES will replace the current Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs). Whilst the RPGs were a robust policy document, it is widely accepted that the population and household targets had become outdated, significantly reducing the relevance of the Guidelines.<sup>7</sup> Meath County Council

<sup>7</sup> These targets were based on 2006 census data

therefore welcomes the publication of the RSES as it provides up to date projections based on the present economic circumstances and 2016 census data. The clarity provided with regard to the transition from current Plans to the new policy framework advocated in the NPF and Draft RSES, particularly in relation to dealing with extant permissions and future population targets is welcomed.

### 3.1 Policy shift in National Planning Framework

The NPF is to be implemented through the RSES process. One of the key themes of the NPF is the promotion of 'effective Regional development' whereby a policy of 'Regional parity' is set out. Under this scenario there is an emphasis on a shift from the 'business as usual' approach towards more compact growth with growth to be concentrated in Dublin, the second tier cities of Cork, Limerick, Galway, and Waterford, and Regional growth centres including Athlone, Drogheda, Dundalk, Sligo, and Letterkenny. This policy approach has implications for population growth in the Eastern and Midland Region.

In recognition of the transition towards the implementation of this shift in policy approach an Implementation Roadmap for the NPF was published in July 2018. This Roadmap included transitional population projections for 2026 and 2031 to take account of the lead in time for Development Plans and LAPs to align with the NPF. They also take account of the 'gap' between current City and County Development Plans and the NPF.

This transition period is to operate up to 2027. Meath County Council welcomes this approach as it has provided some clarity with regard to population growth and will ensure there is a smoother transition towards the long term strategy of the NPF. This approach will allow Local Authorities to deal with the 'pent up demand' for housing following the economic crisis whilst also planning for more long term growth and infrastructure investment.

Notwithstanding the NPF Implementation Roadmap and the inclusion of a transition period to facilitate a lead in time for the shift in policy direction, the Council would still have reservations regarding the implications of the 'Regional parity' policy on economic growth in the Eastern and Midland Region, particularly given the strong performance of the economy over successive years with record numbers of jobs created and unemployment at its lowest since 2008. These concerns are further discussed in Appendix C.

An interventionist policy such as 'Regional parity' could undermine any gains made to the economy. Given the uncertainty of the future performance of the economy in the context of Brexit it is suggested that priority is given to ensuring stability in the economy. In the immediate term it is essential that the RSES continues to support the sustainable expansion of settlements in County Meath which are capable of delivering plan led, evidence based 'live-work' communities which are capable of making a significant contribution to the implementation of Rebuilding Ireland.

## 3.2 Growth Strategy

The Growth Strategy for the Region is as follows:

- Support the continued growth of Dublin as our national economic engine.
- Deliver sustainable growth of the Metropolitan Area through the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP).
- Target Growth of the Regional Growth Centres of Athlone, Drogheda and Dundalk as Regional drivers.
- Support vibrant rural areas with a network of towns and villages.
- Facilitate the collaboration and growth of the Dublin – Belfast corridor.
- Embed a network of key towns through the Region to deliver sustainable Regional development.

In recognition of the importance and dominance of Dublin in the national and Regional economy one of the primary aspects of the RSES is to support the continued growth of the capital city. This will be assisted by the preparation of a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) for the Dublin Metropolitan Area.

Dublin is the National Gateway in the EMRA Region immediately below which 3 Regional Growth Centres have been identified (Athlone, Drogheda, and Dundalk). These settlements are designated for growth in the NPF and are identified as towns of a scale and critical mass of population that have the capacity to drive growth and have a level of service and employment provision that will continue to attract talent and investment.

When transposing this strategy into the Meath County Development Plan the primary focus of growth will be in Navan, the Southern Environs of Drogheda, and the Metropolitan Settlement of Dunboyne.<sup>8</sup> Having regard to their importance as local service centres and/or locational advantage, the Council will be focusing on providing the policy basis for the sustainable consolidation and where appropriate, expansion of the following settlements: Ashbourne, Ratoath, Kells, Trim, Enfield, Stamullen and the Maynooth Environs. The forthcoming Development Plan will also seek to include measures which will support the creation of 'live-work' communities in the Laytown/Bettystown area.

### 3.2.1 Navan

Navan is the County town and administrative capital of Meath. It is the primary centre of employment in the County with over 20% of all jobs in the County located in the town. The town has a good ratio of jobs to resident workers and there are a number of Industrial Estates, including an IDA Business and Technology Park providing employment in sectors such as manufacturing, logistics, medical devices, services and communication. Outbound commuting remains an issue with 34% of the workforce travelling outside the town for employment in 2016. The primary objective of the Council is to attract further economic investment to the town and strengthen its position as a centre

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<sup>8</sup> The Environs lands of Kilcock also lie in the Metropolitan Area

for employment. To this end the Council has adopted a plan led approach to its work in Navan with the adoption in 2017 of Variation No 2 of the Navan Development Plan which incorporated the key tenets of the Meath Economic Strategy into the Navan Development 2009-2015. A public realm plan and public transport strategy, 'Navan 2030' was completed for the town centre in 2016, this plan contains a strategy for renewal of the town centre and public transport improvements. Work is ongoing to implement same in partnership with the National Transport Authority (NTA). In addition work is ongoing in partnership with the NTA to provide a comprehensive pedestrian and cycle network to serve the town centre and link residential areas with the town centre and other key destinations in the town environs.

The Council welcomes the support from the Government for Urban Regeneration through the creation of the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and was successful in a number of funding applications for Navan as follows: Flowerhill Regeneration Project, Railway Street Regeneration Project and County archive and a housing focused Active Land Management Project. The progression of these projects will assist in reinvigorating the urban core of the town and making it a location of choice for investment.

In addition to a quality living environment, connectivity is also essential for both people and businesses. The delivery of Phase 2 of the Dublin-Navan Rail line is central to Navan realising its potential in terms of improving its connectivity with Dublin and the wider Region. In preparation for the delivery of the rail line, the current County Development Plan and the Navan Development Plan have zoned the rail reservation to include provision of stations at Dunshaughlin, Kilmessan, Navan Central and Navan North.

Navan is the only administrative capital in the Greater Dublin Area that does not have a rail service to Dublin city centre i.e. Wicklow Town and Naas have a rail link to Dublin<sup>9</sup>. Indeed in the recently established Eastern and Midlands Region there is a rail service to Dublin from all 12 administrative capitals with the exception Navan. The lack of progress on advancing the rail project particularly in the context of the improving national economy is disappointing. It is considered that while the draft document does refer to the rail project the absence of a time bound delivery mechanism is of significant concern.

The efficient movement of people and goods within the town is also important in tandem with the focus on sustainable transport measures. The Council is therefore progressing proposals for a number of distributor roads in the town including a link road between the Trim Road and the old Dublin Road (R147), a link road (including a bridge over the River Blackwater) from the Clonmagadden area of the town to the Navan Inner Relief Road and the LIHAF funded link road at Farganstown which will facilitate the creation of a 'live-work' community at this location.

Provision of choice of location for potential future investors was identified in the Economic Strategy as a key requirement. The Council, through the implementation of the Economic Strategy, is promoting the town as a strategic centre for employment. The town is currently served by an IDA business park (capacity available), a number of more traditional business parks, a strategic employment zone at Farganstown and it is proposed to designate an additional strategic

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<sup>9</sup> NTA Strategy confirms the delivery of Metro North to Swords

employment zone to the south of the town off the Trim Road. A major link road has been designed which will serve these lands, please refer to Map of Navan in Appendix A.

The inclusion of RPO 4.31 supporting the development of a Regional hospital in Navan and the inclusion of reference to the extension of the Boyne Greenway (RPO 4.32) is welcomed. The Council looks forward to the continued support of EMRA to secure the delivery of these projects.

In summary, the narrative for Navan in the Draft RSES fails to reflect the importance or potential of Navan as a centre for growth. The role of the RSES is to assist the Council in the attraction of additional investment to the town to address this issue. It is critical that this text is reviewed accordingly, please refer to proposed amendments 4, 5 and 12 in Appendix B.

### 3.2.2 Drogheda

Whilst the Council supports the designation of Drogheda as a Regional Growth Centre, there are concerns that the Regional Policy Objectives for the town fail to identify the contribution that the lands in the Southern Environs of the town, within the jurisdiction of Meath County Council, are making to the future growth of the town. The Southern Environs of Drogheda are an example of a well planned area with a balanced mix of residential, employment, community and recreational land uses. Furthermore, circa 120 ha of lands are available to accommodate employment generating uses (including an IDA park) to ensure a continuation of the already established balanced approach to development in the area when taken in conjunction with residential development. The positive and sustainable development that has occurred, and which continues to evolve, in the Southern Environs of Drogheda, guided by the South Drogheda LAP, has not been replicated in the northern environs of Drogheda – the ‘Sienna Valley’ project envisaged in the late 2000s did not materialise and employment-zoned lands under the North Drogheda Environs LAP did not result in the creation of any significant new employment, please refer to Drogheda Map in Appendix A. It is apparent that the northern environs of Drogheda still have significant economic and residential development potential and the area presents the opportunity for Louth County Council to take the lead in planning for its sustainable growth, with Meath County Council continuing to lead in the future sustainable development of the southern environs of the town. Meath County Council fully supports the delivery of this ambitious project for the town. The unitary plan provides an excellent opportunity for a plan led dynamic and equitable approach to the development of the town. The Council looks forward to working in partnership with Louth County Council in the preparation of a Joint Urban Area Plan for the town and advancing its economic potential.

The lands in the southern environs are served by the McBride train station which allows multimodal access to these lands. Having regard to the proposed electrification of the rail line it is important that national infrastructure investment is leveraged to create sustainable communities. Meath County Council would support the location of an additional train station in the northern environs of the town.

The RSES has set a population target of 50,000 for Drogheda by 2031. Based on historic growth rates in the town, the Council considers that this target maybe insufficient given the enhanced status of the town and the target population of 65,000 set out in the 2007 Planning Strategy for the Greater Drogheda Area. The requirement for population distribution between Meath and Louth County

Council for Drogheda to equate to existing population levels within the jurisdiction of each Local Authority is unfavourable to the southern environs and does not acknowledge the strategically located lands within the boundary of Meath that could contribute to the future sustainable growth and development of Drogheda. As brownfield development<sup>10</sup> is located in the main in the town centre the allocation as set in the draft document will further penalise Meath and stymie an opportunity for the comprehensive, balanced development of the town in accordance with the NPF.

Proposed amendment no.1 in Appendix B sets out the suggested amendments to the narrative for Drogheda to give a greater recognition to the potential of the lands in the Southern Environs of the town.

### 3.2.3 Dunboyne

Dunboyne is the only settlement in Meath located within the Metropolitan Area.<sup>11</sup> The town has benefitted from significant investment in road and rail infrastructure over the past decade which has enhanced its attractiveness as a location for economic development. This is evident through high profile announcements of significant FDI employment by Facebook, Shire, and other developments such as Avoca. The Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) has acknowledged the economic potential of the town by identifying strategic employment lands available for development.

In addition to economic development in the town, Variation 3 of the County Development Plan gives parity of esteem to the existing town centre and the lands adjacent to M3 Parkway Rail Station and Park and Ride at Dunboyne North. These lands were identified for the creation of a live-work community whereby lands were zoned for employment and residential uses. This model of development is based on the objective of achieving a healthy well balanced population with a thriving community life.

As part of the implementation of its Active Land Management Strategy the Council has engaged with the owners of the strategically located lands in the centre of Dunboyne. Section 4.3 of the draft RSES acknowledges the challenges faced by Planning Authorities in getting such strategic lands released for development:

*“Sites with long term development potential at priority locations should not be ‘reserved’ at the land allocation stages of the plan-making and implementation processes, in such a way as would create an unreasonable dependency on such sites being brought forward or that would impede the bringing forward of other suitable lands with better prospects for delivery in the short term, if the strategic sites are not being brought forward by their owners.”*

Section 5.4 of the MASP sets out the Strategy for future development in Dunboyne. Reference is made to the sequential development of lands in Dunboyne and Dunboyne North which is at variance with variation no. 3 of the County Development Plan and is therefore unacceptable to Meath County

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<sup>10</sup> NPF National Policy objective 3c requires that at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements other than the 5 cities within their existing built-up footprints.

<sup>11</sup> Note that there is a typographical error on page 29 of the Draft RSES which includes Dunboyne in a list of Hinterland settlements. See proposed amendment 3 in appendix B for details.

Council. Having regard to the status of Dunboyne, the Council's sole centre in the metropolitan area as currently designated it is critical to ensure that no restrictions are placed on delivery of a 'live-work' community at this location. It is therefore critical that reference to sequential development in the town is removed please refer to Appendix B amendments 8 and 11 and Table 5.1 (as amended) for details of the proposed amendments.

The support for the delivery of 'land hungry' uses, on locations outside the M50 is welcomed and any policies or designations which restrict the ability to accommodate these uses in County Meath will not be supported by the Elected Members of Meath County Council.

### 3.2.4 Ashbourne

Located on the border with Fingal, Ashbourne is the second largest town in Meath, and is one of the fastest growing towns in the County. Between 2011-2016 the population increased by 11.7%, bringing the total population to 12,679. It is an important employment and service centre in that it supports almost 2,000 jobs, which is c.5% of the total jobs in the County. Many of these jobs are concentrated in the recently redeveloped town centre and a number of business and industrial parks in the northern part of the town. Transport, distribution and logistics, and retailing and wholesaling are important sectors for the town, reflecting its favourable location, including its proximity to Dublin Port and Dublin Airport.

Ashbourne's competitive advantage is based on its unique location on the boundary of Fingal and County Meath. The town is close to Dublin Airport with excellent transport links that rapidly connect the town to Dublin city centre. The Council recognises that there are opportunities to further enhance the economic performance of Ashbourne by capitalising on its proximity to Dublin Airport and the associated national and international connectivity that this provides. As previously indicated, there are a number of business/industrial parks in the town that benefit from access to the M2 Motorway. The importance of Ashbourne as a centre for employment growth in Meath is demonstrated by its inclusion as one of 5 strategically important settlements designated to attract FDI in the Economic Development Strategy. The Strategy identifies employment lands at the Rath roundabout as a strategic site for major inward investment. The Council has prepared a Master Plan to ensure a planned approach to the site's development and the lands are being marketed by the Council's Economic Development Team to potential investors in conjunction with external employment partner agencies. It is noteworthy that currently zoned strategic employment lands identified by Fingal at Ballymadun are adjacent to the strategic employment site in Ashbourne. Due to the configuration of the lands, access to the Ballymadun employment lands in Fingal, can only be provided via the Rath roundabout, please refer to map in Appendix A.

The Regional Planning Guidelines, 2010-2022 acknowledged the potential for Ashbourne to capitalise on opportunities for economic growth due to its proximity to Dublin Airport and the Dublin Metropolitan Area and identified the town as a 'Secondary Economic Growth Town'. These Guidelines support the consolidation of economic development in Ashbourne that would assist in the creation of a more sustainable settlement. Reference is also made to the creation of synergy

between Ashbourne and Ratoath that would optimise local employment opportunities by availing and utilising the highly skilled workforce that reside in the towns.

Section 3.7.5 of the Regional Planning Guidelines states that Ashbourne is: *“transitioning away from a dormitory hinterland context to a more urbanised, metropolitan character.”*

This was not acknowledged in the draft RSES with an expansion of the Metropolitan boundary to include Ashbourne. Please refer to map in Appendix A to provide context of Ashbourne and Ratoath in relation to the Dublin Metropolitan Area.

In recognition of the delivery of Metro North to Swords during the lifetime of the National Planning Framework, the Council will support the strengthening of links and connectivity between Ashbourne and Swords, in order to further improve the links between Ashbourne and Dublin City centre whilst also promoting more sustainable modes of transport by facilitating the use of the Metro for commuters travelling to Dublin City centre and Airport for employment.

As part of the shift towards the use of more sustainable modes of transport, the Council will support the identification of suitable lands for a park and ride facility.

Despite the unprecedented population growth experienced in Ashbourne over the past 20 years, social and community infrastructure in the town has kept pace with population growth. The Council has been proactive in supporting the provision of essential infrastructure in the town. Notable achievements include the construction of an education campus, a public library, and a new town centre.

It is recognised that the urban structure of the town is fragmented particularly between the traditional Main Street and the new Town Centre. A Public Realm Strategy prepared in 2018 and has successfully obtained urban regeneration funding to commence the implementation of this strategy. As part of the provision of green infrastructure in Ashbourne, the Council is progressing the delivery of a Linear Park. This Park will be a new public amenity for the residents of Ashbourne and will integrate and connect green spaces in the town.

In addition to the proposed Park, the Council is also actively seeking potential lands that would be suitable for the provision of a Town Park that would be a focal point for social and recreational amenities.

In summary the principle growth strategy for Ashbourne will be one of plan led and managed growth. There is limited reference to Ashbourne in the Draft RSES which fails to recognise and acknowledge the achievements in the town to date in implementing the policies set out in the current RPGs. In addition there is an opportunity to continue to support the transition of the town to a Metropolitan settlement and maximise the future potential of Ashbourne as a centre for growth. The role of the RSES is to assist the Council in the attraction of additional investment to the town. It is critical that this text is reviewed accordingly , please refer to amendments 9 and 10 in Appendix B for details of the suggested amendments. As set above in respect of Ashbourne and Ratoath a full review of the Metropolitan boundary is essential based on the detailed analysis set

out in this submission with particular reference to Appendix C.

### 3.2.5 Maynooth Environs

Maynooth Environs in County Meath is located on the northern periphery of the dynamic university town of Maynooth. These lands comprise of 139 hectares approximately 1.5km to the north east of the town centre. The lands enjoy an attractive setting and character in proximity to the Carton House Estate on which there is a high quality hotel used for business and recreational purposes.

The town has a growing student and residential population with established rail and motorway links to Dublin and the West. The development of the Maynooth Environs is envisaged by Meath County Council as a natural extension to the town of Maynooth. The County Development Plan sets out that the Environs will be a focal point for science and technology employment. Employment uses are based on the Economic Strategy objectives which focus on the development of Life Sciences, High Tech, Bio Tech, ICT, Research & Development and seeks to benefit from synergies with third level institutions which may include Maynooth University (MU) and major employers already established in the sub Region (Intel, Hewlett Packard). The Economic Strategy seeks to brand this area as a centre of excellence in the knowledge based economy, particularly having regard to its location viz a viz the M4 Knowledge corridor. The objective is to foster a 'dynamic partnership' between multi-national companies, indigenous Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME's), and third level institutions which may include NUI Maynooth University (MU), in a campus style environment of exceptional high quality design.

As set out in the Draft RSES, the future population for Maynooth can be taken from the Metropolitan allocation therefore facilitating significant growth in the future leveraging on its rail based Metropolitan status. Future development in Maynooth is dependent on the delivery of a number of key pieces of infrastructure in particular the Maynooth Outer Orbital Route (MOOR). Part of this route in County Kildare has the benefit of LIHAF funding. The document fails to acknowledge that a significant part of the MOOR is located in the Meath environs of Maynooth. Kildare County Council approached Meath County Council historically to explore mechanisms for delivery of this road. The completion of the MOOR is compromised by the complete absence of any reference to development of land in County Meath as all areas identified for growth are located in County Kildare. (Please refer to composite map of Maynooth town contained in Appendix A, prepared by Kildare County Council).

In summary, the document needs to be revised to reflect the requirements for the delivery of the MOOR and must provide clarity that the environs will similarly benefit from the Metropolitan population allocation, it is also requested that Table 5.1 of the MASP 'Strategic Development Corridors, Capacity Infrastructure and Phasing' is expanded to include the Maynooth Environs. Please refer to the suggested amendments to Table 5.1 in Appendix B.

### 3.2.6 Kells

Kells is a key employment and service centre for the north of the County that has a wide catchment extending into Cavan, Louth and Westmeath. The designation of the Kells Municipal district as a

Regional Economic Development Zone (REDZ) has created a positive impact on employment and enterprise activity in the town. Kells Business Park located northwest of the town has enjoyed excellent success to date and has capacity for future expansion.

Examples of recent enterprise initiatives in the town include the creation of the Kells Tech Hub located in the Business Park. This Hub offers high quality accommodation to domestic and foreign start-ups and SMEs such as offices, co-working spaces, hot desks and meeting rooms. It supports the development of new and existing businesses in the Region and provides access to national and international networks that can facilitate access to global market opportunities.

The historic streetscape, heritage buildings, medieval street pattern and Monastic sites are at the heart of the tourism offer of the town. The Council will continue to support the preservation of the town's heritage and will require any development to have regard to the heritage and architectural importance of the town.

Kells has benefitted from recent initiatives supporting the regeneration of historic settlements. The town was chosen by the Irish Walled Town Network as the national pilot to a 'Kickstart' Scheme, which provided grants for painting work to buildings and minor conservation repairs. This project has delivered improvements to the urban core of the town and made it a more pleasant and attractive environment for residents and visitors.

There is a vibrant arts and cultural community in Kells that has helped to support a number of high profile international film and literary festivals. Tapping in to this resource will provide an opportunity for Kells to develop as a cultural hub that would result in employment opportunities and strengthen community identity in the town.

The support of the RSES to facilitate opportunities to promote the unique cultural and built heritage of Kells through the Boyne Valley and Ireland's Ancient East tourism initiatives would be welcomed.

### 3.2.7 Trim

Trim is a town of immense heritage significance located circa 14km from Navan. The town enjoys the benefits of being located in an attractive setting along the banks of the River Boyne. The resident population grew by 11% during the years between the 2011 and 2016 censuses. The town and Trim Castle attract over 100,000 visitors a year.

Although it lacks direct access to a motorway or rail line, the town is proximate to national road network, and closely linked to Navan and Dunshaughlin on the M3 corridor and to the M4 corridor in County Kildare to the south.

Trim Castle is a very significant site in the Ireland's Ancient East brand and the town has the capacity to accommodate additional tourism activity. In partnership with the OPW, the Council is seeking to improve visitor facilities for Trim Castle with the provision of a new Visitors Centre in the former Market House adjacent to the Castle.

As part of its investment in community infrastructure in the town the Council is progressing the 'Trim Theatre Project' which will involve the construction of a community theatre space at Trim Library and the adjoining Church.

The support of the RSES to continue to develop the tourism product in Trim will facilitate the continued expansion of this market which will support employment growth.

### 3.2.8 Dunshaughlin

Dunshaughlin is an important growth town in south Meath that benefits from strong transport links to Dublin due to its proximity to the M3. The future potential of Dunshaughlin is intrinsically linked to the delivery of Phase 2 of the Dublin-Navan Rail Project. The construction of the Rail Line would result in Dunshaughlin becoming a hub for economic and residential growth due to its location on a multi-modal corridor with direct road and rail links to Dublin and the wider Region.

Dunshaughlin is in the unique position of having benefitted from significant investment in water and waste water infrastructure. The front loading of these services alongside upgrades to the local network has created significant capacity in this infrastructure to accommodate medium-long term growth. In order to maximise the return on this infrastructure investment the growth strategy for the town must take account of the availability of this infrastructure and the substantial investment (circa €60 million) that has taken place over the past decade.

The combination of the delivery of the Rail Line and the available capacity in water services infrastructure will make the town an attractive location to potential investors as a place of employment whilst the connectivity of the town to Dublin and Navan via the local road network and frequent bus service makes the town an attractive location for the general population as a place to live. The connectivity of the town to the M3 motorway will require the provision of additional key road infrastructure to the south west of the town, please refer to map in Appendix A.

In order to ensure the viability of the Navan Rail Line, it is essential that there is a critical mass of population living along the rail corridor. Continued population growth in Dunshaughlin is therefore required to support the delivery of the Rail Line.

