

# Tionól Reigiúnach Oirthir agus Lár-Tíre

# Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

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# 1

## **Draft Meath Local Economic and Community Plan**

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly notes the publication of the draft document for the Meath Local Economic and Community Plan and sets out hereunder observations on behalf of the Regional Assembly. The submission has been prepared by the executive and approved by the members of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly at the meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

# **1.0 Overall Context**

### 1.1 Role and Function of the Regional Assembly

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) is part of the regional tier of governance in Ireland. It is primarily focused on driving regional development through the formulation, adoption and implementation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), oversight and coordination of County Development Plans and Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs), management of EU Programmes, EU project participation, implementation of national economic policy and additional functions working with the National Oversight and Audit Commission. As a strategic policy body, EMRA also participates in the consultation process of other relevant strategic plans and policies.

This submission relates to the statutory role of the Assembly regarding the Meath Local Economic and Community Plan.

#### 1.2 Legislative Context

Section 44 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 (amending Section 66C of the Local Government Act 2001), provides that every Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) shall be consistent with any Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy as well as the City/County Development Plan that applies to the area of the LECP. It also states that the local authority shall submit a draft of the economic and community elements of the LECP to the Regional Assembly and it shall adopt a statement on the draft Plan for consideration by the elected members of that local authority.

The Act requires that the consideration of a draft plan by the Regional Assembly, shall relate to its consistency with –

- (i) The core strategy and the objectives of the development plan of the local authority concerned,
- (ii) Any regional spatial and economic strategy that may apply, and
- (iii) The need to consider consistency between the economic and community elements of the draft plan.

The Local Economic and Community Plans Guidelines (LECP) Guidelines 2021, published in November 2021, assist with the preparation of the draft LECPs, with a key focus on sustainability, consultation and engagement with local communities and businesses. The guidelines also require local authorities to consider housing needs when formulating both the economic and community elements of their LECPs in accordance with the commitment in Housing for All, the Government's national plan for housing to 2030.

The LECP process consists of two parts: the development of an overall LECP framework detailing the High-Level Goals and sustainable community and economic objectives, including outcomes for a six-year period; and the development of Implementation Plans of the objectives of the LECP.

#### 1.3 The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region

The RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region was made by the Members of the Assembly in June 2019 and is a strategic plan and investment framework to shape future growth throughout the Region. The overall vision of the Strategy is to create a sustainable and competitive Region that supports the health and wellbeing of our people and places, from urban to rural, with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunity for all. The vision is supported by sixteen Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) that are framed around three Key Principles of Healthy Placemaking, Climate Action and Economic Opportunity.

A primary statutory objective of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) is to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF), alignment with the investment priorities of the National Development Plan 2021-2030 (and thus Project Ireland 2040), by coupling new development with the requisite investment in services and infrastructure. The RSES is of critical importance for the delivery of Project Ireland 2040, given that it is the succeeding tier of policy delivery in Ireland.

The RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region presents a Spatial Strategy, devised and informed by a complementary Economic Strategy, which provides a framework for future growth, ensuring the delivery of effective regional development through the realisation of viable and vital places. This includes championing the capital city of Dublin as a smart, climate resilient and global city region; identifying Regional Growth Centres which act as regional economic drivers and supports for their wider catchment areas; and promoting a network of large economically active Key Towns that provide employment and services to their surrounding areas. All of this is supported by Self-Sustaining Growth Towns, Self-Sustaining Towns and a network of multifaceted Rural Places.

Drogheda (along with Dundalk and Athlone) is identified as a Regional Growth Centre in the overall settlement strategy of the RSES which is earmarked to accommodate significant new investment in housing, transport and employment generation in the region. The southern environs area of Drogheda

is located in County Meath. The future development of the southern environs area of Drogheda should be in accordance with any joint local area plan that is prepared for Drogheda in conjunction with Louth County Council.

The key priorities for Drogheda outlined in the RSES are to promote the continued sustainable and compact growth of Drogheda as a regional driver of city scale with a target population of 50,000 by 2031. The objective is to provide for the regeneration of the town centre, the compact planned and co-ordinated growth of the town's hinterland along with enhancing Drogheda's role as a self-sustaining strategic employment centre on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. The dynamic of securing investment, while driving synergies between the Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry cross border network, and building on the existing education and skills base in the Region are promoted within the Strategy.

