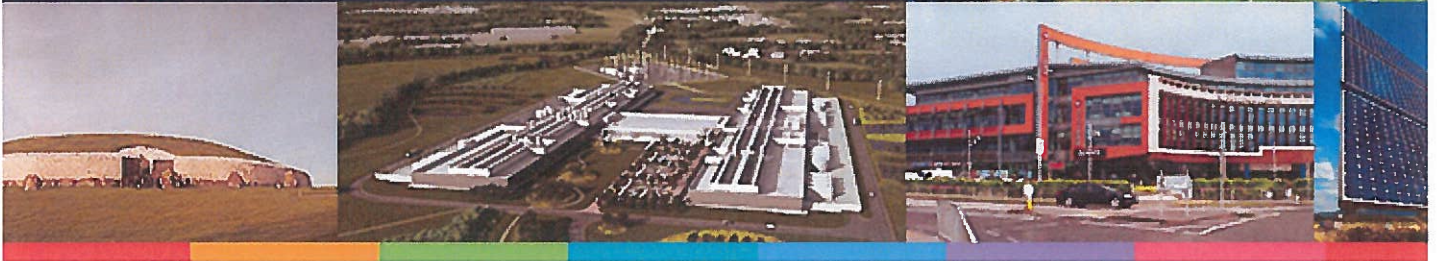




comhairle chontae na mí  
*meath county council*

# MEATH: EUROPE'S BUSINESS READY REGION



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

April 2019



Meath County  
Development Plan  
2019-2025

## 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. As the process enters its final stages the Council continues to be actively engaged with the Regional Authority in finalising the Strategy.

A detailed submission was prepared by the Council in response to the Issues Paper and Draft RSES. The Council acknowledges the positive consideration given to these submissions by the Regional Authority and welcomes the amendments made to the Strategy in response to the submissions.

It is not intended to repeat the issues raised in the previous submissions but rather the focus in this submission will be on the proposed material amendments and the position of the Council with regard to these amendments.

## 2.0 General overview

The proposed amendments will not result in any fundamental changes to the direction or vision of the RSES but rather provide additional text and supporting information that strengthens the document and provides greater clarity which will assist in the interpretation and implementation of the Strategy.

The additional narrative and policy objectives included for the Key Towns and Regional Growth Settlements provides a broader context of the strengths and opportunities in these settlements and their ability to facilitate population and economic growth. There is also an acknowledgement that settlements with a strong employment base have the capacity to deliver balanced and moderate growth.

Meath County Council welcomes and supports the following proposed amendments:

- i) The clarification that land prioritisation rather than de-zoning of land will be the primary mechanism for dealing with excess zoned lands. This clarity will be of assistance in the preparation of the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan, particularly in the absence of updated Core Strategy Guidelines.
- ii) The recognition of the contribution the Southern Environs of Drogheda can make to the future population and economic growth of Drogheda as it develops into an important Regional Growth Centre along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.

South Drogheda Environs is an important area for growth in Meath therefore the acknowledgement of the potential of this area with regard to the long term growth of Drogheda is welcomed. **A minor amendment to the text for the Southern Environs is proposed in section 4.0.**

- iii) The support for the preparation of a Joint Urban Area Plan for Maynooth between Meath and Kildare County Council and the importance of the delivery of the Maynooth Outer Relief Road in improving connectivity and accessibility for residents and visitors.

The Council consider the development of Maynooth Environs to be a natural extension to the town. It is anticipated that this area will be a focal point for science and technology employment in addition to providing commensurate residential accommodation.

- iv) The additional Regional Policy Objectives for Navan, which emphasise the importance of key sites in the town for economic development and support the delivery of key infrastructure that is critical in improving accessibility and reducing congestion.

The inclusion of these objectives are an indication of the long term objectives of the Council to continue to support the economic development of Navan as set out in the Meath Economic Development Strategy.

- v) The additional support for Phase 2 of the Navan Rail Project is strongly welcomed. The appraisal of this project should be progressed as early as possible. The support is welcome recognition that Navan is the only County Town/Administrative Capital in the Eastern and Midland Region currently without a rail link to Dublin City.
- vi) The amendments to the text regarding the sequential development of the lands in Dunboyne and Dunboyne North, which will ensure that these strategically located metropolitan lands can be released for development when required and assist in the creation of sustainable 'live-work' communities along a high quality public transport corridor.
- vii) The clarification that population targets for each Local Authority in the Metropolitan Area will be agreed by the MASP Implementation Group following the adoption of the RSES. The Council looks forward to engaging in this process.
- viii) The recognition that compact growth includes lands "close to the existing built up footprint". This will ensure that in settlements where there are a limited number of infill/brownfield sites available the 30% compact growth target can still be achieved by focusing development on lands contiguous to the built up area.
- ix) The proposal to create a database setting out all strategic brownfield and infill sites in the Region will provide a useful overview of the status of these sites and where they are located is supported. This database will also assist in monitoring of targets for compact growth.