As set out above in Section 3.2.1, the lack of progress on advancing the rail project particularly in the context of the improving national economy is disappointing. It is considered that while the draft document does refer to the rail project the absence of a time bound delivery mechanism is of significant concern. As stated earlier, in preparation for the delivery of the rail line, the current County Development Plan and the Navan Development Plan have zoned the rail reservation to include provision of stations at Dunshaughlin, Kilmessan, Navan Central and Navan North. Having regard to the significant potential the settlement has to deliver future growth, the support of the document to achieve this goal is required please refer to proposed amendment 12 in Appendix B.

### 3.2.9 Enfield

Enfield is positioned on the southern boundary of the County adjacent to the M4 Motorway. The town has developed compactly along both northern and southern sides of the Regional Road R148 (formally the N4 national route). The town benefits from a southern local bypass of the main urban area (Enfield Outer Relief Road) provided originally to relieve the town centre of strategic through-traffic prior to the motorway construction.

Enfield currently functions as a commuter town with settlement growth influenced by its proximity and accessibility to Dublin City and its metropolitan city economy, with strategic road and rail commuter connections to the Capital and the northwest as part of the national Dublin-Sligo rail line.

Given the strategic location of Enfield, proximate to the M4 knowledge corridor and Maynooth University, there is a significant opportunity for economic and commercial development growth in the town. In recognition of the growth potential of the settlement the Council have been in positive discussions with Irish Water to augment existing services infrastructure.

Variation 3 of the County Development Plan established Meath County Council's intention to seek to advance the settlement status of Enfield, from 'Small Towns' to 'Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns', through the Eastern Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA), having regard to their important locational advantages on the M4 and M1 Economic Corridors respectively, within the Greater Dublin Area.

In summary, the RSES needs to reflect the potential of the settlement as identified in Variation 3 of the County Development Plan to enable maximum advantage to be taken from the existing rail connections to Dublin City and other employment centres such as Kilcock and Maynooth.

### 3.2.10 Ratoath

Ratoath is the fourth largest town in the County and had a population of 9,533 in 2016. The population is continuing to grow at a steady rate, with a 5.4% increase recorded between 2011-2016. The town has a highly skilled workforce, many of whom commute for employment. In 2016 the town supported c.950 jobs. Ratoath operates primarily as a commuter settlement, with almost 75% of the workforce travelling outside Meath for employment in 2016, with 70% of these people travelling to the Dublin Region and 36% travelling to Dublin city centre. This confirms the strong connectivity between Ratoath and the Metropolitan Area.

Reducing the volume of commuting from Ratoath and expanding the employment base is the key challenge facing the town. An opportunity to strengthen the relationship between Ratoath and the equine industry, including Fairyhouse Racecourse and the Tattersalls International Equestrian facilities, which have been identified in the Economic Development Strategy as an economic asset and as an area where future employment opportunities could be generated.

Ratoath is located c. 7km west of the M3 Parkway Park and Ride Facility, which has parking for up to 1,200 vehicles. It is a priority to improve linkages with the rail and the provision of park and ride/shuttle service to the Rail Station at M3 Parkway which would bolster the use of the rail line and improve the connectivity of the town from a multi-modal perspective.

The implementation of the approved cycle network within Ratoath will support the transition from a car based transport model to a more sustainable multi modal system. Connectivity in the area of M3 Parkway and Dunboyne will be improved in the future by the implementation of the Dunboyne Transport Study, prepared by AECOM on behalf of the Council's Transportation Section. This study has identified additional walking and cycling infrastructure and facilities, including a proposed pedestrian and cycle bridge across the Motorway link to M3 Parkway in order to improve

connectivity between Ratoath and M3 Parkway. The extension of the rail to Navan will make Ratoath a more connected settlement.

In summary, the role of the RSES is to assist the Council in the attraction of additional investment to the town to address the lack of local employment. As set above in respect of Ashbourne and Ratoath a full review of the Metropolitan boundary is essential based on the detailed analysis set out in this submission with particular reference to Appendix C.

### 3.2.11 Stamullen

Stamullen is situated in the east of the County, in close proximity to the Fingal border. The town has developed as a commuter settlement primarily due to its proximity to Dublin and associated road and rail links via the M1 Dublin-Belfast Motorway and Gormanstown Rail Station. It is also well connected to the designated growth centre of Drogheda. The City North Business Park is an important employment centre which provides local employment. Improving existing connectivity within the settlement is a key priority.

Variation 3 of the County Development Plan established Meath County Council's intention to seek to advance the settlement status of Enfield and Stamullen from 'Small Towns' to 'Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns', through the Eastern Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA), having regard to their important locational advantages on the M4 and M1 Economic Corridors respectively, within the Greater Dublin Area.

This area has been identified within the NPF as the national entry point to the Country and as part of the NPF the Government intends to capitalise upon and further support and promote the inherent economic potential of the corridor. It is further stated in the NPF that the settlements along this corridor which include Stamullen 'function like a linear network'. It is the intention of the NPF to make these commuter driven growth patterns more self sustaining economically in order to alleviate rising commuter levels into Dublin City. The settlement is currently connected to Drogheda and Dublin by both train at Gormanstown and bus. Whereas adequate employment lands are identified priority will be given to relocating existing residentially zoned lands to more appropriate locations more accessible by sustainable means to the existing town centre. Thereby employment lands will benefit from a revised location adjacent to existing complimentary uses and the motorway network.

In summary, the RSES needs to reflect the potential of the settlement as identified in Variation 3 of the County Development Plan to enable maximum advantage to be taken from its existing connections to Dublin City and its location on the M1 International corridor.

### 3.2.12 Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington

Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington is a coastal settlement in east Meath that benefits from its access to the beach and location along the Dublin-Belfast Rail line. The settlement has experienced significant population growth over the past 20 years and in 2016 was the third largest settlement in the County with a population of almost 12,000 people. Employment growth in the settlement has not kept pace with population growth, resulting in the settlement functioning primarily as a commuter settlement. This is demonstrated by the fact that one third of the workforce travelled to

Dublin City and Suburbs for employment in 2016. The settlements also had the highest percentage of the workforce in the country travelling over one hour for employment, with 27.6% of the workforce with journey times in excess of 1 hour.<sup>12</sup>

In order to create a more balanced and sustainable community and reduce the volume of outbound commuting, future growth of the settlement will focus on the promotion of local employment opportunities and provision of necessary social infrastructure including a public library.

In promoting the settlement as a place for employment there is an opportunity for the town to benefit from its proximity to Drogheda and location along the M1 Economic Corridor. In addition, infrastructural investment including the delivery of a Spine Road and a Park and Ride facility at Laytown Rail Station will make positive contributions to the area.

The Council support the delivery of a new train station at Bettystown which would improve connectivity and accessibility and would be facilitated by planned improvements to rail infrastructure.

The town also benefits from significant natural environmental features and natural open space given its coastal location expansive beach front. These assets make a positive contribution to the quality of life of residents in the settlement and are an important recreational amenity. In order to ensure a co-ordinated approach is taken to the management of this important resource the Council has prepared a Beach Management Strategy that will manage the day to day operation of the beach. The Council will also support an Integrated Coastal Zone Management approach to the conservation and management of the natural and man-made features along the coast.

The Council recognise the need to improve the urban core of the town and have recently commenced the process of preparing a Public Realm Strategy. This will focus on improving the relationship of buildings and public spaces, providing better links between the Main Street and residential areas, and provide a focal point in the town. The completion of Bettystown Town Centre will be important for improving vibrancy by strengthening the retail offer in the settlement which will increase pedestrian footfall in the urban core.

In summary, there is an opportunity for the RSES to support the Council in creating a more balanced and sustainable settlement in Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington by facilitating local employment opportunities that would improve the job: population ratio in the town and reduce the volume of outbound commuting.

### 3.2.13 Commuter focused expansion

Section 4.7 of the Draft RSES provides an overview of the structure/typology of settlements below 'Key Towns' in the settlement hierarchy. This includes a reference to commuter driven development in settlements along commuter routes which resulted in the rapid expansion of household and population growth of settlements in the absence of a proportionate growth in employment and services. The Council acknowledges there are towns in Meath that have experienced such growth

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<sup>12</sup> Census 2016

and there is a requirement to consolidate rather than expand the rate of growth in these settlements.

Ashbourne, Ratoath, and Laytown-Bettystown were included in a list of settlements that have recorded the highest levels of population growth and have lower employment provision. This appears to suggest that these settlements are not important centres for the attraction of new employment uses. The Council has serious concerns that this could have a negative impact on attracting economic investment to these towns. This is particularly relevant for Ashbourne, which has been identified as a strategic centre for employment in the Meath Economic Development Strategy. In 2016 there were almost 2,000 jobs in the town.<sup>13</sup> There are concerns that this statement undermines the economic potential of the town as it focuses solely on the job: population ratio. No consideration is given to its location (in proximity to Dublin Airport), the availability of a skilled workforce, or the potential to cluster and share knowledge and services with established businesses and enterprises.

The Council does not dispute the fact that the settlements listed have expanded due to their proximity to Dublin and on the basis of commuter-driven development however it is also important to acknowledge the potential of these centres to attract jobs and create sustainable communities. It of critical importance therefore, that this paragraph is re-phrased accordingly. Please refer to amendment no.6 in Appendix B for details of the suggested amendments.

### 3.2.14 Projected growth in designated Growth Centres

The Growth Strategy in the RSES places a particular emphasis of growth in Dublin City and Suburbs, the Dublin Metropolitan Area, and the Regional Growth Centres. A population target for 2031 has been set out for each of these centres. Dublin City and Suburbs is targeted to grow from 1.17 million people in 2016 to 1.4 million people in 2031.

Athlone is targeted to grow from 21,000 to 30,000, Drogheda is to increase in size from 41,000 to 50,000, and Dundalk is targeted to increase from 39,000 to 50,000. A table setting out population growth in these centres is set out below.

Settlement	Population 2002	Population 2016	Population 2031	Annual average increase 2002-16	Annual average increase 2016-31	Difference in growth rate 2002-2016
<b>Athlone</b>	15,936	21,349	30,000	387	577	49%
<b>Drogheda</b>	31,020	40,956	50,000	710	603	-15%
<b>Dundalk</b>	32,505	39,004	50,000	464	733	58%
<b>Dublin City and Suburbs</b>	1,004,614	1,173,179	1,400,000	12,040	15,121	26%

Table 2: Analysis of population growth in designated growth centres

<sup>13</sup> POWSCAR 2016

An analysis of these figures would indicate the population target for some of these settlements is ambitious. With the growth rate of Athlone and Dundalk required to increase by c.50% more than that experienced between 2002-16, it is likely that this target will only be achieved by migration to these centres rather than a natural increase in population. In the absence of any significant economic investment in these settlements population growth of this scale is unlikely. Indeed it may be the case that some settlements designated as 'Key Towns' will have the capacity to expand at a faster rate than these Regional Growth Centres.

The projected growth target for Drogheda is below the growth rate experienced between 2002-16. Therefore there is a strong likelihood that this population target will be reached and even exceeded. This is probable given its proximity to Dublin, its location along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and the target population of 65,000 set out in the 2007 Planning Strategy for the Greater Drogheda Area.

The primary challenge for Dublin City and Suburbs is the delivery of residential accommodation. Construction activity in Dublin is presently dominated by commercial developments including office and student accommodation. The absence of any significant residential developments in the city centre area is placing greater demand for housing in the Mid-East Counties. This is recognised in the NPF and RSES through National Policy Objective 68 which allows for 20% of the City and Suburbs population target to be redistributed to the Metropolitan Area. It is important to note however that it is not just Metropolitan settlements that are contributing to the housing recovery, with key settlements including Navan, Ashbourne and Dunshaughlin providing residential accommodation.

Whilst there are 'pipeline' applications in the Metropolitan Area and City and Suburbs there are added challenges in delivering housing in these locations due to their location in established residential areas which present additional issues in design and construction. Taking this into account it is important that the RSES acknowledges and supports the delivery of housing in the centres where there has been substantial investment in physical and social infrastructure to accommodate future growth with the emphasis on the 'live-work' community model. This would provide certainty to investors, ensure the demand for housing continues to be met, and would provide a maximum return on infrastructure investment.

### 3.3 Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan

The preparation of a MASP for the Dublin Metropolitan Area should enable a strategic and co-ordinated approach to be taken to future growth, development and investment. In the absence of any examination of the existing functional Metropolitan area as discussed at the MASP Technical Working Group an optimal model for the future growth of the area cannot be established.

Dunboyne is the only settlement in Meath located within the Metropolitan boundary. Recent FDI announcements by Facebook and Shire Pharmaceuticals, and other notable developments including Avoca in Dunboyne demonstrate the economic advantages of strong connectivity with Dublin and the wider Metropolitan Area. As set out above and in Appendix C the Council has set out a very robust case for the inclusion of Ashbourne and Ratoath in the Metropolitan area.

### 3.3.1 Case for Review of Metropolitan Boundary

Throughout the RSES and MASP process the Council has consistently articulated its position regarding the inclusion of Ashbourne and Ratoath in the Metropolitan boundary. Improving the links between these settlements and Dublin would enhance their attractiveness as a place of employment for potential investors.

Ashbourne is a town that has grown at more than twice the rate of Metropolitan settlements including Swords, Bray, Greystones, and Leixlip. The proximity of Ashbourne to Dublin Airport, which is experiencing unprecedented growth and has major plans for expansion including a second runway and additional terminal facilities, means the expansion of the town is likely to continue. The 2010 RPGs acknowledged that Ashbourne is *“transitioning.....towards a more urbanised metropolitan character.”*

Ratoath has experienced rapid population growth that has not been matched by economic growth. The town has significant economic potential including a skilled labour force and historic and traditional links to the equine industry through Fairyhouse Racecourse, which is one of the country’s premier horse racing venues, and the Tattersalls Sales complex, which is a leading venue for the sale of top class National Hunt and Flat Race horses.

Section 10.2 of the NPF sets out key factors to be used in the determination of Metropolitan Area boundaries and can be summarised as follows:

- The functional urban area of the city – where the existing dense concentration of employment, population, service provision including transport, is located
- Commuting patterns, based on the proportion of resident workers employed in the principal city area and other principal employment locations
- Geographical features that contribute to delineating/defining the boundary and/or require protection for environmental, amenity, or recreational purposes.

Taking account of these factors, an analysis of commuting/employment patterns of existing Metropolitan settlements in Kildare, Meath, and Wicklow, and Ashbourne and Ratoath was carried out. This data is set out in the Table 3 below.

Settlement	Population 2016	Resident Workers <sup>14</sup>	Total Jobs	Jobs: Resident Workers	% at work In Dublin Region <sup>15</sup>	% at work in Dublin City
<b>Ashbourne</b>	12,679	6,144	1,963	0.319	65.4%	34.6%
<b>Ratoath</b>	9,533	4,260	922	0.216	70%	35.5%
<b>Dunboyne</b>	7,272	3,294	1,211	0.368	69.3%	32.9%
<b>Kilcock</b>	6,093	2,827	848	0.300	49.7%	24.4%
<b>Maynooth</b>	14,585	6,295	5,201	0.826	54.7%	31.8%
<b>Celbridge</b>	20,288	9,374	2,339	0.250	65%	32.1%
<b>Bray</b>	32,600	13,835	8,763	0.633	59.1%	28.2%
<b>Greystones</b>	18,140	7,828	2,514	0.321	59.1%	28.2%

Table 3: Resident Workers and Jobs 2016 (POWSCAR 2016)

<sup>14</sup> Includes mobile workforce

<sup>15</sup> POWSCAR data from 2016 census. Excludes returns that were blank or mobile work locations (i.e. without a known address).

An examination of Table 3 is a further indication that Ashbourne and Ratoath are functioning on a similar platform to existing Metropolitan settlements. It is also confirmation of the interdependency of these settlements with Dublin with regard to employment and housing, with a high percentage of the residents of both settlements working in the Dublin Region. The Council therefore consider that Ashbourne and Ratoath meet the criteria for a Metropolitan settlement as set out in the NPF and therefore request the boundary is amended accordingly. This would assist in elevating the status of these centres which would assist in attracting economic investment to the towns and improve the jobs: population ratio, which is one of the primary objectives of the Economic Development Strategy.

The Elected Members have noted the historic commitment set out in the current Regional Planning Guidelines (2016-2022) regarding the expansion of the Metropolitan Area to include Ashbourne has not been supported. Currently Kildare enjoys the benefits of having 4 centres in the Metropolitan area and Wicklow have 2, Dunboyne is the only centre in Meath that enjoys Metropolitan status. The Elected Members are strongly of the opinion that inclusion of additional Meath settlements in the Metropolitan area would redress the significant current numerical imbalance of the number of settlements in Meath relative to other counties contained in the current RPGs.

A more detailed case for reviewing the Metropolitan boundary is set out in Appendix C.

### 3.3.2 Additional population allocation to Metropolitan Area

National Policy Objective (NPO) 68 of the NPF provides for an allowance of up to 20% of the population target for Dublin City and Suburbs to be transferred to Metropolitan Settlements. This is in recognition of the challenges in meeting the growth target allocated to the City and Suburbs.

The draft RSES has identified that this growth can be transferred to Bray, Maynooth, and Swords, only if they can demonstrate compact growth along public transport corridors.

Meath County Council is unclear as to why Dunboyne was not included in this list of settlements, particularly given that it is a multi-modal settlement with two rail stations and access to the M3 Motorway. Indeed there is significant capacity within the town to deliver substantial growth on a sustainable platform. Taking account of the recent economic successes in Dunboyne in addition to its multi-modal status and ability to deliver compact growth along the rail corridor, it is requested that Dunboyne is added to the list of settlements that can benefit from the transfer of the population target for Dublin City and Suburbs as per NPO 68 of the NPF. Please refer to amendment no.2 and 14 in Appendix B for amended text.

## 3.4 Economy and Employment

### 3.4.1 Recent employment trends in Meath

Through the implementation of the Economic Development Strategy, Meath County Council is strongly committed to facilitating the creation of more jobs/employment in the County. POWSCAR

data indicated that there was an increase of over 2,900 jobs in Meath between 2011-16. This represents an increase of 7.6% and is evidence of the successful implementation of the Economic Strategy to date.

The findings from the Economic Strategy identified a ‘dual’ economy in the County consisting of people living and working in the County and people living in the County and commuting for employment. In order to ensure the sustainable growth of the County the Strategy identified the need to broaden the employment base and to provide economic growth in tandem with population growth.

Table 4 below provides an overview of the location of jobs and workers in the Dublin and Eastern Strategic Planning Areas in 2016. 9.3% of the workforce in the Dublin and Eastern Strategic Planning Area lived in Meath in 2016 however only 5.3% of the total jobs were located in the County. In comparison there were more jobs than workers in the Dublin Strategic Planning Area i.e. 77% of jobs and 67.8% of workers. This is an indication of the dominance and importance of Dublin as a place of employment and the interdependency between Dublin and adjacent counties for the provision of housing and employment.

Strategic Planning Area	Population 2016		Resident Workers		Jobs	
<b>Dublin SPA</b>	1,347,359	66.2%	601,539	67.8%	577,928	77%
<b>Eastern SPA</b>	688,857	33.8%	285,909	32.2%	172,744	23%
<b>Total</b>	2,036,216	100%	887,448	100%	750,672	100%
<b>Meath</b>	195,044	9.6%	82,605	9.3%	41,757	5.6%

Table 4: Population and jobs in Dublin and Eastern SPA 2016 (Source: EMRA Socio-Economic Evidence Baseline Report, 2017)

As part of the strategy of aligning population and employment growth in Meath the council will continue to promote the five strategic employment sites in Navan, South Drogheda, Dunboyne, Ashbourne, and Kells as Regional centres of enterprise and employment. This will ensure growth will be delivered on a sustainable platform whereby development will be concentrated in local and Regional towns that have the capacity to accommodate significant development in a consolidated urban environment. This approach is considered to be consistent with the Regional Policy Objectives for the Economy and Employment set out in Chapter 6 of the RSES.

### 3.4.2 General comments on Employment Chapter

Whilst the methodology and Regional Policy Objectives in this chapter are robust there are concerns that it is too descriptive. There is limited reference to the growth centres in the Region and how it is envisaged they will develop. There is an opportunity to incorporate examples of best practice into the Strategy in order to demonstrate industry sectors, business types, and industrial and business parks in the Region that are expanding. The Council consider that in addition to being a policy document the RSES can also be used to promote the Region. It is therefore suggested that the Employment Chapter is revised to include case studies/examples of major economic investments and successfully functioning industrial parks in the Region. For example the RSES could use the Meath Economic Development Strategy and the ‘live-work’ community model adopted by the

Council as an example of best practice how Local Authorities can take a proactive role in the promotion of economic development on a sustainable platform in co-operation with the private sector and public sector agencies.

Sections 6.2 and 6.3 set out the economic profile and strategy for the Region. There is reference to the various employment sectors e.g. Biopharma, Food and Engineering. There is an opportunity to list some of the companies, either indigenous or multi-national operating in these sectors as it would demonstrate the type of companies choosing to locate in the Region.

The reference to Smart Specialisation explains what it is however no detail is provided as to how this policy approach will be implemented. Again this could be clarified using examples.

With the prospect of a no deal Brexit looking real it is important that the Regional Assembly supports the Government in preparing for all eventualities. The RSES must include flexibility that would allow businesses and government agencies to respond to any challenges in a manner that would ensure the competitiveness and economic opportunities are preserved. In this regard the general principles of RPO 6.1 are supported and welcomed.

It is widely accepted that a no deal Brexit would present extremely difficult challenges for the entire country however the impact will be particularly prevalent in the border counties. There are many Meath based companies that will also be exposed to these risks including agri-food, fisheries, haulage companies, the pharma-chemical industry, and retail businesses. The tourism sector is also exposed to additional risks. Any further devaluation of sterling would have further impacts on cross border shopping and trade and export orientated businesses.

Notwithstanding any implications of Brexit, it is important to retain a focus on an all-island economy that supports the movement of people, goods and services. In this regard the Council welcomes the priority given to economic development along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and the support for improving connectivity through investment in the Dublin-Belfast rail line, the N2/A5 upgrade, and the delivery of the North-South Interconnector.

A detailed analysis of the Economic Strategy and its potential implications for Meath is set out in Appendix C of this submission.

### 3.4.3 Retail Strategy

The retail landscape in Ireland has changed dramatically since the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area was published in 2008. The competition from online retailing is having a significant effect on sales and footfall in town centres. Figures from Retail Ireland indicate that online shopping has increased from 19% of the population in 2007 to just over 50% at present.<sup>16</sup> In this regard the Council have serious concerns regarding the validity of the 2008 Retail Strategy and consider that it is outdated. This lack of up to date information will present challenges for Local Authorities in preparing Retail Strategies as part of the review of Development Plans.

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<sup>16</sup> Shaping the future of Irish Retail 2020, Retail Ireland,

Taking account of the speed at which retailing is changing in combination with the importance of retailing to the vibrancy and very existence of our town and village centres, it is considered that the Retail Strategy is updated as expeditiously as possible. In this regard RPO 6.9 should include a timeframe of completing a Retail Strategy for the Region within 2 years of the adoption of the RSES. Please refer to amendment 15 in Appendix B for the suggested amendments.

### 3.4.4 Compact Urban Development

Compact growth is one of the primary objectives of the NPF and has multiple benefits including reduced costs in providing and delivering services, ensuring major public transport projects are feasible, promoting walking and cycling as an alternative mode of transport, and reducing urban sprawl. National Policy Objective 3c of the NPF is to deliver at least 30% of all growth in settlements outside of cities within their existing built-up footprints.

This policy of compact growth is a continuation of Strategic Policies and Recommendations included in the Regional Planning Guidelines. Strategic Recommendation SR2 of the RPGs required a sequential approach to be taken to the delivery of housing with priority given to the regeneration of infill/brownfield sites. Meath County Council has been successful in the implementation of this policy with a number of schemes in large and small settlements completed, under construction, or at application stage. The successful implementation of this policy has reduced the quantum of infill/brownfield lands available for development in some towns.