Furthermore, the Key Town located within County Meath is Navan which forms part of the Core Region as defined in the RSES. Navan functions as a dynamic urban centre and acts as the focal point for the economic, cultural and social development of County Meath. The town is located on the M3 transport corridor and is well served by a local and regional public transport bus service, including a frequent express bus service to Dublin. As the County Town, Navan acts as a key employment centre with potential to further strengthen the retail, employment and service functions of the town through the consolidation and expansion of the town centre along with new strategic development areas, and to improve connectivity, sustainable transport and public realm.

The Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) contained in Chapter 5 of the RSES provides a strategic planning and investment framework for the Dublin metropolitan area, and part of the southeast area of County Meath is located within the Dublin MASP boundary. Of particular relevance to the MASP implementation strategy is Table 5.1 of the RSES - *Strategic Development Areas & Corridors, Capacity Infrastructure and Phasing [North-West Corridor* and Table 5.2 *Potential of Strategic Employment Development Areas in the Dublin Metropolitan Area [North-West Corridor (DART/Maynooth-Dunboyne Commuter Line)*].In relation to the Economic Strategy of the RSES, this has five key principles which include smart specialisation, clustering, placemaking, orderly growth and future proof. This Strategy includes a retail hierarchy for the region, as outlined in the RSES under Chapter 6 Table 6.1. This identifies Navan as Level 2 (Major Town Centres and County Town Centres), and Ashbourne, Dunshaughlin, Kells, Trim, (Laytown/Bettystown) as Level 3 (Town and/or District Centres and Sub-County Town Centres) of the retail hierarchy.

In relation to community development, the RSES outlines support for community and adult education providers who are already providing formal and non-formal education to targeted disadvantage groups and who have already identified the barriers to participation in lifelong learning such as childcare, transport and rural isolation to increase participation rates and support progression into further education and employment. The RSES also highlights the importance of recreation and sporting facilities including blueways and greenways.

The draft LECP submitted makes reference to key spatial planning, economic, social and community elements of the policies and objectives of the RSES and the Dublin MASP in order to demonstrate consistency with same, which is welcomed by the Regional Assembly. This is discussed further in Section 3.

## 2.0 Overview of the draft Framework LECP

The draft Framework for the Meath LECP was received on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023 and contains the following sections:

- A Local Economic and Community Plan for County Meath
- Development and Preparation of the LECP
- Meath at a Glance
- Meath's Community Participation
- A Vision for County Meath
- An Action Plan for County Meath
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Appendices

Chapter 6 of the draft document sets out the following vision statement;

"An economically vibrant and environmentally sustainable county that offers a high quality of life for its diverse communities'.

The document highlights 7 no. High-Level Goals as follows;

Goal 1	A Sustainable, Eco-Friendly County that is Committed to Climate Action
Goal 2	A Connected and Accessible County
Goal 3	A Healthy and Thriving County
Goal 4	A County that Works Together to Achieve Common Good
Goal 5	A County that Celebrates, Protects and Promotes its Rich Culture and Heritage, and is
	Attractive to Residents and Visitors
Goal 6	A County that Welcomes, Empowers and Includes All
Goal 7	A County that Actively Encourages and Supports a Growing Economy and Workforce

Each of the High-Level Goals above are supported by several listed Sustainable Community Objectives (SCOs) and Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDOs). The SCOs and SEDOs are indicated to be key priority areas within each High-Level Goal.

The objectives provide an indication of how actions might be grouped in order to work toward achieving the High-Level Goals.



Actions are the specific projects or initiatives identified to fulfil the objectives and contribute to accomplishing the High-Level Goals. Each of the High-Level Goals, and supporting SCOs, SEDOs and Actions are provided and explained in detail in Section 7.0 of the draft LECP.

The draft document also contains sections on implementation, monitoring and review in Section 8.0. The content of the draft LECP will be discussed in the following sections of this report.

