

# Open Space & Outdoor Recreation Strategy for County Kildare 2021-2031

Public Consultation  
Issues Paper  
10<sup>th</sup> September 2020



**Closing Date for Submissions:  
5pm Thursday  
22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020**

**HAVE YOUR SAY**



**Kildare County Council**

## Why prepare a Strategy for Open Space and Outdoor Recreation?

Open space is an essential component of the fabric of our environment which brings social, environmental, economic and health benefits to the communities of County Kildare.

The critical importance of open space and green infrastructure has been evidenced in recent times during the global pandemic for the functioning of society, for recreation and for our wellbeing.



The benefit of preparing an open space strategy is the protection and creation of a network of high-quality open spaces, which will yield further benefits for the people, communities and environment of County Kildare

In recent years, a significant rise in population has occurred throughout the county. A parallel increase in the provision of dedicated civic open space and its associated recreational facilities has not kept pace with the level of growth that has occurred.

The Planning and Parks Departments of Kildare County Council are now preparing a new Strategy for the provision of Open Space and Outdoor Recreational Facilities in County Kildare and we would like to hear your opinions and ideas.

## What is 'Open Space'?

For the purposes of this strategy, 'Open Space' is defined as space which is accessible to the public, is open-air and may be in public or private ownership (when accessible to the public), the primary use of which is for outdoor recreation and amenity.

County Kildare has a wealth of high-quality open spaces including Ballynafagh Lake, Pollardstown Fen, Donadea Forest, Carton Avenue, Castletown Demesne, sporting grounds, playgrounds, walking and Slí na Sláinte routes including along the Grand and Royal Canals.

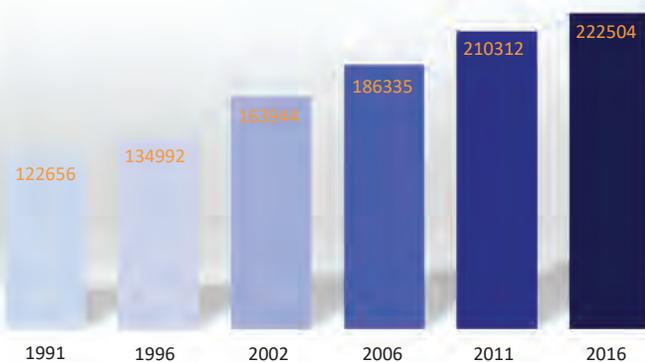


## Kildare in Context

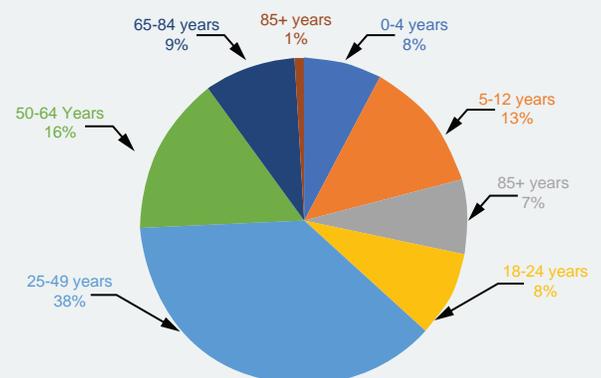
Over the last two decades, Kildare has experienced the second fastest rate of population growth in the country. At the 2016 Census, County Kildare had a population of 222,504 making it the fifth largest local authority in the state. The age profile of the County tells us:

- 8% is under the age of 4 and 13% is primary school - going age (5-12).
- 7% is secondary school going age (13-17) and 8% third-level age (18-24).
- 54% of the County's population is of 'working age' (25 and 64).
- 10% of the County's population is of 'retirement age' (65 and over).