Taking account of the fact that there is a finite quantity of infill/brownfield lands available (for example see section 3.2.2 on Drogheda), the analysis of projected infill/brownfield development in each settlement should take account of the total quantum of these lands available for development and the potential number of units that could be delivered on these lands. Any target for compact growth should be based on these figures. This would ensure a more realistic approach and achievable targets are being set with regard to compact development. It is recommended that this is reflected in the RSES and that in settlements where there is less than 30% of growth available on infill/brownfield lands due to the lands being recently built out a relaxation in this figure can be applied.

In addition to the above, it is suggested that the RSES provides clarity with regard to the definition of 'existing built up area'. It is unclear if greenfield lands in urban centres can be considered as being located in the 'existing built up area'. If such lands are along sustainable transport corridors in proximity to town centres they would be consistent with the principles of compact growth, therefore should be included in any calculation. In order to ensure consistency between Local Authorities in the Region in their approach to this calculation it is recommended that the RSES provides clarity and guidance on this issue.

The creation of a sustainable urban community involves the provision of a suitable mix of uses and facilities to meet the needs of people of all ages. It is therefore important that housing is not the only type of development promoted on infill and brownfield sites. In addition a large scale urban regeneration project could significantly increase the population in a confined area. If such developments are to be successfully implemented it is essential that there is adequate physical and social infrastructure to meet the needs of this increased population. Consideration must also be

given to the impact such development would have on existing infrastructure e.g. roads, schools, amenity spaces etc. With this in mind, the redevelopment of brownfield lands should ensure an appropriate combination of residential, commercial, employment, schools, and amenities are provided.

### 3.4.5 Transitional population growth and headroom

The NPF Implementation Roadmap published in July 2018 provides welcome clarity with regard to the transitional population projections for 2026 and 2031. Whilst this is acknowledged in the draft RSES it would be extremely useful if the RSES listed the Local Authority Areas in the Eastern and Midland Region that can avail of the supplementary 25% headroom.<sup>17</sup> An additional column could also be included in the 'County Population Tables' in Appendix B. This would provide certainty and clarity with regard to future population targets and would make the calculation of future population targets more straightforward for both Local Authority staff and the general public, including developers and potential investors.

### 3.4.6 Household growth

One of the main contrasts between the RPGs and the draft RSES is the lack of detail/correlation between population and household growth. Section 9.3 of the RSES acknowledges the national target of 25,000 new homes being required in the country per annum up to 2040. This figure has not been distributed at a Regional or County level.

It appears that the household figures were not provided to facilitate a shift away from 'planning by numbers' towards a more spatial approach based on best practice and the capacity to deliver growth. Whilst the Council welcomes this approach as it ensures greater focus is given to how a settlement will develop spatially, it is also recognised that the Core Strategy requirements set out in section 10 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) require details of the proposed number of residential units to be provided. Taking the legislative requirements into account, the absence of a household target or occupancy rates presents a challenge for Local Authorities in the calculation of future households and the quantum lands to zone for residential use. It is acknowledged however that further guidance with regard to this issue may be set out in the updated Core Strategy and Development Plan Guidelines to be published in the near future.

### 3.4.7 Tiered Zoning

When identifying future residential land requirements in the County the Council will be following the 'Tiered Approach to Land Zoning' as set out in Appendix 3 of the NPF. This will include the prioritisation of land with a particular emphasis on lands that are likely to deliver housing and a differentiation between 'serviced' and 'serviceable' land. This approach to zoning will result in greater clarity as to what lands are likely to be developed within the lifetime of Plans and will also

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<sup>17</sup> Page 5 of the NPF Implementation Roadmap lists the counties where an additional 25% headroom can be considered.

require close co-ordination and a strong working relationship between infrastructure agencies and Local Authorities.

### 3.4.8 Strategic Housing Developments

The Council notes that no reference has been made to the Strategic Housing Development process in the RSES. Taking account of the fact that this will be the primary mechanism for the delivery of major housing developments in the immediate term, reference should be made to this process in the document. The nature of these applications is that they are major developments that will be built in phases which in some cases may be over a 10 year period. It is considered that the Growth Strategy of the RSES takes account of the scale of these developments and acknowledges that it is likely they will be built out of a number of Development Plan cycles. This would provide greater flexibility for Planning Authorities in quantifying and identifying lands available for residential development.

### 3.4.9 Housing Need Demand Assessments

Section 9.3 of the draft RSES makes reference to the requirement to prepare a Housing Need Demand Assessment, as required under NPO 37 of the NPF. It is unclear if this assessment will replace the current Housing Strategies to be prepared as part of the Development Plan process. Prior to the preparation of these Assessments further guidance regarding how Local Authorities will quantify/project future household requirements will be required, particularly in the absence of occupancy rates and household targets. It is acknowledged that this detail may be set out in the forthcoming Development Plan Guidelines.

### 3.4.10 Rural Areas

The rural community makes an important economic and social contribution to County Meath with regard to local employment, access to high quality amenity areas and the output of high quality agricultural produce. These rural areas are facing a variety of challenges including pressure from urban generated housing, an ageing population, isolation, and lack of access to quality infrastructure and services. In 2016 41% of the population in Meath lived in an area designated as 'rural'.

The draft RSES acknowledges the contribution rural areas make to the Region in economic, social, cultural, and environmental terms. The Council welcomes the objective of the draft RSES to strengthen the fabric of rural areas and the rejuvenation of rural towns and villages. In particular the Council looks forward to working with Irish Water and local communities in the delivery of the 'Serviced Sites Programme' which will provide a focus for regeneration of rural towns and villages. In order to strengthen the status of this initiative it is considered that it should be included as a Regional Policy Objective in the RSES. See proposed amendment no.7 in appendix B for the details of this proposed amendment.

In recognition of the opportunities for rural areas to diversify and offer a range of activities and associated facilities including activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding, and angling, the Council will continue to support rural tourism initiatives and diversification projects that will provide local employment and assist in the regeneration of rural areas.

The ability of businesses to operate in rural locations requires the provision of appropriate infrastructure. A high quality reliable broadband infrastructure is essential in ensuring connectivity is provided in rural areas and facilitating the growth of existing businesses. In this regard the Council welcomes the support for the delivery of the National Broadband Plan.

### 3.4.11 Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is a fundamental aspect in the creation of a balanced, sustainable community. Section 9.6 of the Draft RSES identifies some of the challenges facing the Region with regard to social inclusion. The Council welcome the inclusion of Regional Policy Objective 9.14 which supports Local Authorities in targeting disadvantaged areas in the Region. The Council recommends that the RSES addresses the needs of those experiencing disabilities in all its forms in a proactive fashion.

### 3.4.12 Ageing Population

As the population of the country gets older, the NPF and RSES will be important policy documents in guiding and co-ordinating land use, transport, housing, and health care policies that will meet the needs of an ageing population.

Meath County Council has taken on a lead role in promoting best practice in age friendly initiatives and is currently the host of the National Age Friendly Ireland Programme. The Council therefore welcomes the inclusion of Regional Policy Objective 9.1 which supports the creation of integrated, healthy, and attractive communities that meets the needs of the entire community and looks forward to working in partnership with the Regional Authority to implement same.

## 3.5 Connectivity

### 3.5.1 Rail projects

The Council welcome the alignment of the NPF and the National Development Plan whereby there is a strong correlation in infrastructure investment and targeted growth centres. With the commuter roads into Dublin becoming increasingly congested, the proposed investment in sustainable travel is welcomed. This includes the following projects:

- The DART Expansion Programme, which will provide fast, high frequency electrified services to Drogheda on the northern line and M3 Parkway on the Maynooth/Sligo line
- The Metro Link Project, which will provide a high frequency rail link from Swords to Sandyford via Dublin Airport

These are major infrastructure projects which, when completed will result in a significant shift in modal split and travel patterns for people travelling to and from the city centre. As part of the Metro Link Project the Council would support the further improvement of transport links between Ashbourne and Swords and in particular an enhanced bus service and upgraded road links. Improved connectivity between these settlements would promote more sustainable modes of transport by

facilitating the use of the Metro for commuters travelling to Dublin City centre and Airport for employment.

The delivery of Phase 2 of the Navan Rail Project remains a priority for the Council. This rail line is critical to Navan fulfilling its potential as a Primary Development Centre. This would improve the connectivity between Navan and Dublin and would result in the provision of a sustainable mode of transport between the settlements. The Council welcome the support in the RSES for the reappraisal of this project in Table 8.2 of the RSES however request that in order to ensure this review takes place in a timely manner additional text is inserted requiring this appraisal to be completed prior to the mid-term review of the RSES. Please refer to amendment 12 and the proposed amendments to Table 8.2 in Appendix B.

### 3.5.2 Road projects

The investment in the road network over the past 20 years and in particular the motorway and Regional road network has resulted in significant improvements in connectivity between towns and cities across the country. This infrastructure is critical in the efficient movement of people, goods, and services. In order to maintain competitiveness it is essential that new road projects and projects associated with the upgrade and maintenance of the existing road network are advanced in a timely manner.

The construction of the Slane By-pass and the upgrades of the N2 national route are regarded as crucial in improving connectivity within the Region. The N2 is a vital international economic corridor in the Region. The upgrade of this road would significantly improve connectivity between Dublin and the north/north-west of the island. The Council welcomes the support for the N2 upgrade project, Slane By-pass and the Laytown-Bettystown Link Road.

In a number of settlements, for example Navan, Dunboyne, Dunshaughlin and Trim local road infrastructure upgrades are necessary to facilitate the development of existing zoned lands. These include in Navan a new distributor road and bridge from Clonmagadden to the Navan Inner Relief Road which will allow the SDZ to develop; a link between the Old Dublin Road (R147) and the Trim Road and the LIHAF funded road at Farganstown. In Dunboyne the proposed distributor road network will allow for the delivery of additional residential development in the metropolitan area. In Dunshaughlin the local link connecting the R147 to the M3 will increase usage of the motorway network. In Trim it involves the construction of a link road and bridge which will connect the Navan and Dublin roads in the town. Please refer to Appendix A.

### 3.5.3 Walking and cycling

As part of the strategy of improving connectivity and creating more sustainable communities ongoing investment in walking and cycling infrastructure is required. Meath County Council will continue to work closely with the NTA in improving this infrastructure in settlements across the County in order to promote more sustainable communities and a more active and healthy lifestyle and make walking and cycling a more natural choice for shorter journeys.

### 3.5.4 Park and Ride Dunboyne

Table 8.5 refers to proposed Park and Ride projects in the Region. This includes a Park and Ride in Dunboyne. This Park and Ride (M3 Parkway) is completed and therefore should be omitted from this Table. Please refer to amendment 13 and the proposed amendments to Table 8.5 in Appendix B.

### 3.5.5 Broadband

The provision of high quality broadband infrastructure is crucial in improving connectivity in urban and rural areas. This infrastructure is becoming increasingly essential for both consumers and businesses as the number of internet capable devices people are using is increasing. It can change the way in which businesses operate by improving online activities and pursuing new online ventures. The continued roll out of the National Broadband Plan throughout the Region should remain a priority in order to maintain the competitiveness of the Region and its attractiveness as a place to live and invest.

The Council notes Regional Policy Objective 8.24 supports the preparation of guidelines for the efficient delivery of broadband. It is not considered that statutory guidelines would be required for the roll out of broadband. The publication of a Roadmap and associated circular document may be a more appropriate mechanism to ensure the co-ordination and co-operation of various bodies and agencies in the delivery of this project.

## 3.6 Water and Wastewater Infrastructure

The progression of the Eastern and Midlands Water Supply Project and the Greater Dublin Drainage project would provide additional capacity in water and waste water infrastructure in the Region. The Council welcome the support for these projects in Chapter 10.

An integral part of the rejuvenation of town and village centres in addition to the ‘serviced sites’ initiative is the commitment from Irish Water to support investment in these centres. In this regard the Council welcome the inclusion of RPO 10.9 which supports the servicing of rural villages.

## 3.7 Environment and Heritage

Meath is regarded as the ‘Heritage Capital’ of Ireland and the birthplace of Ireland’s ‘Ancient East’ due to its wealth of built and natural heritage, which makes the County unique in Ireland. This heritage includes the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne, the seat of the High Kings of Ireland at Tara, the passage tombs of Loughcrew, the largest Anglo-Norman Castle in Europe (Trim), the historic towns of Navan, Trim, and Kells. The protection of this unique heritage for the benefit of existing and future generations in order to retain the attractiveness of the County as a place to live and do business is central to the sustainable growth of the County. The references to the diversity of the Regions landscape and heritage are welcomed. This will assist in promoting the rural economy and highlighting the value of heritage towns and villages.

The Meath Gaeltacht areas of Ráth Cairn and Baile Ghib are the only Gaeltacht areas in the Region. Meath County Council welcomes the recognition in Section 9.9 of the Draft RSES of the contribution of these settlements to the cultural and linguistic heritage of the Region.

## 3.8 Green Infrastructure

The wealth of Green Infrastructure in the Region is well documented in the Strategy. This infrastructure is a significant asset in promoting the Region as a place to live and visit. RPO 7.22, which supports the co-ordination of the mapping of Green Infrastructure in the Region by EMRA is welcomed as it will result in a more coherent and structured approach to the provision of green infrastructure in the future.

As part of the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles it is considered that there is an opportunity for the RSES to include provision for the development of national cycle and walking routes. The development of such trails along tourist routes would be of significant benefits to tourists and the resident population. Such routes could be marketed under the ‘Ireland’s Ancient East’ brand.

### 3.8.1 Greenways

The detailed reference to the importance of Greenways in section 7.6 of the Draft RSES is welcomed. The Council has enjoyed a successful roll out of the Greenway programme in the County with the success of the Boyne and Royal Canal Greenways. It is an objective of the council to continue to develop a network of greenways, which include:

- All future phases of the Boyne Greenway;
- The Lakelands Greenway (Navan – Kingscourt) This route is a standalone route. However, it will ultimately link through Navan to the Boyne Greenway and with corridors 1, 2, 5 and 13 of the National Cycle Network. The route links Navan and Kingscourt, and specifically the Dun Na Ri Forest Park with the Blackwater Park in Navan. It has potential to extend and link to Carrickmacross and Dundalk. This would bring the possibility of connecting into the coastal route from Dundalk to Drogheda and Cycle Corridor 5 leading back to Dublin.
- Newgrange to Newbridge Greenway which will connect Meath, Dublin, and Kildare.

Cross border greenway projects are recognised within the NPF as an opportunity to maximise market exposure from a tourism perspective and the provision of a north – south long distance cycling route is supported by the Council.

Taking account of the fact that these Greenways will significantly improve connectivity in the Region and will promote active, healthy lifestyles it is requested that they are referenced in Table 7.1 of the RSES.

## 3.9 Climate Change

The Council is supportive of objectives of the National Land Development Agency and looks forward to working closely with the agency in facilitating the delivery of projects in key locations in the County.

Climate change is one of the cross-cutting key principles underpinned in the thematic approach taken in the preparation of the Draft RSES. The Council is supportive of the Climate Change Regional Policy objectives and is fully committed to reducing the overall quantity of greenhouse gas emissions and the management of anticipated future climate risks.

The Council seek to proactively move County Meath to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy.

## 3.10 National Land Development Agency

The Council is supportive of objectives of the National Land Development Agency and looks forward to working closely with the agency in facilitating the delivery of projects in key locations in the County.

## 3.11 Regional Investment Plan

Regional Policy Objective 6.27 refers to the preparation of a 'Regional Investment Plan' in accordance with Project Ireland 2040. No supplementary details have been provided with regard to this Investment Plan. It is unclear if additional projects not included in the National Development Plan can be funded through this Plan.

Section 6.3 of the National Development Plan sets out the 'Role of Regional Investment Plans' and indicates that *"it is envisaged that by end-2018 each RSES should be finalised containing agreed priority investment projects capable of being delivered within the capital allocation available to Departments and agencies."*

The draft RSES does not include a list of priority projects to be included in the Regional Investment Plan.

In order to ensure the progression of these projects, Meath County Council would welcome the inclusion of a timeframe for the preparation of this Investment Plan.

The responsibility for the successful implementation of the RSES will be shared by Local Authorities, Government Departments, and Agencies. This will include co-ordination and co-operation in investment programmes and collaboration in the delivery of projects.

On-going monitoring and data sharing of projects and information will be critical to the successful implementation of the Strategy.

## 4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, Meath County Council acknowledges the importance role of the RSES in creating a policy framework for the future growth of the Eastern and Midland Region. The Council is supportive of the key themes and objectives in the RSES including economic growth, improved connectivity, and the creation of compact, sustainable communities.

The unparalleled rapid growth of the County which addressed a significant housing affordability issue in the Greater Dublin Area at the time has resulted in rapid urbanisation of south and east Meath in particular. These new communities require community facilities and economic opportunities which the Council's Development Plan (including Variation 3), Economic Strategy and Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) seek to deliver. The achievement of this transformation cannot be sustained without the support of EMRA and the Department of Housing and Planning in order to embed and support these policies at Regional and National level. Such rebalancing is a very challenging task to which the Council has already committed significant resources and effort in the recent past.

The Council has prepared an Economic Strategy based on the principles of sustainable growth, with an emphasis of creating more jobs in the County and improving the quality of life of residents. In order to support the successful implementation of this Economic Strategy and allow Meath to maximise its potential and continue to make a significant contribution to the growth of the Eastern and Midland Region and Dublin as the National Gateway.

It is essential that the following key points, in addition to those set out in detail in the submission, are taken into consideration in the finalisation of the RSES:

1. A full review of the Metropolitan boundary is carried out and completed prior to the mid-term review of the strategy;
2. Acknowledgement of the importance of Navan as the County town and support for the potential of Navan as a centre for growth.
3. Continued support for infrastructural investment in the County (in particular Phase 2 of the Navan Rail Project) to improve connectivity and the attractiveness of the County as a location of choice for economic investment.
4. The Council supports the designation of Drogheda as a Regional Growth Centre. The Regional Policy Objectives as set out in the Draft RSES fail to acknowledge the contribution that the lands in the Southern Environs of the town have made and will make to the achievement of the NPF objectives for the enhanced status of the town.
5. Acknowledgement of the potential of County Meath to contribute to the development of the M1 corridor in order to secure the achievement of the NPF objectives for this key international economic route way.

6. Having regard to the status of Dunboyne, the Council's sole centre in the metropolitan area as currently designated it is critical to ensure that no restrictions are placed on delivery of a 'live-work' community at Dunboyne North. It is therefore essential that reference to sequential development in the town is removed.
7. The inclusion of Dunboyne in the list of Metropolitan settlements that will benefit an allowance of up to 20% of the population target for Dublin City and Suburbs to be transferred this Metropolitan Settlement in County Meath.
8. Recognition is given to the potential contribution the Environs of Maynooth to the development of the town including the delivery of key infrastructure in particular the Maynooth Outer Orbital Route (MOOR).

# APPENDIX A



comhairle chontae na mí  
*meath county council*





# Navan Development Plan 2009-2015

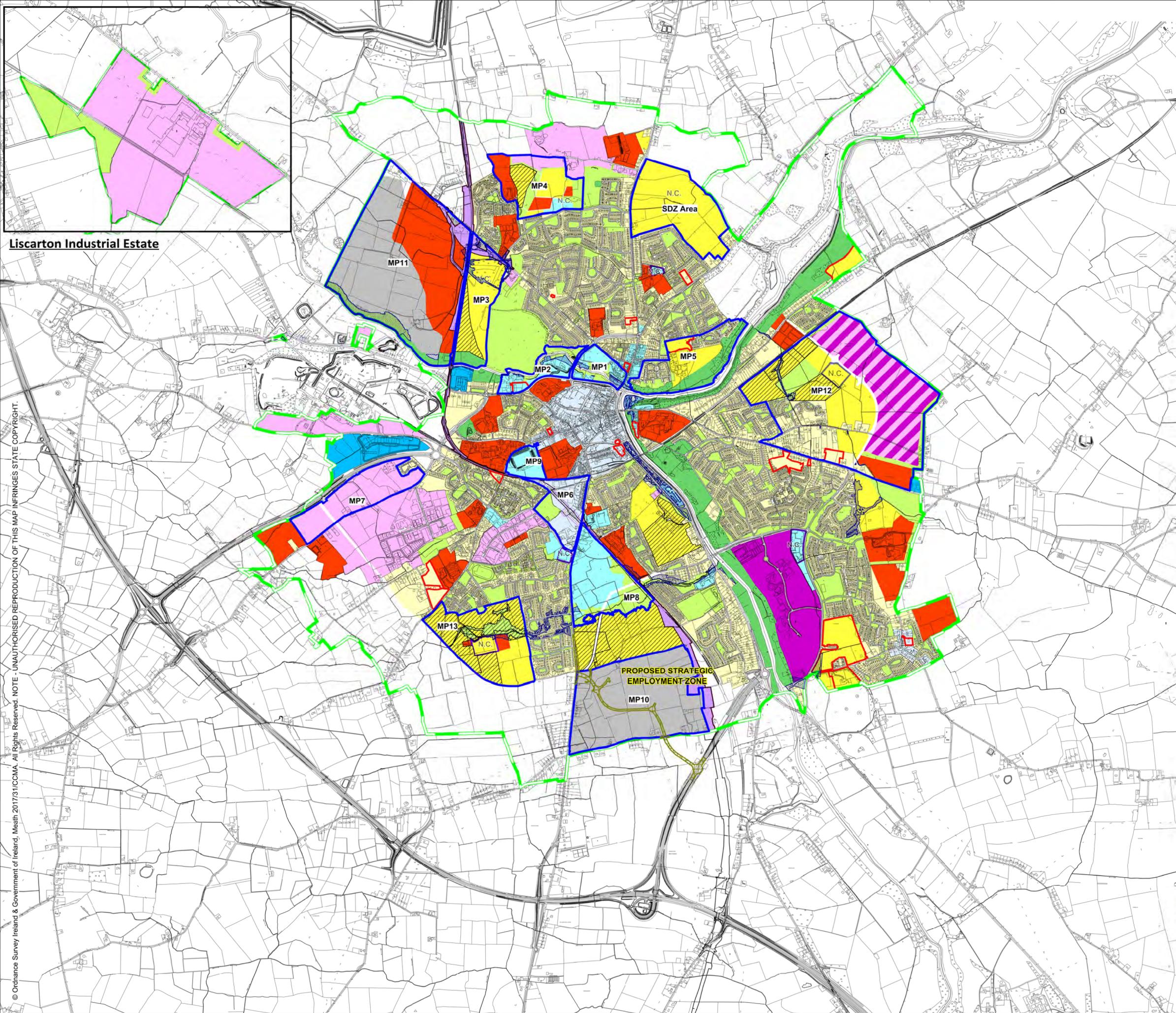
INCORPORATING VARIATION NO. 2  
MADE on JULY 19th 2017

## LAND USE ZONING OBJECTIVES

- A1 Existing Residential
- A2 New Residential
- B1 Commercial/Town or Village Centre
- B2 Retail Warehouse Park
- C1 Mixed Use
- E1 Strategic Employment Zones (High Technology Uses)
- E2 General Enterprise & Employment
- E1/ E2 Strategic Employment Zones (High Technology Uses) General Enterprise & Employment
- F1 Open Space
- G1 Community Infrastructure
- H1 High Amenity
- R1 Rail Corridor
- Interface with Detailed Design of Navan Rail Line Phase II
- WL White Lands