## 3.0 Evaluation of Consistency with the RSES

The draft LECP has been prepared having regard to the recommendations set out in the LECP Guidelines 2021. In this regard, the following are noted from the draft plan submitted to EMRA for consideration.

#### 3.1 Policy Context

Section 2 of the draft LECP details the preparation structure of the LECP which includes a list of National, Regional and Local Plans and Strategies that were considered to inform the overall plan, and these are set out in Figure 2. These plans include the National Development Plan, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (EMRA), the Meath County Development Plan and the NTA Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042.

Overall, the policy considerations are in line with the LECP ministerial guidelines. It is, however, noted that reference is not made to the National Planning Framework which forms part of Project Ireland 2040 with the National Development Plan. In addition, it is noted that the Meath County Development Plan is incorrectly referenced as 2019 - 2025, whereas the adopted plan covers the period 2021 - 2027.

Section 6.6 of the draft LECP demonstrates how alignment with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy is achieved. This section states that the 3 Key Principles of the RSES (Economic Opportunity, Climate Action and Healthy Placemaking) and the RSOs (Regional Strategic Outcomes) of the RSES were taken into consideration with regard to the development of the High-Level Goals, Sustainable Community Objectives (SCOs) and Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDOs) of the LECP and a table is provided demonstrating this alignment. This is welcomed by the Regional Assembly.

The Regional Assembly considers that the plan could be strengthened by referencing the status of Drogheda as a Regional Growth Centre in the Region, in addition to Navan as a Key Town within the Region, as identified in the RSES. Furthermore, the location of the southeastern part of County Meath within the Dublin Metropolitan Area (Dublin MASP) boundary is also not referenced and this should be emphasised in the final LECP.

#### 3.2 Socio-Economic Profile, Consultation Process and SCOT Analysis

Section 4 of the draft LECP provides information regarding the socio-economic profile of County Meath. It is noted that the information and figures provided arise from analysis that was available in September 2022 during the background preparation of the draft LECP, and in this respect Section 4.1.1 of the draft LECP provides details of Meath's population based on preliminary Census 2022 results.

A detailed list of Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats (SCOT) Analysis for County Meath has also been outlined within the draft Framework document, which is welcomed by the Regional Assembly.

In addition to the above analysis, it is considered that the final LECP would benefit by providing additional commentary that recognises the need for adequate infrastructure to support rural business in County Meath, including broadband and improved connectivity. This should include references to broadband provision and improved connectivity, in accordance with RPO 8.25 of the RSES and Section 4.8 of the RSES relating to challenges facing rural places and planning for future growth. References should also be made to RPOs 6.4 to 6.6 inclusive, which aim to support the rural economy including identifying and supporting measures in LECPs to support the rural economy.

Section 5 of the draft LECP outlines the community participation process that was carried out during the preparation of the draft LECP. A socio-economic statement to inform the draft LECP was issued for public review and comment between October and December 2022. Feedback was sought from communities and stakeholders using a variety of online and in-person methods whereby 7000 plus participants engaged from the public, community groups, local service providers, specific sector representatives, statutory agencies and local government. The High-Level goals were updated and amended to reflect this feedback.

It is considered that the public consultation stage was satisfactorily carried out and in accordance with the LECP Guidelines 2021 which require the public consultation phase to take into account different stakeholder needs across both the economic and community sectors. However, the draft LECP does not include a report on this stage, as required by Section 66C (2)(a) (i) (I) and Section 66C (3)(a) (i) of the Local Government Act 2014. In this respect the appendices of the final LECP should include the public consultation information, a list of written submissions and the membership of relevant structures (LCDC, SPC) as detailed in Appendix 2 of the LECP Guidelines 2021.

#### 3.3 High-Level Goals, Objectives & Outcomes

Following the public consultation stage, the draft socio-economic statement was revised to include a full policy alignment review, a socio-economic profile, an analysis of the consultation and an updated SCOT analysis. These components informed the revision of the High-Level Goals and the development of Sustainable Community Objectives (SCOs) and Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDOs) associated with each High-Level Goal.