Clarification as to who would be responsible for updating the database and assist in the monitoring of this innovative facility should be outlined.

- x) The support for the development of the Mid-East as a hub for the Screen Content Creation Sector will promote diversification in the economy and highlight the importance and potential of the film industry to contribute to economic growth. The Assembly should be aware that a film production facility of national scale containing 3 separate film studios has obtained full planning permission in Ashbourne Co. Meath in September 2018.
- xi) The support for the development of co-working spaces in various locations in the Region that would mitigate long distance commuting is welcomed. Kells Tech Hub is an example of a successful co-working facility that is assisting start ups and SMEs. In addition the facility can also be used as an outreach for city based employers.
- xii) The additional emphasis given to prioritising walking and cycling as part of the strategy of creating healthy communities and attractive living environments is welcomed.

### 3.0 Issues that require further consideration

Whilst the Council is generally supportive of the proposed material amendments, there are concerns regarding a number of the changes to the terminology in the document together with a number of the proposed Regional Policy Objectives.

These concerns can be summarised as follows:

- i) It is proposed to amend the settlement typology as follows (text as per Draft RSES in Red and proposed Material Amendments in Green):

Settlement Typology	Description
<del>Medium to Large Towns</del> i) Moderate Growth Towns	i) Medium to large sized towns with a moderate level of jobs and services– includes sub-county market towns and commuter towns with good transport links and capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining.
ii) Consolidation Towns	ii) Towns with high levels of population growth and a weak employment base which are reliant on other areas for employment and/or services and which require targeted ‘catch up’ investment to become more self-sustaining.
Small Towns and Villages	Small towns and villages <del>under 5000 population (4,000 population in the Outer Region) and above 1500</del> with local service and employment functions.
Rural	Rural villages <del>less than 1,500 and</del> the wider rural region



The Council has no objections in principle to these amendments however additional text differentiating between a 'Small Town' and 'Village' would be welcomed in order to ensure consistency in the approach taken by each Local Authority in the Region in defining the Settlement Hierarchy.

- ii) It is proposed to include an additional Regional Policy Objective in Chapter 3 requiring that an assessment of the impact of land use designations and transport infrastructure on greenhouse gas emissions to be carried out. Whilst the Council would not be opposed to the carrying out such an assessment, it is important that the requirement for the lands/infrastructure is also assessed against the growth strategy for the Region. In addition such assessments could only be carried out if the baseline data and national and regional emissions targets are available to Local Authorities.

In this regard it is considered that this objective may be premature pending the publication of such targets alongside detailed guidelines outlining how the potential emissions from land use zoning categories can be calculated and how such an objective could be transferred and practically implemented in the Development Plan process.

- iii) There is a proposal to include an additional Regional Policy Objective regarding the preparation of policies/objectives that anticipate the identification of "Projected Climate Impact Areas". The Council is supportive of any research into climate change and would welcome any guidance that would assist in the integration of climate change policy into the Plan making process. However there is a lack of detail in the RSES as to exactly what "Projected Climate Impact Areas" are and how Local Authorities will be able to utilise this 'designation'.

It is therefore suggested that further detail is included in the RSES as to the provenance of such "Projected Climate Impact Areas", the agency responsible for creating the designation, and the implications of such a designation on a settlement/location.

## 4.0 Proposed amendments

The Council welcomes the references to the potential of the Southern Environs of Drogheda to contribute to the development of the town as a Regional Growth Centre. Whilst the supporting text for the Southern Environs is generally acceptable, it is requested the following amendment is made **(existing text in red and proposed text in green)** to support economic investment in a broader context:

"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~~ a location for economic investment and the creation of compact, residential communities in key locations in proximity to established residential areas and transport hubs."

## 5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Council is broadly supportive of the proposed material amendments and is committed to contributing to the vision for the Region and implementing national and regional policy objectives set out in the NPF and RSES. The Council looks forward to the finalisation of the Strategy and beginning the process of transposing the updated national and regional policy into the County Development Plan.



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