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

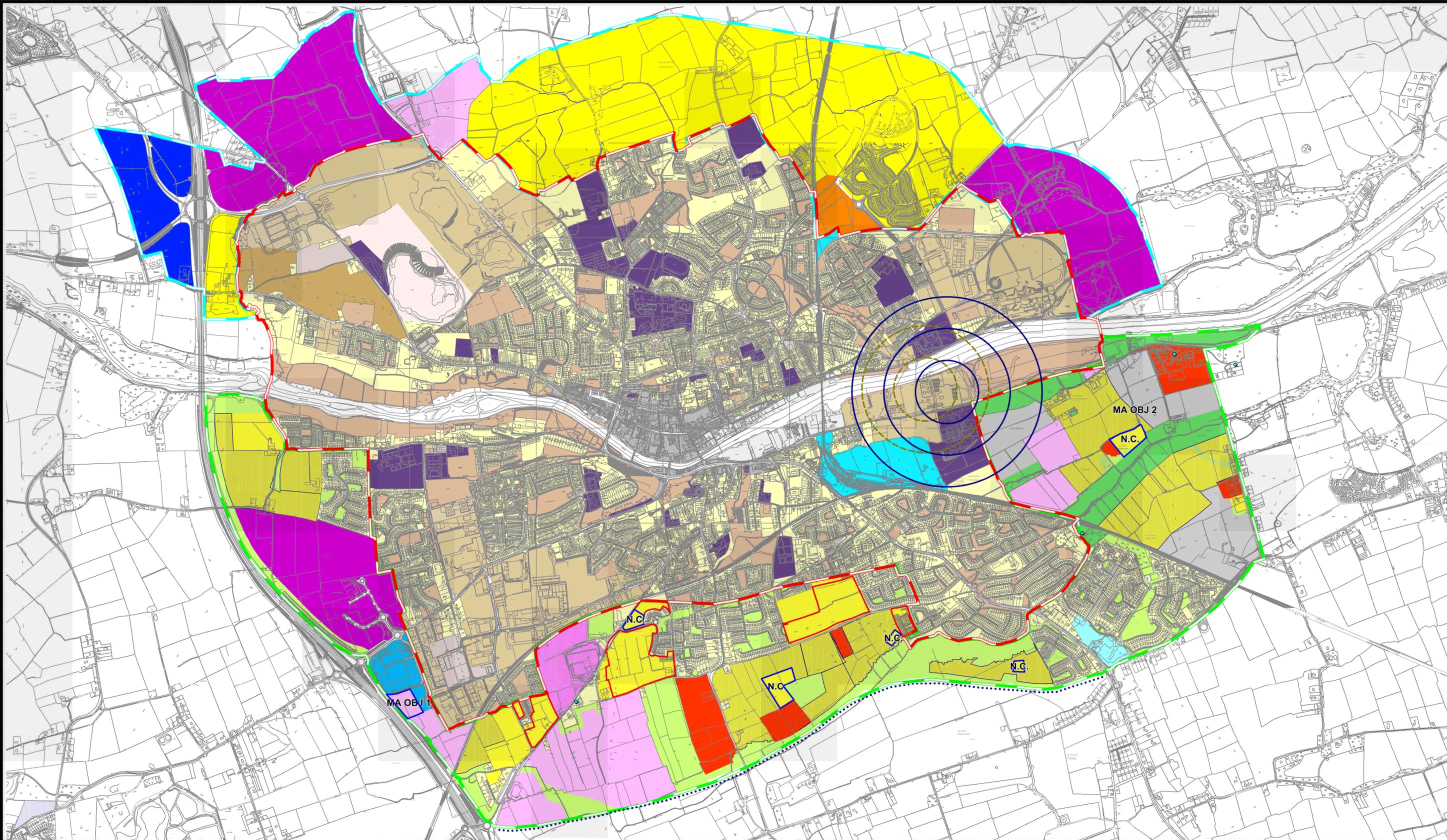
- Development Plan Boundary
- Masterplan Boundary
- Residential Phase II (Post 2019)
- Interface with Flood Zones
- Multiple Residential Development Granted Planning Permission
- Neighbourhood Centre
- SDZ Phasing as per Approved SDZ Scheme
- Phase 1 Road Objectives
- Phase 2 Road Objectives



Liscarton Industrial Estate

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**LCC - Northern Environs of Drogheda LAP**

- To provide for a Retail Park.
- To provide for Employment Uses.
- To provide for Mixed Uses appropriate to Transport Hub.
- To provide for Residential use in accordance with Approved Master Plan.
- To provide for Tourism/ Leisure Uses consistent with protection of adjoining area.

**LAP Boundary**

- Region

**LCC - Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan 2011-2017**

- To Protect, Provide For and Improve Local Shopping Facilities In Order To Provide Facilities for a Residential Neighbourhood
- To Provide For the Development of A Retail Warehouse Park in Accordance with an approved framework plan and subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure
- To Provide For the Development Of Business and Employment Generating Business Activity, Which is Primarily Manufacturing, Service Orientated and Whose Retail Output is Ancillary to The Primary Use
- To Provide For New Business Opportunities on a Green Field Site, Which is Designed In Accordance to an Overall Master Plan Framework. The Zone Allows For Flexibility In The Composition Of Uses including a maximum 25% residential and 4.07 hectares public (Public/Private) to provide for and/or improve open space and recreational amenities.
- To provide for a mix of town centre activities in accordance with the Docklands Area Plan.
- To protect and enhance the special physical and social character of the existing town centre and to provide for new and improved town centre facilities and uses
- To Protect and Expand the Existing Transport Hub Around The Train Station And Facilitate The Development Of Public Transport Facilities Including Residential, Retail And Office Development.
- Further study required for future use.
- To provide for new residential communities and community facilities and protect the amenities of existing residential areas.
- To protect and enhance the amenity of developed residential communities.
- To Provide & Protect Necessary Community, Recreational & Educational Facilities

**Drogheda Borough Boundary**

**MCC - Southern Environs of Drogheda LAP**

- Existing Residential
- New Residential
- Retail Warehouse Park
- Mixed Use
- Strategic Employment Zones (High Technology Uses)
- General Enterprise & Employment
- (E2) General Enterprise & Employment / (E3) Warehousing & Distribution
- Open Space
- Community Infrastructure
- High Amenity
- White Lands

**LAP Boundary**

**Specific Objectives**

- Protected Structures
- Major Distributor Road (Indicative Alignment)
- Seveso Consultation Zone
  - Maxol Ltd.
  - Flags
- Multiple Residential Development Granted Resid
- Residential Phasing II (Post 2019)
- Interface with Flood Risk Zones A & B

**Planning - Land Use Zonings**

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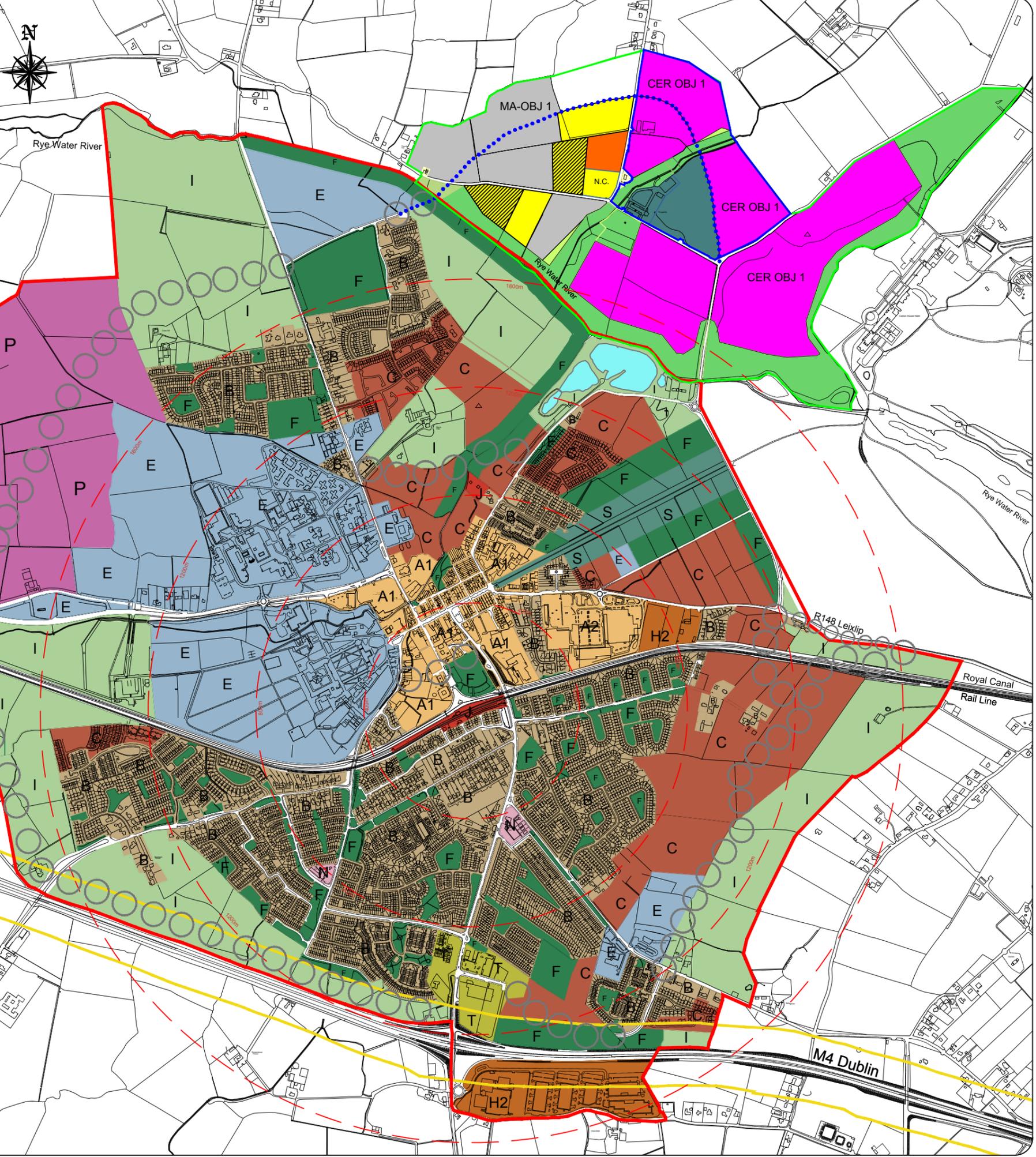
**Drogheda Boundary Review**

Created By: A.O'Brien

**Meath County Council  
Maynooth Environs Local Area Plan**

Legend:

- A1 Existing Residential
- A2 New Residential Phase 2 ( 2019)
- D1 Visitor and Tourist Facility
- E1 Provide for Technology Campus
- F1 Open Space & Amenity
- G1 Open Space & Recreation Amenity
- H1 Areas of High Amenity
- W L W.L. To Protect Strategic Lands



Kildare County Council  
Planning Department,  
Áras Chill Dara, Devoy Park,  
Naas, Co Kildare.

**Maynooth Local Area Plan 2013-2019  
Incorporating Amendment No. 1  
(Effective from 6th of November 2018)**

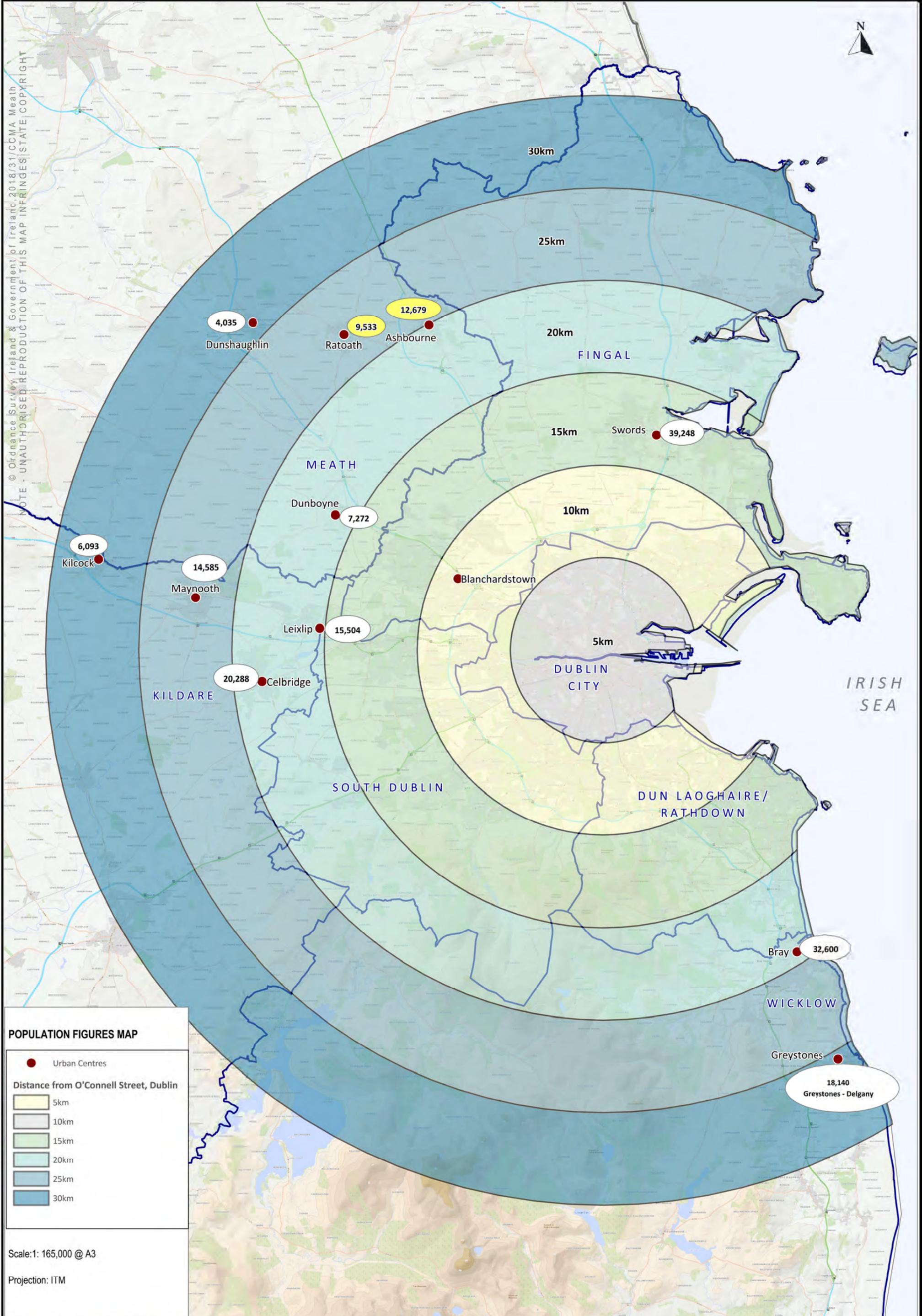
**Legend :**

- A1 & A2: Town Centre
- B: Existing Residential & Infill
- C: New Residential
- E: Community and Educational
- F: Open Space and Amenity
- H2: Office/Light Industry & Warehousing
- I: Agriculture
- J: Transport and Utilities
- N: Neighbourhood Centre
- P: Research and Technology
- S: Carton Avenue
- T: General Development
- Development Boundary
- Kildare County Boundary
- 91m Setback from the M4 Motorway
- Rivers, Canal & Lakes
- Roads Objective (i) - (vii) {Indicative only}

**Land Use Zoning Objectives Map**

Date: 06 November 2018	Map Ref: 6		
Scale: N.T.S	Drawing No: 200/18/910		
© Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved. Licence No.: 2004/07CCMA (Kildare County Council)	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Drawn By: MJK/BR</td> <td>Checked By: LC</td> </tr> </table>	Drawn By: MJK/BR	Checked By: LC
Drawn By: MJK/BR	Checked By: LC		

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



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## ZONED LANDS FINGAL CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017 - 2023

Master Plan 3\_A  
Fingal Central DP

Ballymadun Rural Village  
(subject to LAP)

# FINGAL

**LEGEND**

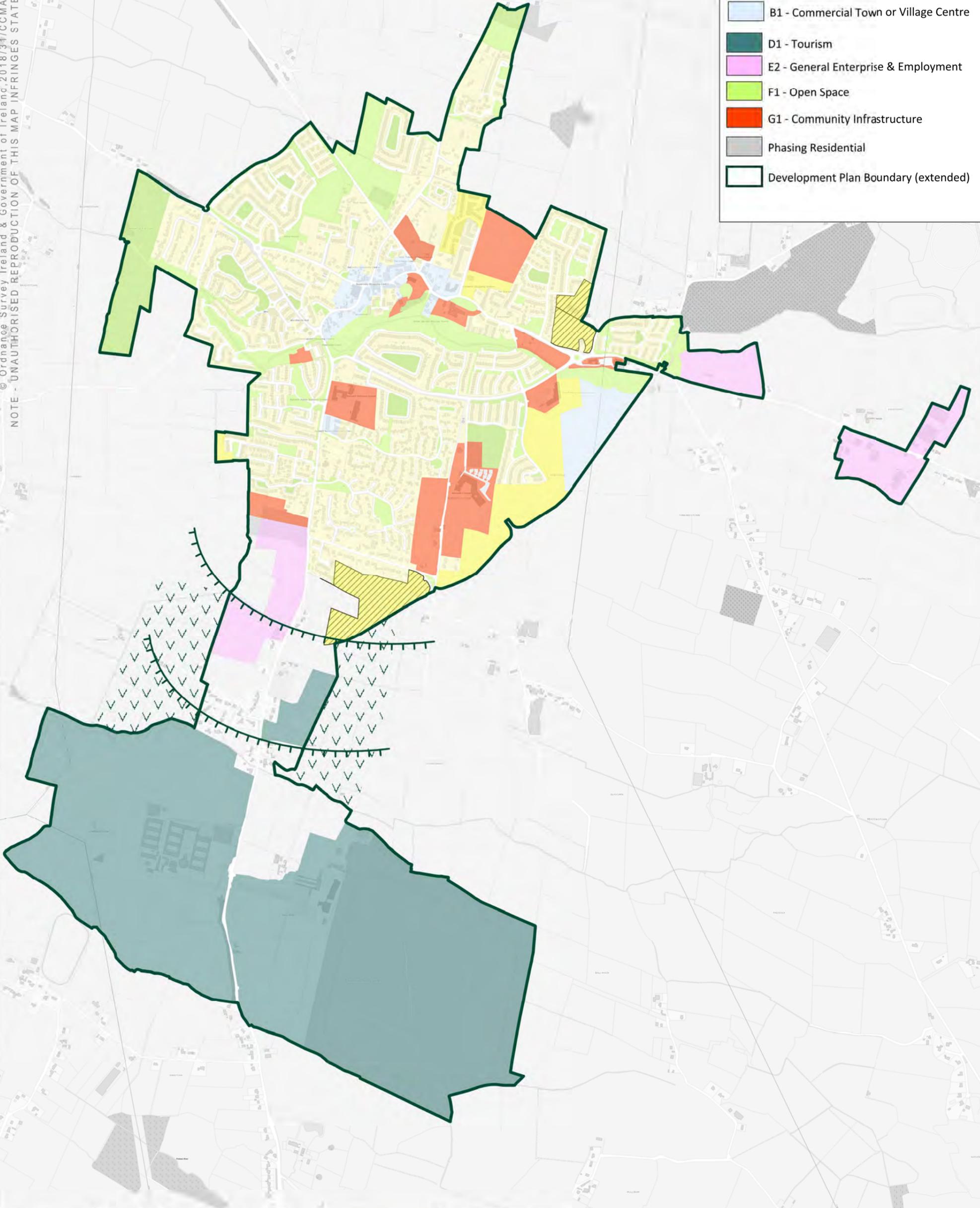
- Projected Direction of Growth
- A1 - Existing Residential
- A2 - New Residential
- B1 - Commercial Town or Village Centre
- B2 - Retail Warehouse Park
- D1 - Tourism
- E2 - General Enterprise & Employment
- F1 - Open Space
- G1 - Community Infrastructure
- Phasing Residential
- Development Plan Boundary

**Fingal Land Use Zoning**

- Master Plan 3A: Fingal Central DP
- Ballymadun Rural Village (LAP)

**LEGEND**

-  Projected Direction of Growth
-  A1 - Existing Residential
-  A2 - New Residential
-  B1 - Commercial Town or Village Centre
-  D1 - Tourism
-  E2 - General Enterprise & Employment
-  F1 - Open Space
-  G1 - Community Infrastructure
-  Phasing Residential
-  Development Plan Boundary (extended)



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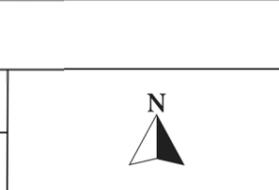
**VISION DOCUMENT: RATOATH**

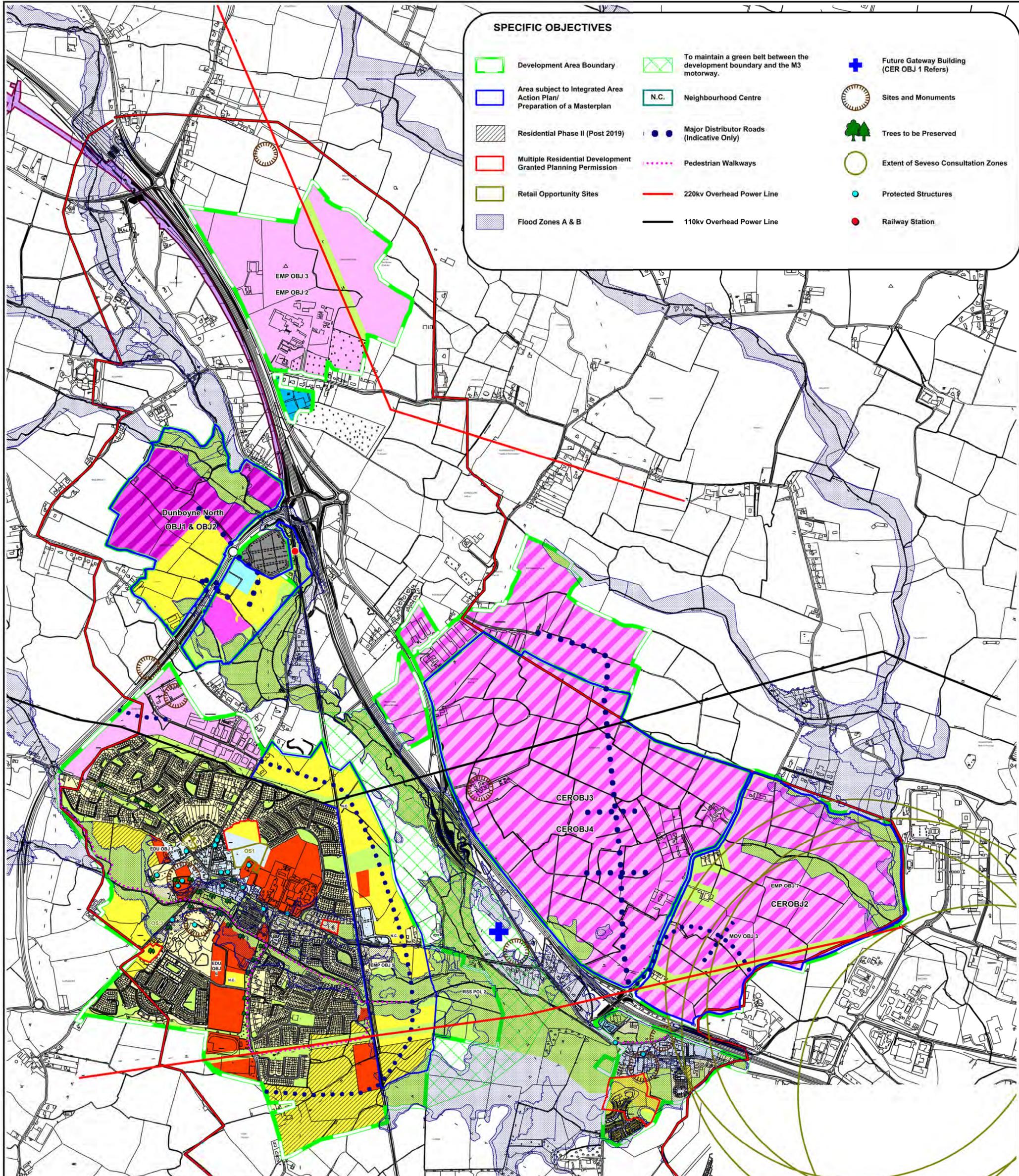
Date: 11. 2018

Prepared: MCC Planning Department

Projection: ING

Scale: 1: 15000 @ A3





### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Development Area Boundary	To maintain a green belt between the development boundary and the M3 motorway.	Future Gateway Building (CER OBJ 1 Refers)
Area subject to Integrated Area Action Plan/ Preparation of a Masterplan	N.C. Neighbourhood Centre	Sites and Monuments
Residential Phase II (Post 2019)	Major Distributor Roads (Indicative Only)	Trees to be Preserved
Multiple Residential Development Granted Planning Permission	Pedestrian Walkways	Extent of Seveso Consultation Zones
Retail Opportunity Sites	220kv Overhead Power Line	Protected Structures
Flood Zones A & B	110kv Overhead Power Line	Railway Station

### LAND USE ZONING OBJECTIVES

A1 To protect and enhance the amenity of developed residential communities.	E2/E3 To provide for the creation of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for employment through industrial, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing and other general employment / enterprise uses in a good quality physical environment. To facilitate logistics, warehousing, distribution and supply chain management inclusive of related industry facilities which require good access to the major road network
A2 To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities and employment uses as considered appropriate for the status of the centre in the Settlement Hierarchy.	E3 To facilitate logistics, warehousing, distribution and supply chain management inclusive of related industry facilities which require good access to the major road network
B1 To protect, provide for and / or improve town and village centre facilities and uses.	F1 To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities.
B2 To provide for the development of a retail warehouse park	G1 To provide for necessary community, social and educational facilities.
C1 To provide for and facilitate mixed residential and business uses.	R1 To provide for a strategic rail corridor and associated physical infrastructure.
E1/E3 To facilitate opportunities for high end technology / manufacturing and major campus style office based employment within high quality and accessible locations. To facilitate logistics, warehousing, distribution and supply chain management inclusive of related industry facilities which require good access to the major road network	T1 To provide for necessary transportation facilities
E2 To provide for the creation of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for employment through industrial, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing and other general employment / enterprise uses in a good quality physical environment.	