The LECP Guidelines 2021 recommend that High-Level Goals should be achievable and realistic. These are discussed in detail below, including an evaluation of consistency with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).

Overall, the Regional Assembly is satisfied with the selection of the seven High-Level Goals and the stated objectives and outcomes, based on the evidence-based approach used and the socio-economic profile which was used to develop the goals. The Regional Assembly is satisfied that the chosen goals align with the 3 Principles of the RSES, the 16 Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) of the RSES and with a number of relevant RPOs of the RSES as highlighted in this section of the report.

Each High-Level Goal is discussed in more detail below:

#### Goal 1: A Sustainable, Eco-Friendly County that is Committed to Climate Action

This goal contains 4 no. SCOs and SEDOs that relate to nature conservation, education and engagement on climate and environmental issues, the green economy and embedding sustainable development goals in policy and practice.

SCO 1.1	To protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment
SCO 1.2	To educate and engage the public on climate and environmental issues and
	opportunities
SEDO 1.3	To promote the green economy
SEDO 1.4	To embed the Sustainable Development Goals in policy and practice.

This High-Level Goal and associated objectives support the Key Principle of Climate Action outlined in the RSES, including Regional Strategic Objectives (RSOs) of the RSES in relation to building climate resilience (RSO 8), supporting the transition to low carbon and clean energy (RSO 9), enhancing green infrastructure (RSO 10) and biodiversity and natural heritage (RSO 11). In addition, the goal supports RPO 3.7 in relation to environmental and sustainability considerations for new development proposals.

#### Goal 2: A Connected and Accessible County

This goal contains 4 no. SCOs that relate to integrated public transport infrastructure, encouraging active travel modes and a transition to sustainable transport patterns.

SCO 2.1	Support connected and integrated public transport networks within and
	between urban and rural areas
SCO 2.1	To encourage and support active transport (cycling and walking)
SCO 2.3	To encourage and promote the transition to more sustainable transport
	patterns
SCO 2.4	Support equitable access to the internet and digital skills.

These objectives support the Key Principles of Climate Action and Economic Opportunity outlined in the RSES, including RSOs in relation to Healthy Communities (RSO 4), Integrated Transport and Land Use (RSO 6), and Enhanced Strategic Connectivity (RSO 15). In addition, the goals support RPOs including RPO 9.10 in relation to encouraging sustainable travel options (walking and cycling), RPO 4.57 in relation to tourism and RPO 8.1 in relation to the integration of transport and land use planning. The objectives listed above also support the Guiding Principles for the Integration of Land Use and Transport as outlined in the RSES.

#### Goal 3: A Healthy and Thriving County

This goal contains 6 no. SCOs that relate to environmental improvements that support healthy living and related community health supports, support for adequate housing options, and the encouragement of increased participation in recreation, sport and leisure activities.

SCO 3.1	To improve health and wellbeing outcomes
SCO 3.2	To support the provision of adequate housing and shelter
SCO 3.3	To support proactive responses to emerging and emergency local needs
SCO 3.4	To increase perceptions and experiences of community safety
SCO 3.5	To increase participation in recreation, sport and leisure
SCO 3.6	To support the provision of community health supports

These objectives support the Key Principle of Healthy Placemaking outlined in the RSES, including the RSO in relation to Healthy Communities (RSO 4). They also demonstrate consistency with RPOs such as RPO 9.13 in relation to new social infrastructure developments being accessible and inclusive for a range of users and RPO 9.16 in relation to public health policy supports. The objectives listed above also support the Guiding Principles for the creation of healthy and attractive spaces detailed in Section 9.4 of the RSES.

#### Goal 4: A County that works together to achieve the common good

This goal contains 5 no. SCOs and SEDOs that relate to environmental improvements that support healthy living and related community health supports, support for adequate housing options, and the encouragement of increased participation in recreation, sport and leisure activities.