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web: <http://countydevelopmentplan.meath.ie>

Scale:  
Not to scale

Reference Only:  
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Amendments to 2013 County Development Plan\_V2013/Revision 3 Amendment

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meath county council

County Development Plan  
2013-2019

**DUNBOYNE NORTH - DUNBOYNE - CLONEE**

Land Use Zoning Objectives Map

LAND USE ZONING OBJECTIVES

- A1  To protect and enhance the amenity of developed residential communities.
- A2  To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities and employment uses as considered appropriate for the status of the centre in the Settlement Hierarchy.
- B1  To protect, provide for and / or improve town and village centre facilities and uses.
- E2  To provide for the creation of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for employment through industrial, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing and other general employment/enterprise uses in a good quality physical environment.
- F1  To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities.
- G1  To provide for necessary community, social and educational facilities.
- R1  To provide for a strategic rail corridor and associated physical infrastructure.

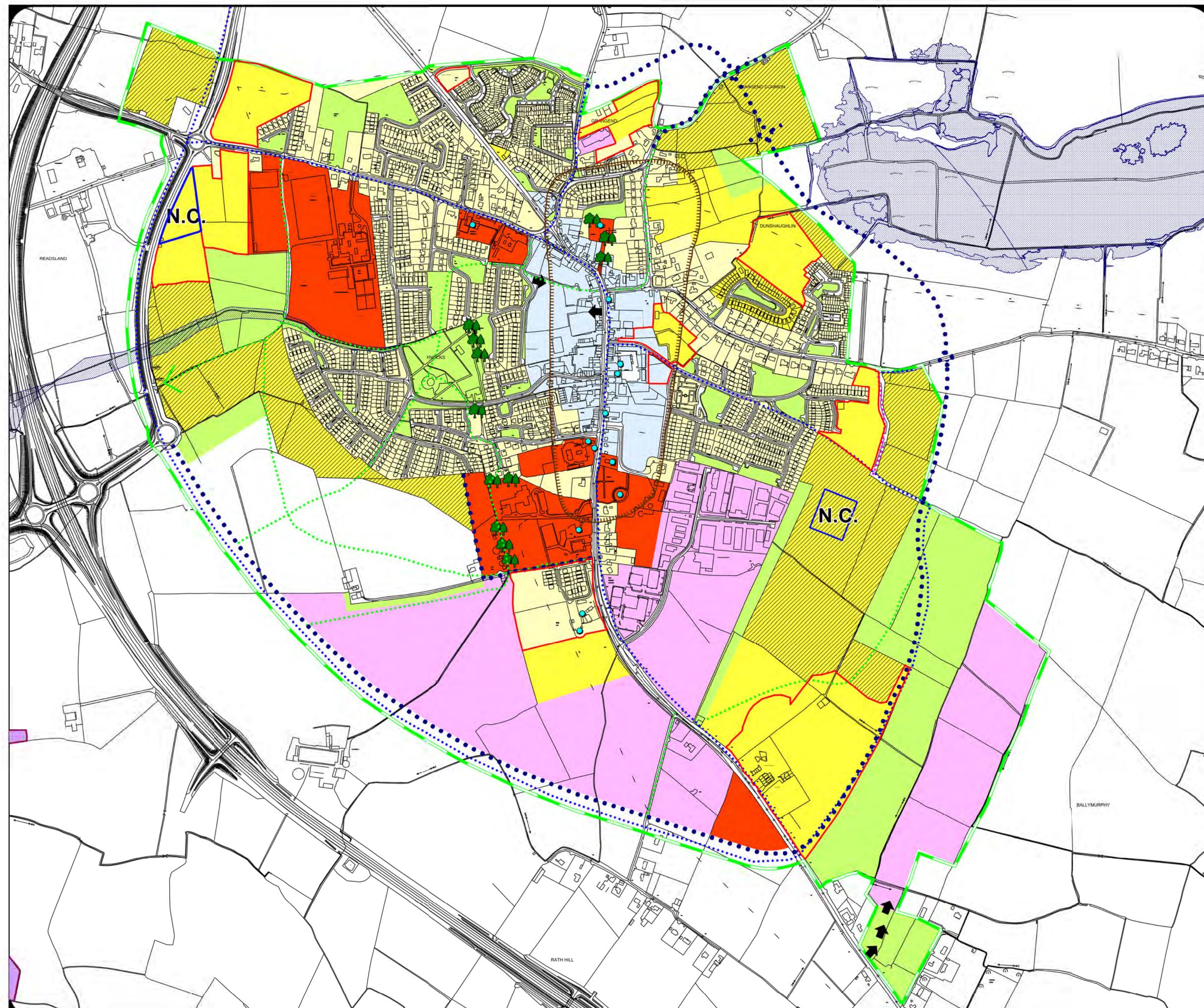
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

-  Access Points
-  Trees to be preserved
-  Protected Structures
-  Development Area Boundary
-  Amenity Walkways
-  Pedestrian walkways/ cycleways existing and proposed
-  Major Distributor Road (Indicative Only)
-  Multiple Residential Development Granted Planning Permission
-  Residential Phase II (Post 2019)
-  N.C. Neighbourhood Centre
-  Flood Zones A & B
-  Area of Archaeological interest

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web: <http://countydevelopmentplan.meath.ie>

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Development\_Plans\  
County Development Plan Adopted\_All Variations to 2016



## **Appendix B**

# **Proposed Amendments to Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy**

**by**

**Meath County Council**

This appendix relates specifically to the relevant sections of the EMRA Draft Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (Draft RSES) which Meath County Council proposed to change/amend. This appendix should be read in conjunction with the main body of this submission.

The existing text of the Draft RSES is shown in normal font and is included to provide context to the content of that specific section. **Proposed Amendments/Additions are shown as blue text underlined and deletions are illustrated as a ~~strike through in red~~.**

## Text to be amended

Amendment number	Section(s) of MCC submission recommending proposed amendment	Section to be amended in RSES	Type of amendment	Proposed amendment
1	3.2.2 Drogheda	4.5 Drogheda Regional Growth Centre	Additional text in Regional Policy Objective 4.8	<p>Future development required to achieve the growth vision for Drogheda included in the Joint UAP shall:</p> <p><u>Support the sustainable development of existing zoned lands in the Southern Environs of the town with a particular emphasis on the promotion of the IDA Business Park as an employment hub and the creation of compact, residential communities in key locations in proximity to established residential areas and transport hubs.</u></p>
2	3.3.2 Additional population allocation to Metropolitan Area	4.6 Key Towns – Metropolitan Key Towns	Additional text to include reference to Dunboyne	<p>The Key Metropolitan Towns of <u>Dunboyne</u>, Swords, Maynooth and Bray are important in a regional and in a county context and they have the capacity and future growth potential to accommodate above average growth in the Region with the requisite investment in employment creation, services, amenities and sustainable transport.</p>

Amendment number	Section(s) of MCC submission recommending proposed amendment	Section to be amended in RSES	Type of amendment	Proposed amendment
				<p>The details and prioritisation of this delivery is set out in the MASP, chapter 5.</p> <p><b><u>Dunboyne</u></b></p> <p><u>Dunboyne is strategically located within the Metropolitan Area along a multi-modal corridor with potential to deliver significant population and employment growth on a sustainable platform. Recent FDI announcements by Facebook and Shire Pharmaceuticals, and other economic developments including Avoca in Dunboyne demonstrate the economic advantages of a strong connectivity with Dublin and the wider Metropolitan Area.</u></p> <p><u>Significant potential is presented by the lands adjacent to the M3 Parkway in Dunboyne North as one of the five key strategic employment sites identified within the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath. Development on these lands would build on the significant public investment already made in the area to create a public transport interchange and is intended to reduce the significant out bound commuter rate in this area. The area is intended for high technology employment opportunities mixed with other complementary land uses such as residential and community uses built on the sustainable 'live- work' community model.</u></p>

Amendment number	Section(s) of MCC submission recommending proposed amendment	Section to be amended in RSES	Type of amendment	Proposed amendment
				<p><u>Additional E2/E3 lands between Portan and Bracetown Business Park are available for future opportunities brought forward by the data centre investment. Given the proximity of these lands to the T50 fibre optic cable and the accessibility of these lands to high voltage electricity, further lands have been identified as a strategic reserve in this location also. These lands will promote clustering and agglomeration effects of similar format developments at this location.</u></p> <p><u>Regional Policy Objectives</u></p> <p><u>Dunboyne Key Town</u></p> <p><u>RPO: Support the continued development of Dunboyne focused on the live-work community model and co-ordinated with the delivery of strategic infrastructure including DART Expansion.</u></p>
<b>3</b>	<b>3.2.3 Dunboyne Footnote 11</b>	<b>3.2 Growth Enablers for the Region – Hinterland Area</b>	Amendment to text referring to Dunboyne as within the Hinterland area	Towns where over half of all trips to work or education are to Dublin’s urban core including Donabate, Skerries, Rush, Luck, <b>Dunboyne</b> , Celbridge, and Ratoath.
<b>4</b>	<b>3.2.1 Navan</b>	<b>4.6 Hinterland Key</b>	Amendment to text –	Navan acts as the county town for Meath and has experienced

Amendment number	Section(s) of MCC submission recommending proposed amendment	Section to be amended in RSES	Type of amendment	Proposed amendment
		<b>Towns</b>	narrative for Navan amended	<p>significant population growth as one of the country's fastest growing large towns between 1996 and 2016 where the population has grown rapidly without the equivalent increase in jobs. <u>Whilst the industrial and business parks in the town are performing well outbound commuting for employment remains an issue. The Meath Economic Development Strategy 2014-2022 has the overarching goal of facilitating more employment within the County, thus addressing high levels of outbound commuting. Through the implementation of this strategy, the Council is promoting Navan as one of five strategic centres for employment.</u></p> <p><u>In addition to economic growth, the Council is also committed to creating a modern and attractive urban environment in the town. This will be delivered through the implementation of the Public Realm Strategy 'Navan 2030' and the Active Land Management Strategy for the town. The funding recently allocated to Navan through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund will assist in the rejuvenation of the urban core and built fabric of the town. Key parts of the town that have suffered from under investment and have high levels of vacancy will be targeted for renewal and regeneration. It is anticipated that the implementation of these urban regeneration initiatives will make town centre living a more attractive options, will improve vibrancy in the urban core, and will</u></p>

Amendment number	Section(s) of MCC submission recommending proposed amendment	Section to be amended in RSES	Type of amendment	Proposed amendment
				<u>assist in the creation of a more compact settlement.</u>
5	3.2.1 Navan	4.6 Hinterland Key Towns	Additional/amendments to Regional Policy Objectives for Navan	<p><u>RPO: Support the time bound delivery of Phase 2 of the Dublin-Navan Rail Line.</u></p> <p><u>RPO: Support the development of strategic employment lands on the Trim Rd in Navan.</u></p> <p><del>RPO 4.29: Support delivery of the distributor road at Farganstown to release strategic residential and employment lands for development.</del></p> <p><u>RPO 4.29: Support the delivery of a network of distributor roads and bridges to release strategic residential and employment lands for development and improve connectivity and the efficient movement of people and services in the town.</u></p>
6	3.2.13 Commuter focused expansion	Chapter 4 – People and Place – Section 4.7 – Other Towns	Additional text to provide a more balanced analysis of settlements that have experienced rapid population growth	<p><u>4.7 Other Towns</u></p> <p><u>Towns recording the highest growth rates in the country over the last ten years (&gt;32%), and which have lower levels of employment provision include; Ashbourne, Balbriggan, Blessington, Clane, Kinsealy-Drinan, Lusk, Laytown-Bettystown, Ratoath, and Sallins.</u></p> <p><u>Nevertheless, it should also be noted that such towns are important</u></p>

Amendment number	Section(s) of MCC submission recommending proposed amendment	Section to be amended in RSES	Type of amendment	Proposed amendment
				<u>employment and service centres. In addition some of these settlements, such as Ashbourne and Ratoath have the potential to strengthen their employment base and develop as important centres of employment due to their strategic location, connectivity with surrounding settlements, and the availability of a skilled workforce.</u>
7	3.4.10 Rural Areas	4.8 – Rural Areas	Additional Regional Policy Objective	<p><u>RPO: Support the sustainable development of declining industries in rural areas.</u></p> <p><u>RPO: Support the roll out of programmes to develop new homes in small towns and villages which provide serviced sites with appropriate infrastructure to attract people to build their own homes and live in small towns and villages.</u></p>
8	3.2.3 Dunboyne	MASP – Figure 5.2 – Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan	Amendment to text in information map relating to sequential development in Dunboyne	<p><b>3. Maynooth/Dunboyne line (DART expansion)</b></p> <p>Strategic development areas along the Dunboyne/M3 parkway commuter line include the Dublin Enterprise Zone and Hansfield SDZ lands, the <del>sequential</del> development of lands in Dunboyne served by the M3 Parkway station and along the main line for sequential growth in Leixlip and Maynooth.</p>
9	3.2.4 Ashbourne	MASP – Section 5.1	Insert footnote relating	<b>The Dublin Metropolitan Area (DMA)</b>

Amendment number	Section(s) of MCC submission recommending proposed amendment	Section to be amended in RSES	Type of amendment	Proposed amendment
		<b>Introduction and Context</b>	to Metropolitan boundary review	<u>Taking into account the population growth, economic development and infrastructural investment that have taken place in the region within the last 14 year period, it is appropriate to review the Metropolitan boundary as part of the 6 year review of the RSES. Such a review should take account of the changing characteristics of settlements both inside and outside the Metropolitan boundary, and the relationship of these settlements with Dublin City centre and the wider Dublin Area. Particular focus should be placed on towns such as Ashbourne and Ratoath that have characteristics and functions of Metropolitan settlements and their inclusion within the Metropolitan boundary.</u>
10	3.2.4 Ashbourne	<b>MASP – Chapter 5 – Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)</b>	Additional Regional Policy Objective	<p><b>The Dublin Metropolitan Area (DMA)</b>  <u>RPO: To complete a full review of the boundary of the Metropolitan area prior to the commencement of the Mid-term review of the Strategy.</u></p> <p><u>RPO: To support the continued development of Ashbourne and Ratoath in order to complete their successful transition to metropolitan status following this Mid- term review.</u></p>
11	3.2.3 Dunboyne	<b>MASP – Section 5.4 Metropolitan Area Strategy</b>	Amendment to text in information map relating to sequential	<b>North western Corridor (Maynooth/Dunboyne commuter line and DART expansion programme)</b>

Amendment number	Section(s) of MCC submission recommending proposed amendment	Section to be amended in RSES	Type of amendment	Proposed amendment
			development in Dunboyne on page 70	There are strategic development opportunities along the Dunboyne/M3 parkway commuter line to drive economic growth at the Dublin Enterprise Zone in Blanchardstown and for significant residential growth at Hansfield SDZ lands along with the <b>sequential</b> development of lands in Dunboyne and Dunboyne north, which is served by the M3 Parkway station. Along the main line, the proposed electrification to Maynooth will open up opportunities for sequential growth in Leixlip and Maynooth, with an estimated completion date of 2027.
12	3.2.1 Navan  3.2.8 Dunshaughlin  3.5.1 Rail projects	MASP – Section 5.6 Integrated Land Use and Transportation	Amendment to text to include a timeframe for the reappraisal of Phase 2 of the Navan Rail Project	<b>Key Transport Infrastructure Investments in the Metropolitan Area as set out in national policy include:</b> <b>Rail;</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reappraisal of the extension of the Dunboyne/M3 Parkway line to Navan <b>during-prior to</b> the Mid Term Review of the GDA Transport Strategy <u>and prior to the mid-term review of the RSES</u>, see also Chapter 8 Connectivity</li> </ul>
13	3.5.4 Park and Ride Dunboyne	MASP – Section 5.6 Integrated Land Use and Transportation	Amendment to text referring to proposed Park and Ride facilities (Park and Ride in Dunboyne has been	<b>Park and Ride</b>  New Park and Ride locations at Swords, Finglas, <b>Dunboyne</b> , Liffey Valley, Naas Road, Carrickmines, Woodbrook, Greystones

Amendment number	Section(s) of MCC submission recommending proposed amendment	Section to be amended in RSES	Type of amendment	Proposed amendment
			completed)	
14	<b>3.3.2 Additional population allocation to Metropolitan Area</b>	<b>MASP – Core Strategy (page 78)</b>	Amendment to text to include reference to Dunboyne as a Metropolitan Key Town	<p>The Core Strategies of the relevant Local Authorities should demonstrate consistency with the population targets expressed in the NPF and the Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework July 2018. The NPF identifies a target population of 1.4 million people in Dublin City and Suburbs for 2031, an increase of some 220,000 people, and a target of 1.65m. in the MASP an increase of some 250,000 people.</p> <p>The further breakdown of population projections to county level are in appendix B and shall be used by Local Authorities in the formulation of the core strategies of their development plans. There is a further allowance of transition population targets in NPO 68 by way of up to 20% of the targeted growth in the city being transferred to other settlements in the MASP8. This shall apply only to the <del>three</del> <u>four</u> Metropolitan Key Towns in the MASP namely Bray, Maynooth, <u>Dunboyne</u> and Swords, and only if they can demonstrate compact growth on high capacity planned or existing public transport corridors.</p>
15	<b>3.4.3 Retail Strategy</b>	<b>6.5 Specific sectors:Retail, Tourism, Marine,</b>	Amendment to regional policy object RPO 6.9 to include a timeframe for	<b>RPO 6.9:</b> <u>Within 2 years of the adoption of the RSES</u> EMRA will prepare a Retail Strategy/Strategies for the Region in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012

Amendment number	Section(s) of MCC submission recommending proposed amendment	Section to be amended in RSES	Type of amendment	Proposed amendment
		<b>Argiculture</b>	completing a Retail Strategy for the Region within 2 years of the adoption of the RSES.	<u>which shall include an</u> <del>to</del> update <u>of</u> the retail hierarchy and <u>the</u> application of <del>apply</del> floorspace requirements for the Region.

## Tables to be amended:

Existing Table 5.1 Strategic Development Corridors, Capacity Infrastructure and Phasing, Draft RSES, Page 77

Sections of MCC's submission recommending proposed amendment: 3.2.3 Dunboyne and 3.2.5 Maynooth Environs

Table 5.1 Strategic Development Corridors, Capacity Infrastructure and Phasing			
Corridor	Residential	Employment/Mixed Use	Phasing/Enabling infrastructure
<b>North-West corridor</b> (Maynooth/Dunboyne commuter line/DART) <b>Population capacity</b> Short 24,000 Medium 10,000 Long 3,000 <b>Total 37,000</b>	<b>Dublin 15 lands</b> – continued development of Hansfield SDZ linked to the future development of Barnhill and Kellytown landbanks to the south and east of the SDZ	Further development of large-scale employment in Dublin Enterprise Zone in proximity to Blanchardstown IT	<b>Short term</b> Public transport, Clonsilla station and WW upgrades.
	<b>Leixlip</b> – strategic Greenfield lands near Confey station with capacity for phased development, poor links to Leixlip and adjoining Dublin/Meath lands	Large scale former Hewlett Packard site and Collinstown site to strengthen employment base for North Kildare.	<b>Short to Medium term</b> LUAS extension to Maynooth, roads upgrades, link to WWT and community and social infrastructure.
	<b>Maynooth</b> – Significant strategic residential capacity at Railpark lands and to the north and west of the town near Maynooth University.	New Research & technology Park adjoining Maynooth University	<b>Short to Medium term</b> LIHAF relief road and bridge, road upgrades, sewer connection, LUAS extension to Maynooth.
	<b>Dunboyne</b> –Sequential development prioritising zoned and serviced lands near the railway station and town centre, followed by development at Dunboyne North at M3 parkway station	Space intensive ‘big box’ employment at Portan, Mixed use ‘live-work’ development at Dunboyne North	<b>Medium to Long term</b> Outer Orbital road, Distributor Road and additional watermain.
<b>South Western corridor</b> (Kildare line/DART and LUAS redline) <b>Population capacity</b> Short 45,000 Medium 21,000 <b>Total 66,000</b>	<b>Western suburbs</b> – Continued development of Adamstown SDZ and the phased development of Clonburris located strategically between the west Dublin suburbs of Lucan and Clondalkin. New residential community at Kilcarbery near Clondalkin	Promotion of high tech, manufacturing and research and development in Grangecastle Business Park	<b>Short to medium term</b> LIHAF roads and railway bridge, new rail station, DART expansion to Cellbridge-Hazelhatch (Adamstown, Clonburris), LIHAF access road and WW upgrades (Kilcarbery). Public transport and access to station (Grangecastle)
	<b>LUAS red line</b> – Regeneration of brownfield lands in Tallaght. New district at Fortunestown near emerging town of Saggart/Citywest	Re-intensification of older industrial estates near Naas Road/Ballymount	<b>Short to Medium term</b> Brownfield conditions and site assembly. WWT upgrades and Citywest junction link at Tallaght/Fortunestown
<b>Metrolink Corridor</b> (Metrolink/LUAS greenline) <b>Population capacity</b> Short 28,000 Medium 25,000 Long 18,000 <b>Total 71,000</b>	<b>Dun Laoghaire – Rathdown</b> – New and emerging mixed-use districts of Cherrywood and Sandyford. New residential communities in Ballyogan and environs and Kiltiernan-Glenamuck	Continued development of high-density business districts at Cherrywood and Sandyford. New mixed use centres in Ballyogan nad Kiltiernan	<b>Short to Medium term</b> Metrolink, LUAS green line upgrades. Public transport and roads upgrades. LIHAF road and bridge and N11 junction (Cherrywood)
	<b>Swords</b> – sequential development of strategic residential sites within Swords and development of Oldtown-Mooretown lands	Airport related, commercial facilities and employment linked to development at Metrolink.	<b>Short-Medium term</b> Public realm, pedestrian and cyclist provision. LIHAF road improvements, Bus Connects. Additional runway and improved access (Airport)
	<b>Swords – Lissenhall</b> – new mixed-use urban district on the northern side of Swords linked to the delivery of Metrolink	Development of high-tech research and development employment within a campus setting at Lissenhall East	<b>Long term</b> Metrolink, roads improvements and expanded internal road networks

Sections of MCC's submission recommending proposed amendment: 3.2.3 Dunboyne and 3.2.5 Maynooth Environs

Table 5.1 Strategic Development Corridors, Capacity Infrastructure and Phasing			
Corridor	Residential	Employment/Mixed Use	Phasing/Enabling infrastructure
<b>North-West corridor</b> (Maynooth/Dunboyne commuter line/DART) <b>Population capacity</b> Short 24,000 Medium 10,000 Long 3,000 <b>Total 37,000</b>	<b>Dublin 15 lands</b> – continued development of Hansfield SDZ linked to the future development of Barnhill and Kellytown landbanks to the south and east of the SDZ	Further development of large-scale employment in Dublin Enterprise Zone in proximity to Blanchardstown IT	<b>Short term</b> Public transport, Clonsilla station and WW upgrades.
	<b>Leixlip</b> – strategic Greenfield lands near Confehy station with capacity for phased development, poor links to Leixlip and adjoining Dublin/Meath lands	Large scale former Hewlett Packard site and Collinstown site to strengthen employment base for North Kildare.	<b>Short to Medium term</b> LUAS extension to Maynooth, roads upgrades, link to WWT and community and social infrastructure.
	<b>Maynooth</b> – Significant strategic residential capacity at Railpark lands and to the north and west of the town neat Maynooth University.  <a href="#">Development of the Moygaddy lands in the Maynooth Environs.</a>	New Research & technology Park adjoining Maynooth University  <a href="#">Employment campus/mixed use</a>	<b>Short to Medium term</b> LIHAF relief road and bridge, road upgrades, sewer connection, LUAS extension to Maynooth. <a href="#">Continuation of the Maynooth Outer Relief Road.</a>
	<b>Dunboyne</b> – <del>Sequential</del> Development prioritising zoned and serviced lands near the railway station, <del>the and</del> town centre, <del>followed by development and</del> at Dunboyne North at M3 parkway station	Space intensive 'big box' employment at Portan, Mixed use 'live-work' development at Dunboyne North	<b>Medium to Long term</b> Outer Orbital road, Distributor Road and additional watermain.
<b>South Western corridor</b> (Kildare line/DART and LUAS redline) <b>Population capacity</b> Short 45,000 Medium 21,000 <b>Total 66,000</b>	<b>Western suburbs</b> – Continued development of Adamstown SDZ and the phased development of Clonburris located strategically between the west Dublin suburbs of Lucan and Clondalkin. New residential community at Kilcarbery near Clondalkin	Promotion of high tech, manufacturing and research and development in Grangecastle Business Park	<b>Short to medium term</b> LIHAF roads and railway bridge, new rail station, DART expansion to Cellbridge-Hazelhatch (Adamstown, Clonburris), LIHAF access road and WW upgrades (Kilcarbery). Public transport and access to station (Grangecastle)
	<b>LUAS red line</b> – Regeneration of brownfield lands in Tallaght. New district at Fortunestown near emerging town of Saggart/Citywest	Re-intensification of older industrial estates near Naas Road/Ballymount	<b>Short to Medium term</b> Brownfield conditions and site assembly. WWT upgrades and Citywest junction link at Tallaght/Fortunestown
<b>Metrolink Corridor</b> (Metrolink/LUAS greenline) <b>Population capacity</b> Short 28,000 Medium 25,000 Long 18,000 <b>Total 71,000</b>	<b>Dun Laoghaire – Rathdown</b> – New and emerging mixed-use districts of Cherrywood and Sandyford. New residential communities in Ballyogan and environs and Kiltiernan-Glenamuck	Continued development of high-density business districts at Cherrywood and Sandyford. New mixed use centres in Ballyogan nad Kiltiernan	<b>Short to Medium term</b> Metrolink, LUAS green line upgrades. Public transport and roads upgrades. LIHAF road and bridge and N11 junction (Cherrywood)
	<b>Swords</b> – sequential development of strategic residential sites within Swords and development of Oldtown-Mooretown lands	Airport related, commercial facilities and employment linked to development at Metrolink.	<b>Short-Medium term</b> Public realm, pedestrian and cyclist provision. LIHAF road improvements, Bus Connects. Additional runway and improved access (Airport)
	<b>Swords – Lissenhall</b> – new mixed-use urban district on the northern side of Swords linked to the delivery of Metrolink	Development of high-tech research and development employment within a campus setting at Lissenhall East	<b>Long term</b> Metrolink, roads improvements and expanded internal road networks

Existing Table 7.1 EMRA Strategic Green Infrastructure and Cultural Heritage, Draft RSES, Page 124

Section of MCC's submission recommending proposed amendment: 3.8 Green Infrastructure

EMRA Strategic Green Infrastructure and Cultural Heritage	
Greenways, blueways and peatways	Dublin to Galway Eurovelo Route, Shannon Wilderness Corridor, East Coast Trail, Newry to Carlingford, Royal and Grand Canal Ways, Wicklow Way, Peatways (Corolea, Boora), Barrow and Boyne Blueways

Proposed Table 7.1 EMRA Strategic Green Infrastructure and Cultural Heritage, Draft RSES, Page 124

Section of MCC's submission recommending proposed amendment: 3.8 Green Infrastructure

EMRA Strategic Green Infrastructure and Cultural Heritage	
Greenways, blueways and peatways	Dublin to Galway Eurovelo Route, Shannon Wilderness Corridor, East Coast Trail, Newry to Carlingford, Royal and Grand Canal Ways, Wicklow Way, Peatways (Corolea, Boora), Barrow and Boyne Blueways, <a href="#">Boyne Greenway</a> , <a href="#">Lakelands Greenway</a> , <a href="#">Newgrange to Newbridge Greenway</a>

Park and Ride, Draft RSES, Page 152

Section of MCC's submission recommending proposed amendment: 3.5.4 Park and Ride Dunboyne

Existing Table:		Proposed Table:	
Table 8.5: Strategic Park and Ride Projects for the Region		Table 8.5: Strategic Park and Ride Projects for the Region	
.....		.....	
• Swords	• Naas Road	• Swords	• Naas Road
• Finglas	• Carrickmines	• Finglas	• Carrickmines
• Dunboyne	• Woodbrook	• <del>Dunboyne</del>	• Woodbrook
• Liffey Valley	• Greystones	• Liffey Valley	• Greystones

8.4 Transport Investment Priorities, Draft RSES, Page 148

Section of MCC's submission recommending proposed amendment: 3.5.1 Rail projects

Existing Table:	Proposed Table:
<p><b>Table 8.2: Rail Projects for the Region</b></p> <p>.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of DART Expansion Programme – delivery of priority elements including investment in new train fleet, new infrastructure and electrification of existing lines. Provide fast, high-frequency electrified services to Drogheda on the Northern Line, Celbridge-Hazelhatch on the Kildare Line, Maynooth and M3 Parkway on the Maynooth/Sligo Line, while continuing to improve DART services on the South-Eastern Line as far south as Greystones</li> <li>• Provide for an appropriate level of commuter rail service in the Midlands and South-East</li> <li>• Complete the construction of the National Train Control Centre</li> <li>• New stations to provide interchange with bus, LUAS and Metro network at including Kishoge, Heuston West, Cabra, Glasnevin, Pelletstown and Woodbrook</li> <li>• A feasibility study of high-speed rail between Dublin Belfast, Dublin Limerick Junction/Cork will be carried out</li> <li>• Reappraisal of the extension of the Dunboyne/ M3 Parkway line to Dunshauglin and Navan</li> <li>• Support construction of Metrolink (from Swords to Sandyford)</li> <li>• LUAS Green Line Capacity Enhancement in advance of Metrolink</li> <li>• Undertake appraisal, planning and design of LUAS network expansion to Bray, Finglas, Lucan, Poolbeg</li> </ul>	<p><b>Table 8.2: Rail Projects for the Region</b></p> <p>.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of DART Expansion Programme – delivery of priority elements including investment in new train fleet, new infrastructure and electrification of existing lines. Provide fast, high-frequency electrified services to Drogheda on the Northern Line, Celbridge-Hazelhatch on the Kildare Line, Maynooth and M3 Parkway on the Maynooth/Sligo Line, while continuing to improve DART services on the South-Eastern Line as far south as Greystones</li> <li>• Provide for an appropriate level of commuter rail service in the Midlands and South-East</li> <li>• Complete the construction of the National Train Control Centre</li> <li>• New stations to provide interchange with bus, LUAS and Metro network at including Kishoge, Heuston West, Cabra, Glasnevin, Pelletstown and Woodbrook</li> <li>• A feasibility study of high-speed rail between Dublin Belfast, Dublin Limerick Junction/Cork will be carried out</li> <li>• Reappraisal of the extension of the Dunboyne/ M3 Parkway line to Dunshauglin and Navan <u>prior to the Mid Term Review of the GDA Transport Strategy and prior to the mid-term review of the Regional RSES</u></li> <li>• Support construction of Metrolink (from Swords to Sandyford)</li> <li>• LUAS Green Line Capacity Enhancement in advance of Metrolink</li> <li>• Undertake appraisal, planning and design of LUAS network expansion to Bray, Finglas, Lucan, Poolbeg</li> </ul>

## **Appendix C**

# **Economic Analysis of the Potential Implications for the Economy of County Meath of the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy**

Report prepared by Dr. Pat McCloughan

Managing Director

PMCA Economic Consulting

On behalf of Meath County Council

January 2019

**PMCA ECONOMIC CONSULTING**

## 1. Introduction

This report by PMCA Economic Consulting considers the potential economic implications of the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region Assembly (EMRA) area on the economy of County Meath. The economic performance of Meath is closely related to that of the EMRA area – for example, Dublin and Louth are the largest work destinations for people living in Meath. Almost 28,000 persons residing in the County and at work in 2016 did so in the Dublin Region and around 3,600 persons were working in Louth in that year. The economic links between Meath and the wider functional region mean that there are aligned incentives between the County and the EMRA area. Meath County Council and other stakeholders are today embarked upon, and committed to, a more proactive approach to economic development in the County, where the overriding objective is to facilitate more jobs within the County. **Accordingly, it is critically important that the RSES supports the much-needed ambitious approach to economic development in the County, including in Meath’s key settlements, which will be the drivers of the employment growth.**

PMCA has been assisting the economic development work of Meath County Council since 2014, when the Council commissioned independent consultants to complete an Economic Strategy for the County Meath, running to 2022, in line with the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (2010-2022). Ahead of the Economic Strategy, the Council retained Maynooth University to undertake a baseline socio-economic profile of the County. The Economic Strategy was put together by PMCA Economic Consulting and JSA Planning Consultants, and incorporates economic analysis and spatial planning in an integrated manner. It was launched in 2015 and contains a series of actions aimed at significantly enhancing the number of persons at work within the County. As well as catering for engagement with *external* bodies to promote more investment in Meath, the Economic Strategy also provides for *internal* engagement, in which the officials and Elected Members of the Council have bought into the plan, which now is part of the ‘DNA’ of the organisation. There is a dedicated Economic Development Team within the Council, which works closely with Meath LEO (Local Enterprise Office) and external stakeholders in implementing the Economic Strategy. Variation No. 3 of the Meath County Development Plan incorporates key tenets of the Economic Strategy as they relate to land use planning, and the County Meath Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021 aligns with the Economic Strategy. **It is vital that the positive momentum underway is reflected and supported in the RSES to support the goal of sustainable communities as well as sustained economic development in County Meath.**

The key findings of this report are summarised as follows:

- **There is an urgent need to extend the Metropolitan Area of Meath to include the settlements of Ashbourne and Ratoath, which have substantial economic development potential, like Dunboyne, which is already part of the Metropolitan Area and benefitting from the rollout of the Economic Strategy through significant new foreign direct investment (FDI).**
- **The composition of employment in Meath by sector, where private sector jobs are relatively more reliant on traditional activities, like meat processing, engineering and other manufacturing, means that the County is more exposed to Brexit. The critical need for the RSES to support the Economic Strategy means, in practical terms, maximising the potential of the County’s economic assets, including the IDA Business & Technology Parks in Navan and Drogheda, to diversify the economic base of Meath, in line with the skills of its residents, and this requirement needs to be reflected in the RSES.**

## 2. Chapter 5 of the Draft RSES: Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan

Meath's connectivity with Dublin has been instrumental in the successful implementation of the Economic Development Strategy to date. The FDI wins by Facebook, Shire and Aramark (Avoca) in the Dunboyne area, within the Metropolitan Area of Meath, illustrate the economic advantages of that connectivity and more particularly the benefits of the Metropolitan Area. Extending the Metropolitan Area will increase the likelihood of further jobs in key Meath settlements close to the capital, namely Ashbourne and Ratoath.

During the preparation of the RSES, Meath County Council has consistently sought an extension of the Metropolitan Area to include Ashbourne and Ratoath. While there is an element of judgement in delineating a metropolitan area, generally speaking, such subjectivity should be minimised and focused instead on objective criteria that can be informed by relevant empirical evidence. The accepted criteria are employment connectivity – how much of the resident population is working in the core city area, in this case, Dublin City – and population density or urban character, as set out in the Draft MASP (May 2018) and as implied in the National Planning Framework, which quotes the *“standardised EU/OECD definition of a city region is the commuter catchment from which at least 15% of the relevant city area workforce is drawn”*.

In view of these considerations, it is relevant to compare the settlements of Ashbourne and Ratoath with the existing Metropolitan Area of Meath (i.e. the Electoral Divisions or EDs of Dunboyne and Rodanstown) and then to move to a town/settlement-based analysis by comparing the settlements of Ashbourne and Ratoath with that of Dunboyne (Rodanstown is largely rural in character) and the settlements in Kildare and Wicklow currently in the Metropolitan Area. **When the commuter flows and urban character of the Meath settlements (Ashbourne and Ratoath) are considered in relative form, the case for their inclusion in the Metropolitan Area is strongly supported.**

Consider firstly the analysis at ED level. Beginning with the two Meath EDs currently included in the Metropolitan Area, analysis of POWSCAR 2016 reveals the following facts (corresponding POWSCAR 2011 figures in parentheses):<sup>1</sup>

- Dunboyne ED
  - Residents at work 3,823 (3,547)
    - Percentage working in the Dublin Region 69.3% (66.5%)
    - Percentage working in Dublin City 32.9% (32.7%)
- Rodanstown ED
  - Residents at work 361 (363)
    - Percentage working in the Dublin Region 45.4% (39.1%)
    - Percentage working in Dublin City 23.8% (19.8%).

Clearly, Rodanstown ED is rural in character (very low number of residents at work) and its employment connectivity with the capital is much lower compared with Dunboyne ED.

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<sup>1</sup> POWSCAR is short for Place of Work, School or College Census of Anonymised Records and is particularly useful for establishing the number of persons at work at local authority or lower levels of geographical disaggregation. The Dublin Region comprises the four local authority areas of Dublin City, Fingal, South Dublin and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. In the following analysis, the number of persons at work are based on known work locations and Census returns that were blank or for which no known employment address was given are excluded.

Now consider the EDs in which Ashbourne and Ratoath occur:<sup>2</sup>

- Donaghmore ED
  - Residents at work 4,493 (4,297)
    - Percentage working in the Dublin Region 64.3% (64.2%)
    - Percentage working in Dublin City 34.3% (35.4%)
- Kilbrew ED
  - Residents at work 1,388 (1,159)
    - Percentage working in the Dublin Region 60.7% (61.9%)
    - Percentage working in Dublin City 31.3% (33.5%)
- Ratoath ED
  - Residents at work 4,086 (3,882)
    - Percentage working in the Dublin Region 68.4% (69.9%)
    - Percentage working in Dublin City 34.8% (36.3%).

It is clear from these facts that the EDs of Donaghmore, Kilbrew and Ratoath have commuting rates to the Dublin Region and Dublin City comparable with Dunboyne ED, and which are much higher than the corresponding rates for Rodanstown ED which is already part of the Metropolitan Area. Furthermore, the EDs of Donaghmore, Kilbrew and Ratoath are more urban in character than Rodanstown ED due to their inclusion of the settlements of Ashbourne and Ratoath, the second and fourth largest settlements in County Meath, with respective populations in Census 2016 of 12,679 and 9,633. The population of Dunboyne settlement was lower at 7,272 in 2016.

On a like-for-like, consistent approach, the facts indicate that the three EDs of Donaghmore, Kilbrew and Ratoath should be included in the Metropolitan Area, along with the existing EDs of Dunboyne and Rodanstown.

However, by the same principles and facts, there would be other EDs in Meath that should also be part of the Metropolitan Area by virtue of their employment connectivity with the Dublin Region and Dublin City, and given their urban character. The evidence-based plan-led approach which is being consistently advocated by the Council does not support the inclusion of the three EDs of Donaghmore, Kilbrew and Ratoath in the Metropolitan Area **but rather the *settlements of Ashbourne and Ratoath, on the basis of the evidence showing that they have: (1) transitioned rapidly to Metropolitan status since the RPGs for the GDA in 2010; (2) sufficient urban character; and (3) unique or important economic assets, that have assumed greater economic significance since 2010. In particular, Ashbourne has developed strongly as a major transport and logistics hub close to Dublin Airport with access to the rest of the country; and Ratoath is now an important centre on the basis of the skills of its residents and its unique assets relating to the equine industry (Fairyhouse and Tattersalls) – race meetings, eventing etc. tourism and leisure, and advanced veterinary services in respect of these assets etc.***

**The inclusion of Ashbourne and Ratoath in the Metropolitan Area will facilitate residential and transport/infrastructure growth enabling these now important settlements to realise their economic and employment potential during the lifetime of the RSES, in line with the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath.**

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<sup>2</sup> The settlement of Ashbourne occurs in the EDs of Donaghmore and Kilbrew.

Consider the following facts on Ashbourne and Ratoath settlements 2016 (2011 figures) (employment figures exclude blank or mobile workers as previously).

- Ashbourne settlement
  - Residents at work 4,962 (4,586)
    - Percentage working in the Dublin Region 65.4% (65.7%)
    - Percentage working in Dublin City 34.6% (36.7%)
- Ratoath settlement
  - Residents at work 3,585 (3,365)
    - Percentage working in the Dublin Region 70.0% (71.6%)
    - Percentage working in Dublin City 35.5% (36.9%).

Now let us compare these figures with the settlements in Kildare and Wicklow currently in the Metropolitan Area, beginning with those in Kildare 2016 (2011 figures):

- Kilcock settlement
  - Residents at work 2,425 (2,186)
    - Percentage working in the Dublin Region 49.7% (51.7%)
    - Percentage working in Dublin City 24.4% (26.4%)
- Maynooth settlement
  - Residents at work 5,432 (4,514)
    - Percentage working in the Dublin Region 54.7% (52.7%)
    - Percentage working in Dublin City 31.8% (30.3%)
- Leixlip settlement
  - Residents at work 6,048 (5,872)
    - Percentage working in the Dublin Region 66.5% (65.7%)
    - Percentage working in Dublin City 35.6% (35.7%)
- Celbridge settlement
  - Residents at work 7,937 (7,309)
    - Percentage working in the Dublin Region 65.0% (66.1%)
    - Percentage working in Dublin City 32.1% (32.1%).

And to the settlements in Wicklow currently in the Metropolitan Area 2016 (2011 figures):

- Bray settlement
  - Residents at work 11,419 (10,959)
    - Percentage working in the Dublin Region 59.1% (58.8%)
    - Percentage working in Dublin City 23.4% (23.5%)
- Greystones/Delgany settlement
  - Residents at work 6,664 (6,476)
    - Percentage working in the Dublin Region 59.1% (59.3%)
    - Percentage working in Dublin City 28.2% (27.9%).

Examination of the facts indicates that the commuting rates to the Dublin Region and Dublin City from Ashbourne and Ratoath settlements are comparable with those in Kildare and Wicklow, with the exception of Kilcock, which is the odd one out of all the settlements, having the smallest number of residents at work and lowest commuting rates. FIGURE A1-FIGURE A4 in the Annex to this paper show that employment connectivity in the three Meath towns to the capital (whether the Dublin Region or Dublin City) is relatively high among all the settlements (the Meath settlements are shown in green).

In view of the commuting evidence, together with the rapid population growth of Ashbourne and Ratoath, and their strong economic prospects, PMCA has advised the Council that the case for inclusion of the two Meath settlements (namely Ashbourne and Ratoath) in the Metropolitan Area is without doubt and compelling. Through their inclusion in the Metropolitan Area, their employment development will be facilitated in the coming years, in line with the Economic Development Strategy. It will be a win-win situation for the region.

Furthermore, all Meath settlements in the Metropolitan Area – Dunboyne and the proposed Ashbourne and Ratoath – should be treated in the same manner in respect of their housing allocations, namely from the Metropolitan Area and not from County allocations, which otherwise will restrict the numbers of units needed to facilitate the economic and employment growth urgently required (which is clearly evident from PMCA's consideration of Economy and Employment, to which we next turn).

### **3. Chapter 6 of the Draft RSES: Economy and Employment**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

It is important that the Economy and Employment Chapter of the EMRA RSES is consistent with, and supports, the economic ambition and goals that Meath County Council has appropriately set for Meath over the coming years. The Meath Economic Development Strategy 2014-2022 has the overarching goal of facilitating more employment within the County, accepting the reality that Dublin is the State's principal employment centre and the inevitable fact that the capital will continue to be an important work destination for people residing in Meath. Accordingly, the vision for Economy and Employment in Meath is to complement, rather than compete with, the inexorable development of jobs and economic growth in Dublin, which is based on the evidence and appropriate interpretation of the key facts, as outlined presently.

#### **3.2 The Economic Development Strategy for County Meath**

The principal target in the Economic Development Strategy is to increase the number of persons at work within County Meath by 7,500 on the level observed in 2011 by 2022. The year 2011 was chosen as the baseline year of the Economic Strategy because it was the latest year for which official Census data were available from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) at the time the Economic Strategy was put together during 2014-2015 (the Economic Strategy has particular regard to the results of the POWSCAR conducted as part of Census 2011). There were 38,822 persons at work in County Meath in 2011 and the headline target of the Economic Strategy is to facilitate (at least) 46,322 persons at work in 2022. Progress has been made with the implementation of the Economic Strategy and PMCA considers that the County is on track to achieve or surpass the targeted 46,322 by 2022.

Analysis of the latest POWSCAR reveals that there were 41,757 persons at work in Meath in 2016. However, this figure does not include the new FDI projects since the launch of the Economic Strategy in 2015. When the new jobs due to the investments by Facebook, Shire and Avoca are delivered, we expect that the target of 46,322 jobs will be met or exceeded by 2022, though nothing is being taken for granted, particularly in the present environment.

Despite the progress being made on the Economic Strategy, including the aforementioned FDI projects, there remain a number of concerns with economic and employment performance in Meath.

The first concern is that Meath remains the local authority area with the highest rate of outbound commuting in the State, outside of the Dublin Region (within which one would expect the rates of commuting among the four parts of the capital region to be high in any event). In 2011, there were almost 33,000 people living in the County but working outside of Meath, implying an outbound commuter rate of 54% in that year. In 2016, the outbound commuter rate from the County was 55%. Most (76%) of the outbound commuters worked in the Dublin Region, with 37% of the outbound commuters working in Dublin City and 28% in Fingal, which are the two biggest employment destinations for the outbound commuters (South Dublin and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown accounted for 8% and 4% of the outbound commuters from Meath in 2016 respectively). County Louth is also an important employment destination for people residing in Meath. In 2016, that local authority area accounted for 10% of all outbound commuters from Meath, which makes it the third largest employment destination for Meath-based workers (after Dublin City and Fingal). The importance of Louth reflects the roles of Drogheda (Louth part) and Dundalk as employment centres for residents of Meath.