SCO 4.1	To stimulate and support interagency and collaborative approaches by the public
	sector
SCO 4.2	To support internal capacity for the LECP and LCDC
SCO 4.3	To encourage civic engagement including in local democratic processes of all
	residents and communities
SCO 4.4	To enable a joined up approach to community information delivery
SEDO 4.5	To create stronger networks among key agencies and enterprises

These objectives support the Key Principles of Economic Opportunity and Healthy Placemaking outlined in the RSES, including the RSO in relation to Collaborative Platform (RSO 16). They also demonstrate consistency with a range of RPOs including RPOs 6.25 and 6.26 in relation to collaboration with educational providers and industry and research agencies on skills and innovation advances.

# Goal 5: A County that celebrates, protects and promotes its rich heritage and culture and heritage, and is attractive to residents and visitors

This goal contains 6 no. SCOs and SEDOs that relate to community and arts, tourism, heritage and public realm improvements.

SCO 5.1	To further develop community arts and cultural actions
SCO 5.2	To preserve Meath's heritage and enable appropriate access
SCO 5.3	To enhance the standing of Irish in and outside the Gaeltacht areas
SCO 5.4	To provide attractive, accessible public spaces and parks across the County
SEDO 5.5	To proactively promote the County's attractions

SEDO 5.6	To enhance the public realm and promote Meath's main town centres as retailing,
	visitor and employment centres.

These objectives support the Key Principles of Economic Opportunity and Healthy Placemaking outlined in the RSES, including the RSO in relation to Compact Growth and Urban Regeneration (RSO 2) and Creative Places (RSO 5). They also demonstrate consistency with RPOs such as RPOs 9.24 and 9.25 in relation to arts and culture and cultural tourism promotion in the Region. The objectives listed above also support the Guiding Principles for the creation of healthy and attractive spaces detailed in Section 9.4 of the RSES.

#### Goal 6: A County that welcomes, empowers and includes all communities

This goal contains 5 no. SCOs and SEDOs that relate to community infrastructure, integration and tacking educational disadvantage.

SCO 6.1	To expand and strengthen equitable access to community infrastructure
SCO 6.2	To promote integration and inclusion in all communities in Meath
SCO 6.3	To reduce educational disadvantages
SEDO 6.4	To provide effective educational infrastructure provision
SEDO 6.5	Continue the collaborative and supportive responses to navigating local planning
	processes

These objectives support the Key Principle of Economic Opportunity outlined in the RSES, including the RSO in relation to Improve Education Skills and Social Inclusion (RSO 13). They also demonstrate consistency with RPOs including RPOs 4.16, 4.24 and 4.61 in relation to urban regeneration and improvements to educational attainment levels in areas of disadvantage.

#### Goal 7: A County that actively encourages and supports a growing economy and workforce

This goal contains 5 no. SCOs and SEDOs that relate to economic development and increasing employment opportunities in the county.

SCO 7.1	To increase levels of local employment and conditions for employability
SCO 7.2	Increase opportunities for remote working
SCO 7.3	Continue to promote an economic and employment development ethos throughout
	all departments and functions within Meath County Council, including elected reps
	of the Council
SEDO 7.4	To provide effective infrastructure provision – sites and property solutions for
	employment generation.
SEDO 7.5	To promote the economic opportunities and achievements in the County.

The objectives relate to the five principles of the Economic Strategy of the RSES which are listed as smart specialisation, clustering, placemaking, orderly growth and future proof. They support the Key Principle of Economic Opportunity outlined in the RSES, including the RSO in relation to Improve Education Skills and Social Inclusion (RSO 13). They also demonstrate consistency with RPOs such as RPO 4.84 in relation to the Rural Economy, RPO 4.27 whereby Key Towns will act as economic drivers,

and RPO 6.1 to support national, regional and local employment agencies with plans for job creation and economic development.

#### 3.4 Implementation

Section 8.0 of the draft LECP sets out details on how the plan will be monitored and reviewed for progression. It is indicated that monitoring of the Implementation Plans will be undertaken regularly by an independent working group of local enterprise, innovation and community stakeholders. An annual report on the implementation process will be prepared and submitted to Meath LCDC. Two interim reviews will be undertaken to further monitor progress and align relevant objectives and actions to evolving needs. The interim reviews are expected to be undertaken in 2025 and 2027.