Analysis of outbound commuting, inbound commuting and people both living and working in County Meath is presented in TABLE 1 below. Such high and growing levels of outbound commuting are problematic because they (1) entail typically 3-4 hours commuting time per day, (2) detract from economic impact in the County (ideally we would like to maximise the number of people both living and working in Meath, whilst accepting that there will be outward commuting), (3) reduce community engagement and social capital due to time spent travelling and (4) adversely affect the environment because the predominant mode of transport to work is by car. **PMCA considers that the high levels of outbound commuting are unsustainable due to the negative economic externalities involved ((1)-(4)). The goal of the Economic Strategy is to facilitate more employment opportunities within the County.**

**PMCA recommends that this economic reality needs to be prominently reflected in the RSES and in particular the goal of facilitating more jobs in the non-Dublin parts of the EMRA area, including importantly high quality knowledge-oriented employment (it is a well-established fact that the outbound commuters from Meath have strong educational attainment, are well-skilled and work in senior positions).<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, this goal needs to be firmly embraced by the State Agencies. While progress is being made, there remains a lot more to do, not least given the very big risks facing the country in the form of Brexit and the likelihood of international protectionism (trade and investment). As outlined below, the risks from Brexit are especially large for Meath, given its existing employment composition by sector.**

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<sup>3</sup> For instance, as established in the Economic Development Strategy, the number of business owners and managers among the outbound commuters in Meath exceeds the number of such workers within the County and the same is also true of higher professionals. As a result, the economic impact of the skills base within the County is sub-optimal and the Economic Strategy aims to ensure that more economic impact is facilitated within Meath by providing more high quality work opportunities therein.

**TABLE 1: ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYMENT IN AND FROM COUNTY MEATH IN 2011 AND 2016 BY WORKER TYPE**

Worker Type	2011	2016	% Change 2011-2016
Living and Working in Meath	28,449	29,909	5.1%
Living Elsewhere and Working in Meath (Inbound Commuters)	10,373	11,848	14.2%
Dublin Region	3,617	3,951	9.2%
Dublin City	1,060	1,100	3.8%
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	178	228	28.1%
Fingal	1,920	2,073	8.0%
South Dublin	459	550	19.8%
Louth	2,419	2,716	12.3%
Rest of State	4,337	5,181	19.5%
Living in Meath and Working Elsewhere (Outbound Commuters)	32,942	36,584	11.1%
Dublin Region	25,008	27,795	11.1%
Dublin City	12,642	13,362	5.7%
Fingal	8,648	10,133	17.2%
South Dublin	2,692	2,947	9.5%
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	1,026	1,353	31.9%
Louth	3,270	3,627	10.9%
Rest of State	4,597	4,932	7.3%
NI	67	103	53.7%
Abroad	N/a	127	
Total Employment in Meath	38,822	41,757	7.6%
Meath Residents at Work in Any Location	61,391	66,493	8.3%
Outbound Commuter Rate (%) - All Locations Outside of Meath	53.7%	55.0%	2.5%

*Source: POWSCAR 2011 and 2016, Meath County Council analysis.*

The second main economic concern relates to the composition of employment by sector in Meath. Figure 6.2 on page 87 of the Draft RSES includes analysis of the percentage of employment by sector in the local authority areas making up the EMRA area. This relevant and important piece of analysis is reproduced in TABLE 2 below. A stark comparison can be drawn between Dublin City, on the one hand, and the non-Dublin Region counties in the EMRA area, on the other hand, including Meath. In 2016, a very high proportion of all employment in Dublin City (319,092, by-far the highest number of jobs of any local authority in the State) was due to ICT, finance and professional services (almost 40%) whereas much smaller proportions were in manufacturing (4.7%) and wholesale, retail, transport and logistics (19%). The latter two sectors are more exposed to the risks from Brexit than professional services, which tend to be less reliant on the UK market. In addition, many of the jobs in professional services in Dublin City are in FDI firms. In contrast, in County Meath, only 12% of all jobs within the County are in professional services, while 15% are in manufacturing (in traditional sectors like meat processing and engineering, which are reliant on the UK market) and 27% are in wholesale, retail, transport and logistics, which is a sector closely connected to the UK, either as a market in its own right or as a land-bridge between Ireland and continental Europe.

**What the employment patterns by sector imply is that the non-Dublin part of the EMRA area, including Meath, is heavily Brexit-exposed, whereas the Dublin part, in particular Dublin City, is less Brexit-exposed, owing to the comparably high share of all employment due to professional services, which in the capital are driven to a large extent by FDI firms.**

PMCA considers that the high Brexit exposure of the EMRA area (outside of Dublin City and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown) needs to be highlighted in the RSES, given the fact that the other parts of the Region (including Fingal and South Dublin) are more reliant on employment in agri-food, manufacturing and/or wholesaling/retailing/transport/logistics and have lower shares of market-based IT, finance and other professional services (including FDI employment). This is not to say that Dublin City and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown are not without exposure to Brexit; but it is a matter of *relative* exposure to an issue that will probably be the greatest economic challenge to the State in living memory. These parts of the capital (especially Dublin City) have become very successful at attracting FDI in finance and IT, but Dublin is becoming increasingly costly to live and PMCA has advised Meath County Council that the Government needs to think more carefully and creatively about planning for a wider Dublin City Region to help ensure the capital's competitiveness in the years ahead. This vision includes thinking imaginatively about the Metropolitan Area, and the location of new employment opportunities and services as well as affordable housing for workers. It is the opinion of PMCA that while the principle of Compact Growth may have merit in respect of spatial planning, it is problematic economically because of the risk it presents to inflation and erosion of competitiveness.

**TABLE 2: ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYMENT IN COUNTY MEATH AND OTHER LOCATIONS IN THE STATE 2016 BY SECTOR**

Local Authority	2016							
	Sector							
	Agri, Forestry & Fishing	Manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale, Retail etc.	ICT, Finance etc.	Public Admin	Education, Health etc.	Other Services
Dublin City	0.1%	4.7%	1.5%	18.9%	38.7%	9.1%	22.0%	4.2%
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	0.2%	7.7%	2.2%	19.7%	35.5%	2.8%	24.4%	6.4%
Fingal	1.1%	10.1%	3.1%	39.1%	21.1%	4.1%	16.7%	3.8%
South Dublin	0.2%	14.5%	5.2%	32.4%	18.2%	4.2%	20.6%	3.7%
Kildare	4.6%	18.8%	3.6%	27.7%	12.3%	5.4%	22.1%	4.3%
Louth	2.6%	12.9%	2.3%	28.6%	14.3%	5.3%	27.0%	5.7%
Meath	7.1%	14.9%	5.2%	27.2%	12.2%	5.1%	21.8%	5.1%
Wicklow	5.4%	13.0%	3.3%	29.5%	14.1%	4.0%	23.0%	6.0%
Laois	9.4%	8.8%	3.0%	30.3%	8.5%	10.2%	24.4%	4.0%
Longford	7.1%	21.5%	2.4%	25.5%	8.3%	9.3%	20.7%	3.9%
Offaly	8.1%	20.1%	3.1%	23.5%	7.6%	6.5%	25.5%	3.9%
Westmeath	5.3%	13.8%	2.6%	27.4%	12.5%	8.4%	25.1%	3.7%
EMRA	1.9%	9.9%	2.7%	25.3%	26.2%	6.5%	21.9%	4.5%
NWRA	6.9%	16.0%	2.8%	26.3%	11.7%	5.7%	25.3%	4.2%
SRA	6.7%	16.6%	2.8%	26.0%	14.7%	5.2%	23.0%	4.0%
State	4.2%	13.0%	2.8%	25.7%	20.3%	6.0%	22.8%	4.3%

Source: EMRA Draft RSES (based on POWSCAR 2016).

Note: Percentages for each geographical area may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Box 1 overleaf outlines the significance of Dublin today as a major European (and international) hub for IT/technology, which includes growing activities like Fintech and e-payments, where IT is interfacing with banking and payments. Most of these activities are concentrated in Dublin City (the IFSC and Dublin Docklands) and in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. But there are other opportunities to grow and develop Fintech outside of the capital, including the M1 Corridor, where the M1 Payments Corridor (M1PC) initiative is promoting Louth and Meath as a Fintech hub for both FDI and Irish-owned enterprises. This initiative represents an example of how the non-Dublin and Dublin parts of the Corridor can complement each other to the mutual benefit of the whole EMRA area.

### **BOX 1: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DUBLIN AS A MAJOR TECHNOLOGY HUB IN EUROPE AND INTERNATIONALLY**

The tech sector is unique among most if not all economic sectors: innovation occurs rapidly, often in the matter of weeks or months, compared with years in the case of other innovation-intensive sectors; innovation also tends to occur through community-based initiatives, including between competitors, reflecting the importance of collaboration (open source etc.) ('meet-ups'); and IT/technology transcends other sectors, including agri-food, manufacturing, health and professional services, all of which are now adopting new IT technologies. Ireland is at forefront of the tech industry in Europe, performing to an extent way out of proportion to its population or national income. This is due in large part to FDI by tech companies and inflows of tech talent from other European countries and the US to work in these firms, in which Dublin is the predominant tech hub in the State (within which Dublin City).

According to The State of European Tech (2018), Ireland saw \$454m capital invested in tech companies in 2018, the 9<sup>th</sup> largest country in this regard in that year. There were 67,100 professional developers in the country in 2018, putting Ireland in 22<sup>nd</sup> place in this respect, which means that capital invested per developer is among the highest in Ireland in a European context. For example, capital invested per professional developer in Dublin was \$45,000 in 2018, which put the Irish capital in fourth place (behind Berlin \$97,404, London \$66,373 and Stockholm \$63,018) and in comparison with the European average of \$13,906.

The UK is the number one destination for all international movers into the European tech ecosystem, with a 21% share, but is closely followed by Germany (15%) and France (11%). Ireland's share is 4%, coming sixth in the European league table after the UK, Germany, France, Netherlands (8%) and Spain (7%). Ireland is the second country of choice for US software engineers searching for potential job postings in the European tech ecosystem, with a share of 3% in 2018 (up from 2% in 2017) after the UK (14% 2018, 11% 2017).

Meet-up activity in the tech sector relative to population is highest in Ireland among European countries.

The predominance of Dublin as Ireland's major tech hub can be seen by looking at the trend in capital invested in Dublin. In 2018, capital invested in the capital was \$420m or 93% of all capital invested in tech in Ireland in that year. The level of capital invested in tech in Dublin was \$98m in 2013 and Dublin ranked 8<sup>th</sup> among European hubs on this metric in 2018 (with London occupying top position).

*Source: The State of European Tech 2018 (atomico in partnership with Slush and Orrick).*

*Note: The findings of the report are based on data collection from a variety of sources and a survey of 5,000 members of the tech eco-system. The findings are generally highly regarded but nevertheless should be treated with an element of caution.*

**The extent to which Meath is exposed to Brexit and the growing rate of outbound commuting, which is unsustainable, imply that a more ambitious approach to economic development in County Meath is necessitated in the RSES.**

**This will necessitate a more ambitious approach to Navan and Drogheda as drivers of employment growth in Meath and the EMRA area, and also to key settlements in the County, namely Ashbourne, Ratoath, Dunboyne, Stamullen and Enfield. The greater ambition warranted in the RSES should also include far-sighted economic development of the M1 Corridor around Drogheda (as implied by the National Planning Framework). This is in addition to the Joint Urban Area Plan (JUAP) for the whole of Drogheda provided for in the Draft RSES, which PMCA welcomes as a unique and important opportunity for the town, both Louth and Meath and for the EMRA area. The IDA Business & Technology Parks in Navan and Drogheda are important economic assets; however, they are currently underutilised and there is scope for them to be more proactively promoted to potential investors by IDA Ireland. The ambitious approach to economic and employment development now necessitated must also include facilitating relevant investor-driven development proposals capable of being delivered. Unique opportunities must be considered and supported where they arise.**

TABLE 3 below provides an analysis of agency-assisted employment (in Irish-owned and foreign-owned firms) in the local authority areas of the EMRA area in 2016, and it also shows the corresponding levels of employment in the NWRA (Northern and Western Region Assembly) area and the SRA (Southern Region Assembly) area, and for the State as a whole. For each area shown, the analysis gives employment in Irish-owned and foreign-owned client companies on the basis of permanent full-time (PFT) persons and both PFTs and others (which comprise temporary part-time workers). PFTs is the key employment indicator. The vast majority of the Irish-owned employment is due to clients of Enterprise Ireland (EI), while IDA Ireland caters for foreign-owned agency-assisted firms (with the exception of foreign-owned firms in the agri-food sector, which are clients of EI). The analysis contained in the table highlights two key aspects of employment performance in Meath, namely:

- The proportion of all employment due to agency-assisted Irish-owned firms is comparably high in Meath (15% in 2016 based on PFTs and 16.5% based on both PFTs and other workers compared with 8.5% and 9.9% for the State). This is a positive outcome for Meath, and the Economic Development Strategy has the aim of maintaining or widening the gap in favour of Meath in this regard. The Economic Strategy is on target in this regard.
- The percentage of all employment due to agency-assisted foreign-owned firms is relatively low in Meath (3.6% in 2016 based on PFTs and 4.4% based on both PFTs and other workers compared with 9.7% and 10.8% for the State). This is a negative outcome for Meath and at variance with the goal of the Economic Development Strategy to boost FDI in the County. However, the data are for the year 2016 and the new jobs due to Facebook, Shire and Aramark have yet to be registered in the data, and the same applies to other FDI projects in the pipeline or that may come on board in the coming years.

**TABLE 3: STATE AGENCY-ASSISTED EMPLOYMENT IN THE EASTERN AND MIDLAND REGION (2016)**

Local Authority	2016										
	Levels						Densities				
	Population	Total Jobs	Jobs in Irish-Owned State Agency Client		Jobs in Foreign-Owned State Agency Client		Jobs in Irish-Owned State Agency Client	Jobs in Irish-Owned State Agency Client	Jobs in Foreign-Owned State Agency Client	Jobs in Foreign-Owned State Agency Client	
			Firms (PFTs)	Other	Firms (PFTs)	Other	Firms (PFTs) / Total Jobs (%)	Firms (PFTs) & Other / Total Jobs (%)	Firms (PFTs) / Total Jobs (%)	Firms (PFTs) & Other / Total Jobs (%)	
Dublin Region	1,347,359	577,928	53,436	65,367	79,102	85,975	9.2%	11.3%	13.7%	14.9%	
Kildare	222,504	62,985	7,412	8,064	10,483	10,878	11.8%	12.8%	16.6%	17.3%	
Louth	128,884	35,451	5,105	5,621	3,228	3,783	14.4%	15.9%	9.1%	10.7%	
Meath	195,044	41,757	6,273	6,891	1,500	1,845	15.0%	16.5%	3.6%	4.4%	
Wicklow	142,425	32,551	3,284	3,957	2,117	2,267	10.1%	12.2%	6.5%	7.0%	
Laois	84,697	18,505	2,493	2,769	392	439	13.5%	15.0%	2.1%	2.4%	
Longford	40,873	11,410	2,138	2,505	861	991	18.7%	22.0%	7.5%	8.7%	
Offaly	77,961	19,782	3,344	3,690	1,214	1,302	16.9%	18.7%	6.1%	6.6%	
Westmeath	88,770	29,151	2,741	3,131	2,778	2,934	9.4%	10.7%	9.5%	10.1%	
EMRA	2,328,517	829,520	86,226	101,995	101,675	110,414	10.4%	12.3%	12.3%	13.3%	
NWRA	847,442	245,916	29,155	33,390	27,522	31,310	11.9%	13.6%	11.2%	12.7%	
SRA	1,585,906	504,401	53,096	59,541	62,768	70,217	10.5%	11.8%	12.4%	13.9%	
State	4,761,865	1,970,738	168,477	194,926	191,964	211,940	8.5%	9.9%	9.7%	10.8%	
Meath - State							6.5%	6.6%	-6.1%	-6.3%	

Source: CSO Census of Population, DBEI.

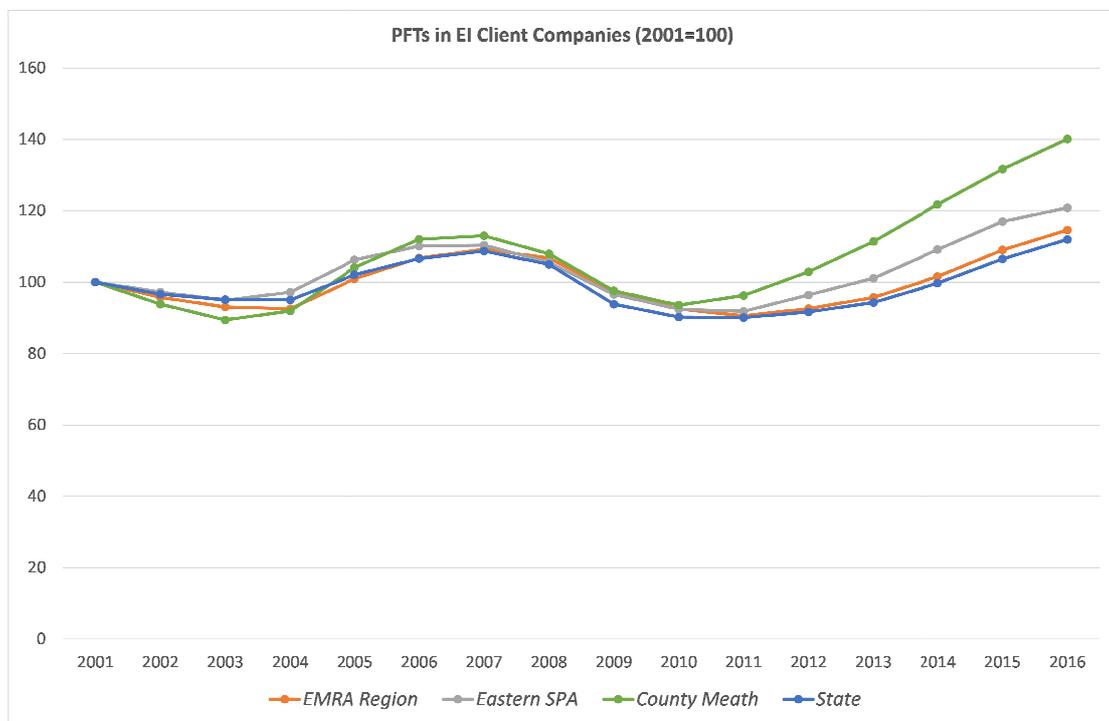
Note: In the DBEI data showing employment in Irish-owned and foreign-owned agency-assisted enterprises, Laois is grouped with Kilkenny, and it is assumed here that Laois has 50% of employment in each case. This does not affect the other local authority areas. Green indicates Meath advantage relative to the State; red a disadvantage.

The analysis contained in TABLE 3 above shows the importance of employment in larger Irish-owned firms to County Meath (clients of EI) and it is also known that employment in these firms has grown relatively strongly in recent years, as illustrated in FIGURE 1 below. In that chart, the trends are expressed relative to the year 2001 (fixed at 100), where it is seen that the number of PFTs in EI client companies have grown strongly in Meath since 2010 or by 40% compared with the base year of 2010 (the highest of the locations shown in the chart).

However, these same companies, which have been doing well in recent years, tend to be more exposed to the risks from Brexit – the companies concerned include agri-food processing firms, engineering and construction-related firms vulnerable to a downturn in the UK economy, not to mention the possibility of a no-deal Brexit that would see reversion to WTO (World Trade Organisation) rules and the prospect of tariffs on imported goods from the current situation (pre-Brexit) in which the firms enjoy access to the UK as a member of the Single Market. In the worst case scenario of a no deal Brexit, where there would be a ‘cliff-edge’ tumbling to WTO rules in respect of EU trade with the UK, job losses in certain sectors could amount to tens of thousands within a few years, including in industries like beef processing and engineering currently important to the Meath economy.

**The prospect of this grim Brexit outcome reinforces the need to take a much more ambitious approach than hitherto to economic planning in Meath, in order to broaden the mix of private sector activities in the overall composition of employment, and this needs to be reflected in the RSES.**

**FIGURE 1: STATE AGENCY-ASSISTED EMPLOYMENT IN COUNTY MEATH, THE EASTERN AND MIDLAND REGION AND THE STATE (2001-2016) – PERMANENT FULL-TIME PERSONS AT WORK**



Source: DBEI.

Note: The Eastern SPA (Strategic Planning Area) within the EMR (Eastern and Midland Region) comprises Counties Louth, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow).

Turning to the FDI deficit in Meath, while the new jobs due to Facebook, Shire and Aramark in the south of the County are very welcome, it remains the case that the IDA Business & Technology Parks in Navan and Drogheda are under-utilised and have significant spare capacity, especially the latter. It is sometimes said that the location of the site in the Meath part of Drogheda is the reason for its high level of spare capacity; whereas if it was located in the Louth side it would be more attractive due to the possibility of EU regional aid for FDI. This may have been the case in the past or further away from Dublin but is less important today, where FDI firms are more concerned about connectivity and the availability of talent. The IDA Park in Drogheda meets these key requirements of modern FDI – it is favourably located to the capital and to Dublin Airport, has excellent transport infrastructure (the park is situated next to the M1 Motorway) and there is ample availability of skills in the vicinity of Drogheda.

**Outside of Dublin, the IDA Parks in Navan and Drogheda, like those in Dundalk and Athlone, are key assets and need to be promoted proactively by the IDA and this message needs to be come out clearly in the RSES.**

### **3.3 Importance of Key Employment Locations in Meath**

The Economic Strategy identifies five areas of employment development around County Meath:

- Navan the County Town along the M3 Corridor and its attendant settlement of Trim along the Boyne Valley (in 2016 Trim was the second largest centre of employment in the County after Navan).
- Southern Environs of Drogheda strategically located along the M1 Dublin-Belfast Corridor, Duleek, Stamullen and Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington-Donacarne, now the third largest settlement in the County, with a population of almost 12,000 in 2016.
- Ashbourne, Ratoath and Dunshaughlin along the M2 and M3 Corridors and well-located in respect of the rapidly growing Dublin Airport and commercial activity along the northern part of the M50 (it is proposed based on the evidence given above that the Metropolitan Area of Meath is extended to include the settlements of Ashbourne and Ratoath).
- Dunboyne, Clonee and Enfield along the M4 Corridor and Maynooth Environs.
- Kells and the northern part of Meath, which is an EU Regional Aid Area 2014-2020 and since the Economic Development Strategy has become a Rural Economic Development Zone (REDZ), as recommended in the Economic Development Strategy.

while there is a new sense of vigour and enthusiasm for assisting economic and employment development throughout the County, and progress has been made since 2015, there is still a long way to go towards realising the goal of facilitating more jobs within Meath, including the settlements identified in the map above.