From a review of the submitted draft LECP, a specific Implementation Plan has not clearly been provided for assessment. Section 7.0 (An Action Plan for the County) details relevant actions, action partners and achievement timeframes for each High-Level Goal, however, this section of the document is not referred to as an Implementation Plan.

As a specific Implementation Plan is required in line with the LECP Guidelines 2021, the finalised LECP should include an Implementation Plan that is prepared and presented in accordance with same.

# 4.0 Evaluation of Consistency with the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

Section 44 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 (amending Section 66C of the Local Government Act 2001) states that LECPs should be consistent with the core strategy and objectives of the Development Plan, in this respect the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. Given that the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 was deemed to be consistent with the RSES, as acknowledged by the submission made by EMRA on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020, the Regional Assembly therefore considers that an analysis of the RSES is deemed sufficient in order to demonstrate consistency. Notwithstanding this, it is considered beneficial if the LECP Framework document could address the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 in more detail to demonstrate that it aligns with and complements the policies and objectives and identified priorities in the County Development Plan.

#### **5.0 Other Considerations**

A number of clerical errors and anomalies are evident in the draft LECP document. In this respect, the draft LECP refers to the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016 - 2035, which has been superseded by the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022 - 2042. Furthermore, as stated in Section 3.1 of this submission, the current Meath County Development Plan is incorrectly referenced as 2019 - 2025, whereas the adopted County Development Plan covers the period 2021 - 2027. Also, Figure 2 of the draft LECP does not refer to the National Planning Framework, which forms part of Project Ireland 2040 with the National Development Plan.

The above matters should be adequately addressed in the final LECP document.

## **6.0 Recommendation and Statement of Consistency**

The Regional Assembly commends the work of Meath County Council to date in the preparation of the draft Framework document and issues a Statement of Consistency for the Meath LECP as required under Section 44 of the Local Government Reform Act (as amended) <u>subject to</u> the following recommendations:

- The LECP should make reference to the designation of Drogheda as a Regional Growth Centre, in addition to Navan as a Key Town, within the Region.
- The LECP should reference that the southeastern part of County Meath is located within the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) boundary as identified in the RSES.
- The LECP should make reference to the retail hierarchy for the region, as outlined in the RSES Chapter 6 Table 6.1 which identifies Navan as Level 2 (Major Town Centres and County Town Centres), and Ashbourne, Dunshaughlin, Kells, Trim, (Laytown/Bettystown) as Level 3 (Town and/or District Centres and Sub-County Town Centres) of the retail hierarchy.
- The LECP should include an Implementation Plan that is prepared and presented in accordance with the requirements of Section B of the LECP Guidelines 2021. This may be included as an appendix of the LECP.
- The LECP is required to be consistent with the core strategy and objectives of the Meath County
  Development Plan 2021-2027. It is recommended that an additional section is included to clearly
  demonstrate this.
- The LECP should include additional commentary that recognises the need for adequate infrastructure to support rural business in County Meath, including broadband and improved connectivity, in accordance with the Settlement Strategy as set out in the RSES and Meath CDP 2021 2027. This includes broadband provision and improved connectivity, in accordance with RPO 8.25 of the RSES, Section 4.8 of the RSES Enabling and Sustaining the Rural Economy, and RPOs 6.4 to 6.6 inclusive which aim to support the rural economy including identifying and supporting measures in LECPs to support the rural economy.
- The appendices of the LECP should include the public consultation information, a list of written submissions and the membership of relevant structures (LCDC, SPC) as detailed in Appendix 2 of the LECP Guidelines 2021.

#### 7.0 Conclusion

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) welcomes the progression of the Local Economic and Community Plan to a draft document and considers the economic and community objectives to be consistent with the RSES and the Meath CDP 2021-2027, subject to the amendments listed in Section 6.0 of this report being incorporated into the finalised LECP. As outlined above, it is considered that the draft Framework document could demonstrate better integration of key references to, and stronger links, with policies and objectives of the RSES and the Meath CDP 2021 - 2027.

Regards,

Clare Bannon

A/Director

Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

13<sup>th</sup> September 2023