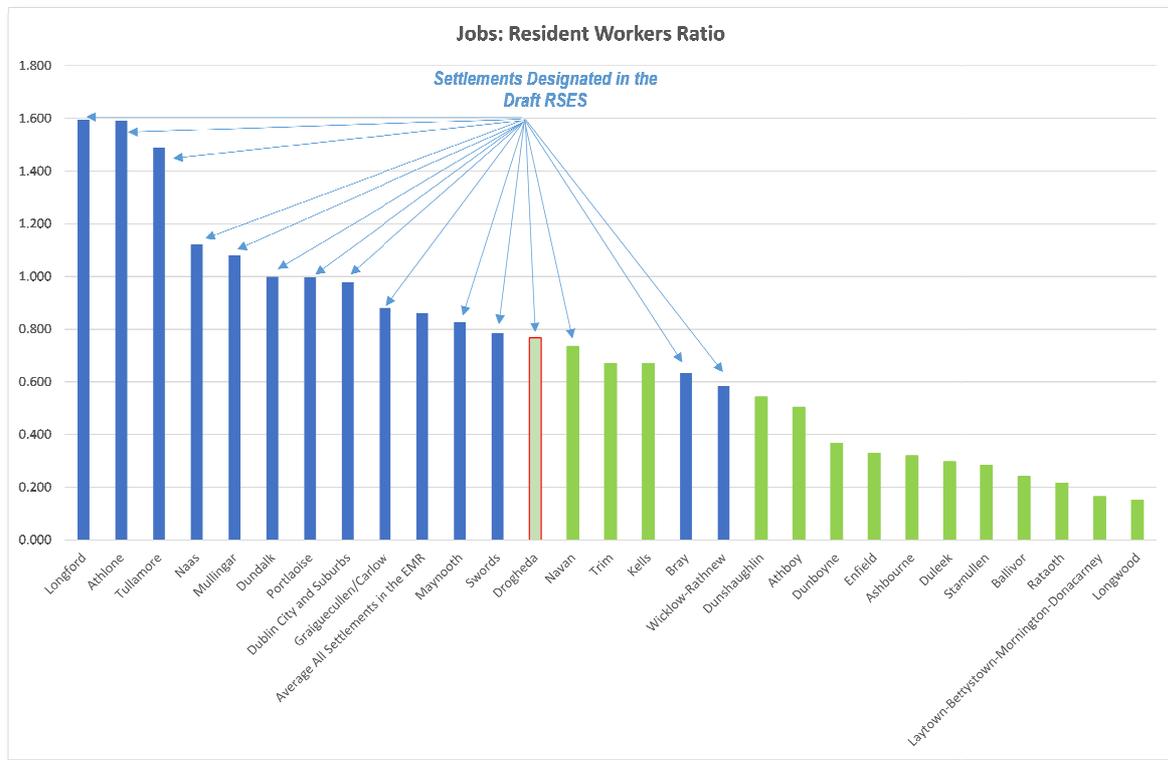
To appreciate the extent of catch-up needed, we can consider data from the CSO's POWSCAR 2016 on settlements in the EMRA area relating to resident workers and the number of persons at work in the settlements (an extensive list of settlements in the State is given in Appendix 2 of the National Planning Framework, pp. 170-174). That data helps to identify towns that are important local, and regional, employment centres and those that are less successful and/or reliant on outward commuting. Consider, for example, Athlone, a regionally significant employment centre. In 2016, this Midlands town, which straddles two counties (Roscommon and Westmeath) had a population of 21,349 (based on the CSO's delineation of the town) and had 8,240 residents at work in any location (including bank and mobile workers). However, there were 13,108 persons at work within the settlement, meaning inward commuting was more significant than outward commuting. The ratio of jobs to resident workers in Athlone was 1.591. Now consider Navan and Drogheda (both the Louth and Meath parts of the settlement, as delineated by the CSO). Drogheda, designated as a Regional Growth Centre in the Draft RSES, had a population in 2016 of 40,956, making it almost twice the size of Athlone. However, it had fewer jobs than Athlone in that year, namely 12,361 compared with 13,108, and the ratio of jobs to resident workers was 0.767 in Drogheda compared to the 1.591 in Athlone. Navan had a population of 30,173, making it one of the largest towns in the country (it is designated as a Key Town in the Draft-RSES, the only settlement in Meath to be designated) and a ratio of 0.736.

Shown in FIGURE 2 below are the jobs-to-resident workers ratios in all of the designated settlements in the Draft RSES plus the corresponding ratios in Meath settlements for comparison – the settlements are ranked on the basis of the ratio. The Meath settlements are shown in green, Drogheda in light green with a red border (it occurs in both Louth and Meath) and the other EMRA area settlements are illustrated in blue. The average of all settlements in the EMRA area (based on the list contained in Appendix 2 of the National Planning Framework) is shown in light blue. Drogheda and all of the Meath settlements have a jobs-to-resident workers ratio less than unity and below the average of all the settlements in the EMRA area. Noteworthy are the very low ratios in Dunboyne, Ashbourne, Ratoath and Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington-Donacorney, which reflect the extent of outward commuting.

PMCA considers that there is an urgent need to provide people living in these parts of the County with more employment opportunities closer to where they live, in order to create sustainable live-work communities. It is recognised that large-scale employment opportunities cannot be generated in each and every settlement; however employment opportunities can be created, notably in Navan, South Meath (Ashbourne and Ratoath as well as Dunboyne), East and North Meath, in turn necessitating an ambitious approach to economic development in certain parts of the County, to which we turn below.

**The need for an ambitious approach to transforming the employment performance of the main settlements in County Meath is evident from the stark facts illustrated in FIGURE 2.**

**FIGURE 2: RATIO OF JOBS TO RESIDENT WORKERS IN MEATH SETTLEMENTS (GREEN) AND SELECTED OTHER SETTLEMENTS IN THE EMR AREA (DROGHEDA IS SHOWN IN LIGHT GREEN WITH A RED BORDER BECAUSE IT OCCURS IN BOTH LOUTH AND MEATH)**



Source: CSO POWSCAR 2016 (also Appendix 2 of the National Planning Framework).

### 3.4 The Need for an Ambitious Approach to the Economic Development of Key Meath Settlements

The Draft RSES appropriately talks about economic assets and the need to maximise these to build economic momentum at local and in turn regional levels. This approach is particularly relevant to further economic development of Meath’s main economic settlements, in line with the Economic Development Strategy.

#### Navan

The County Town’s assets include the IDA Business & Technology Park and the recent success of the proposed Boyne Valley Food Hub, which was approved State funding of €1.6m under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) (announced on 3 December 2018). This award is for Phase 1 of the project, which aims to develop world class production facilities and an innovation-rich enterprise support ecosystem based in Navan to escalate the growth of food and drink entrepreneurs throughout the State. The targeted outputs of the project are 250 new jobs, 50 new and expanding food businesses, 200 new/improved food and drink products, €25m per annum in new export sales, 900 entrepreneurs and learners with increased competencies and 60 interns delivering fresh talent and innovation. In the longer-term, it is envisaged that the impacts nationally will be multiples of those in Phase 1 and that the Boyne Valley Food Hub will comprise a multi-campus network in Navan. This project is especially relevant at this time, in view of Brexit and the need for food and drink companies in Meath, the EMRA area and nationally to diversify their export markets beyond

the UK. The Boyne Valley Food Hub is supported by Meath County Council, Meath Enterprise, Meath LEO and Bord Bia, among other external stakeholders.

The IDA Business & Technology Park in Navan comprises 37 hectares (91 acres), attractively laid out with a range of tenants and spare capacity to bring significant new investment to the area. Since the launch of the Economic Development Strategy in 2015, there has been renewed interest in the IDA Park and it is planned that Meath County Council will continue to work proactively with the IDA to bring more projects and high quality employment to the site. The Council's move from County Hall to Buvinda House in the IDA Park has been widely welcomed, and opens up the possibility of more workspaces becoming available for entrepreneurs in the Council's former premises.

Another important asset for Navan is the Navan Enterprise Centre, located along the R161 Navan-Trim road. At 85,000 square foot of floor space, it is the largest community enterprise centre in the former Mid-East Region (i.e. Meath, Kildare and Wicklow); and with an occupancy rate of 94% makes it the most active such enterprise centre in that region (Table 7, p. 32 of the Mid-East Action Plan for Jobs). The success of Navan Enterprise Centre illustrates the latent demand for workspaces by entrepreneurs, start-ups and established businesses, and PMCA is cognisant that this demand is growing strongly – particularly for office spaces, including co-working spaces, on flexible leasing terms. Existing industrial parks in Navan are Mullaghboy Industrial Estate and Liscarton Industrial Estate, which cater for a range of businesses and employment, and which could accommodate further industrial/light manufacturing activities.

The proposed re-development of Páirc Táihteann (the County Ground of Meath GAA) has a strong rationale, given the state of repair of the current facility and the absence of a GAA ground in North Leinster, a fact out of kilter with the region's population share and growth: in 2016, Counties Meath, Louth, Kildare, Westmeath and Longford had a combined population of over 650,000 or 10% of the population of the island of Ireland and the population grew by 18% during 2006-2016, higher than that in Dublin, South Leinster, Munster, Connaught and Ulster (9 Counties), yet the GAA grounds of North Leinster have a combined capacity of just 4% of the total GAA stadia capacity on the island.

Navan's favourable location in North Leinster, together with its excellent transport infrastructure, mean that a re-developed Páirc Táihteann would be much more attractive and competitive in respect of the growth of Gaelic Games in Meath, Leinster and island-wide, not least given the expanding formats in the form of the Qualifiers and the Super 8s. The proposal is to build a new 22,000 all-seater venue, with four new covered stands. The proposed re-development is relevant in the context of Navan 2030 and the vision of an enhanced town centre, including a sports quarter. Planning permission for the re-development of Páirc Táihteann was granted by Meath County Council in January 2018 and Meath County Council considers that the new facility will be an important economic as well as a sporting and cultural asset for the County and for the region.

### ***Drogheda and the M1 Corridor***

Drogheda is designated as a Regional Growth Centre in the Draft RSES and gets special mention in the National Planning Framework as being in the heart of the Dublin-Belfast Corridor, where it along with Dundalk and Newry are highlighted. There is no doubt that Drogheda (both Louth and Meath parts) has strong economic development potential given its favourable location and access to major, multi-modal transport infrastructure.

The Drogheda Southern Environs LAP area under the remit of Meath County Council, is home to over 7,000 people and according to POWSCAR 2016 there were 1,216 persons at work in the defined area in that year, which represented an increase of 371 persons or 44% on the level in 2011

(excluding mobile and blank returns). This was the largest growth in employment in any Meath settlement during 2011-2016. The strong growth in employment within the Drogheda South LAP area reflects the strong demand for businesses to locate in the area, which in turn reflects the favourable features of the area, including the strong skills residing in the area as well as its strong transport links and access – the M1 Motorway is only 10 minutes from Southgate and Dublin Airport is just 25 minutes drive time. The Drogheda Southern Environs LAP area is home to two major FDI companies in the form of State Street International Financial Services and Coca-Cola International Services, which together account for one-third of all persons at work in foreign-owned firms in Meath on a PFT (permanent full-time) basis. The latter FDI firm is based at Southgate Shopping Centre, which also includes other businesses and retailers. State Street IFS is the sole tenant of the Drogheda IDA Business & Technology Park, since 2006, when the park was opened. There is significant spare capacity in that IDA Park, which urgently needs to be addressed by the IDA. Along with Dundalk, Athlone, Sligo and Letterkenny, and Navan, Drogheda is now a major economic development centre in the top part of the State (above the imaginary line from Dublin to Galway) but compared with the IDA Parks in the other towns mentioned, that in Drogheda is not fulfilling its potential and the absence of new activity in the Drogheda Park needs to be addressed as part of the JUAP and through ongoing liaison with the IDA. The other employment parts of the Drogheda South LAP area, as well as the IDA Park and Southgate, are Drogheda Retail Park, close to which is the major distribution centre operated by Boyne Valley Foods, and Boann Distillery and Visitor Centre.

#### ***Kells and Surrounding Areas, and Trim***

The inclusion of the Kells Municipal District in the EU Regional Aid Map for Ireland 2014-2020 represents an important opportunity for Kells and the northern parts of County Meath. The new map, which became effective from 1 July 2014, means that the State will be able to provide regional aid to the eligible areas identified in the map, without having to worry about whether the assistance constitutes State aid. The aid available includes EI and IDA Ireland grants – Irish and foreign firms. The aid will also include tourism grants, urban and rural renewal incentives. The new aid will be subject to limits and the aid intensity rates (capital and employment grants) are 30% for small firms, 20% medium firms and 10% large firms. While the design of the aid is directed towards micro, small and medium firms, larger firms are also eligible, where the rules specify that large-firm aid should be directed at new activities, diversification of existing firms into new products or process innovation.

Important economic assets for Kells are the Kells Enterprise and Technology Centre which provides over 30,000 square foot of workspace for enterprises and Kells Tech Hub, opened in May 2018 and providing additional workspaces for entrepreneurs and start-ups in IT/technology. Kells now also benefits from its designation as a REDZ (Rural Economic Development Zone) – which applies to the Kells Municipal District.

After Navan (which had 8,970 persons at work in its settlement area in 2016), Trim is the next largest settlement in regard to persons at work, with 2,500 in that year; Kells settlement had 1,543 (excluding mobile and blank returns). In contrast to Drogheda South LAP area and Dunboyne, Kells and Trim are more reliant on traditional private sector activities, which are more Brexit-exposed. Both Trim and Kells have strong tourism potential, by virtue of being in the Boyne Valley trail and through the running of annual events and festivals unique to the towns.

#### **4. Conclusions of the PMCA Report**

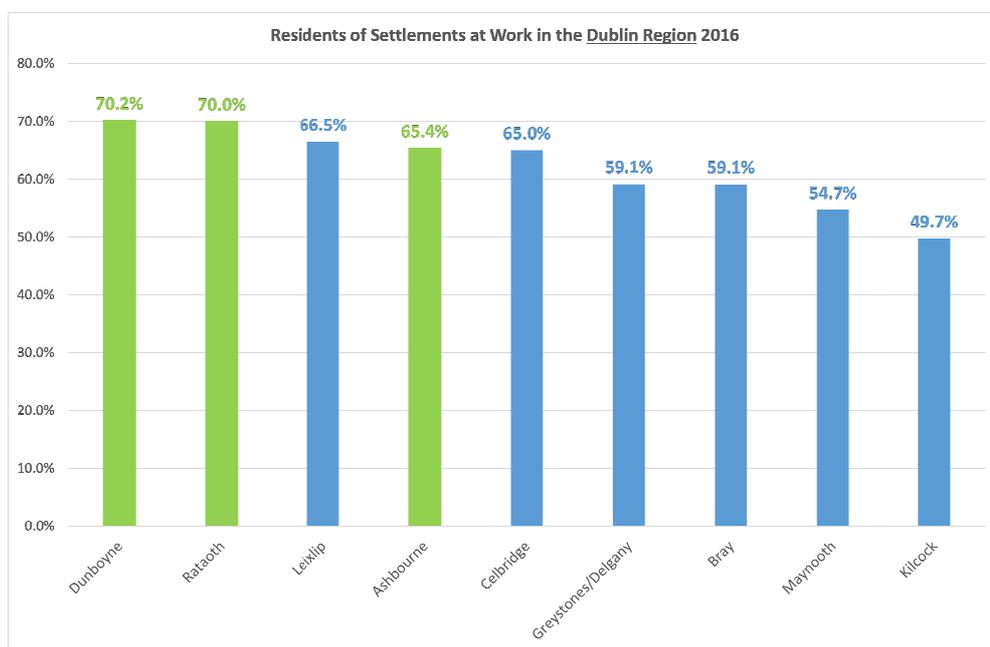
County Meath is on the right journey in terms of economic development. While much progress has been in terms of growing employment within the County since the launch of the Economic Development Strategy in 2015, there remains much work to do, given the low level of employment

before the Economic Strategy and outward commuting, which is unsustainable economically and from a community perspective. PMCA considers that Meath needs to position itself as a complementary investment location to Dublin, providing skills and talent, and having favourable access to major infrastructure and markets at competitive rates. In terms of facilitating more FDI in the County, renewed impetus needs to be given to the IDA Business & Technology Parks in Navan and Drogheda, which have a large degree of spare capacity. This urgent requirement needs to be reflected in the RSES. The importance of this goal is all the more significant given the high Brexit exposure of Meath, where the relatively low levels of IT/professional services and FDI in the County mean that much of the private sector employment in Meath is reliant on the UK market. This too needs to be highlighted in the RSES.

The other main conclusion of the report is the need to include the settlements of Ratoath and Ashbourne in the Metropolitan Area. This need for the County will facilitate residential and transport/infrastructure growth enabling these now important settlements to realise their economic and employment potential during the lifetime of the RSES, in line with the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath. Furthermore, all Meath settlements in the Metropolitan Area – Dunboyne and the proposed Ashbourne and Ratoath – should have housing allocations from the Metropolitan Area and not from County allocations, which otherwise will restrict the numbers of units needed to facilitate the economic and employment growth urgently required.

### Annex of Additional Relevant Information

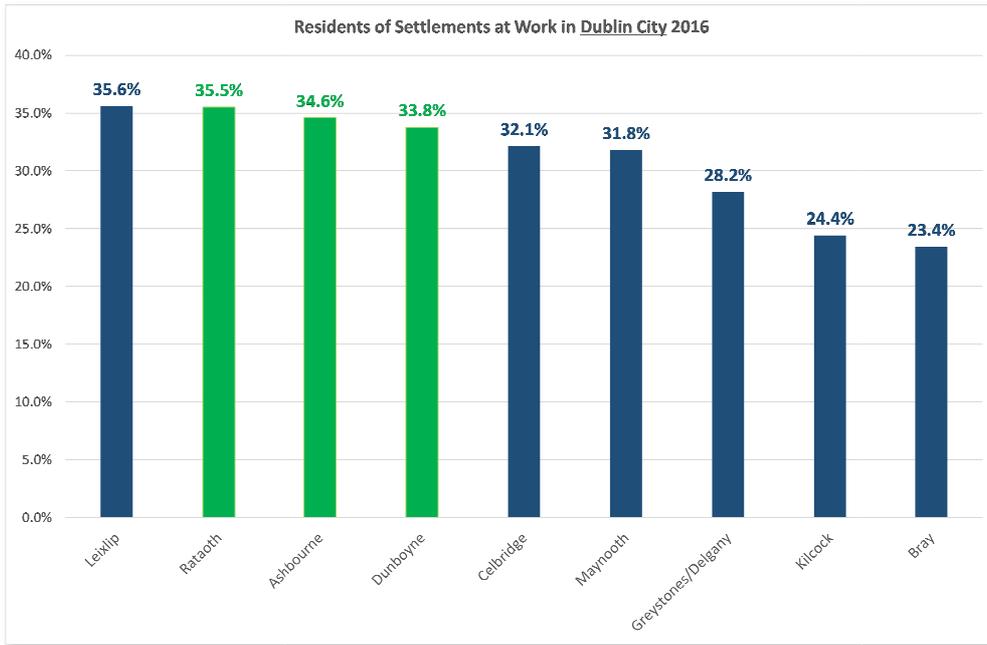
**FIGURE A1: PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS OF SETTLEMENTS AT WORK IN THE DUBLIN REGION 2016**



Source: CSO POWSCAR 2016, PMCA analysis.

Note: Apart from Ashbourne and Ratoath, all settlements are in the Dublin Metropolitan Area

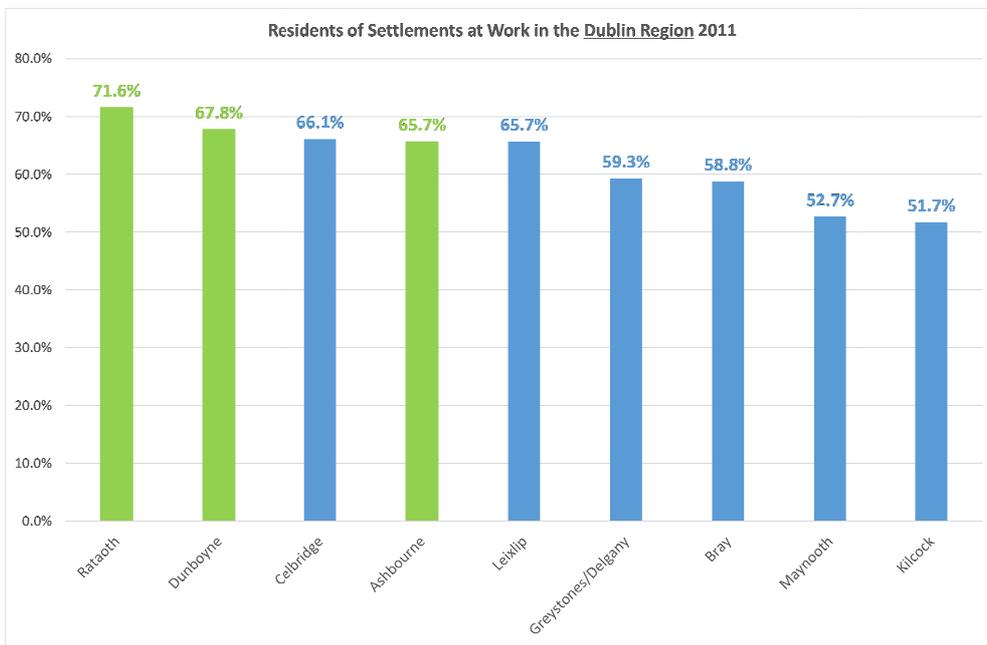
**FIGURE A2: PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS OF SETTLEMENTS AT WORK IN THE DUBLIN CITY 2016**



Source: CSO POWSCAR 2016, PMCA analysis.

Note: Apart from Ashbourne and Ratoath, all settlements are in the Dublin Metropolitan Area

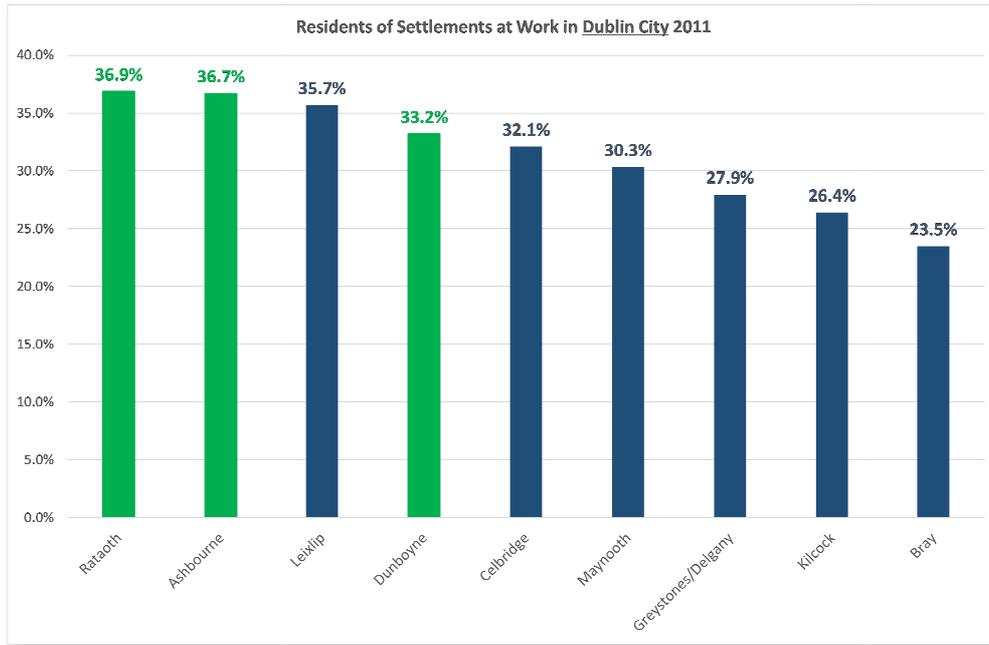
**FIGURE A3: PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS OF SETTLEMENTS AT WORK IN THE DUBLIN REGION 2011**



Source: CSO POWSCAR 2011, PMCA analysis.

Note: Apart from Ashbourne and Ratoath, all settlements are in the Dublin Metropolitan Area

**FIGURE A4: PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS OF SETTLEMENTS AT WORK IN THE DUBLIN CITY 2011**



Source: CSO POWSCAR 2011, PMCA analysis.

Note: Apart from Ashbourne and Ratoath, all settlements are in the Dublin Metropolitan Area