Population of County Kildare 1991-2016



Age Profile of County Kildare 2016 Census



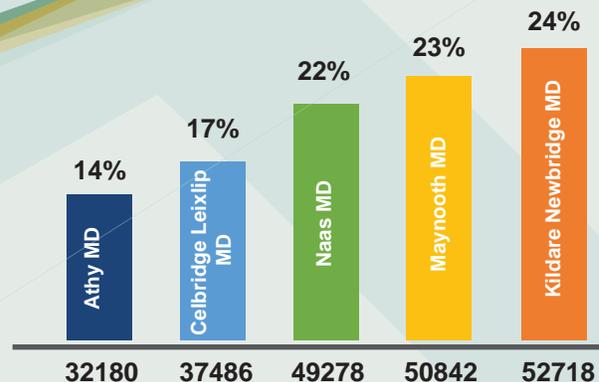
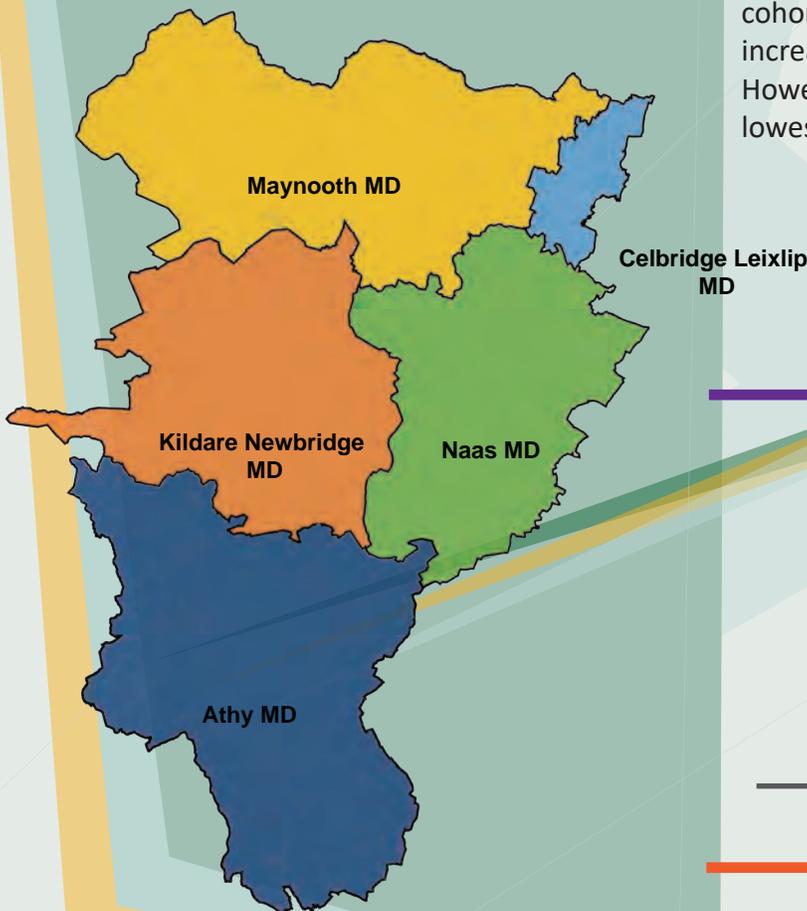


There are five Municipal Districts in County Kildare. Kildare Newbridge MD has the most people (52,718), followed by the Maynooth MD (50,842), Naas MD (49,278), Celbridge Leixlip MD (37,486) and the Athy MD (32,180).

Kildare has the highest rate of young people aged 0 to 24 years in the State. According to the 2016 Census, the population aged 0 to 24 years residing in Kildare was 81,517 and represents 36.6% of the total population - the highest rate in the State.

Kildare has a geographically varied population density. As a county, Kildare is the 8th most densely populated county in the State. However, approximately 72% of the county's population live on 5% of the county's total land area, with the northeast of the county having the highest population densities.

The '65 and over' age cohort has rapidly increased in Kildare, and now represents almost 10% of the total population living in the county. Since 2011 this cohort has increased by 32% which is a major increase in the older population across the county. However, Kildare's '65 and over' age cohort is the 2nd lowest rate in the State.



Population by Municipal District

## What will the Strategy hope to achieve?

### The key Goals of the Strategy are:

- To create a vision for Open Space and outdoor recreation provision in County Kildare,
- To identify existing deficiencies and future opportunities,
- To assess the play and recreation needs of a growing population across all age groups,
- To determine the supply and demand for open spaces and recreational amenity,
- To optimise natural resources and green infrastructure, with a focus on biodiversity,
- To consider a hierarchy of different open spaces at the County and Municipal District level,
- To guide the future provision of open spaces throughout County Kildare, by informing policies and objectives in the Kildare County Development Plan and Local Area Plans,
- To engage with sports clubs across the County to assess their capacity and their evolving/growing needs,

Through engagement with the public, it is envisaged that the Strategy will guide future development of open spaces and recreational facilities throughout the county by setting short, medium and long term goals, it will include an Implementation and Monitoring programme and it will identify potential funding sources.

The new Strategy will replace the Kildare Open Space Strategy 2011.



## What we want to know

Is there an adequate quantity and quality of play, open space and recreational facilities in your area for your needs/age group? Or for your family members?

What are County Kildare's strengths in open space and outdoor recreation? What's working well and should be protected and strengthened?

What does County Kildare lack? What needs fixing and how might it be fixed?

Where are the opportunities to improve open space and outdoor recreation facilities in your area? Or around the County?



How do you think the Strategy can provide for good connectivity for recreational walking and cycling purposes?

How can natural resources and biodiversity be protected whilst facilitating recreational uses?

Has the Covid 19 Pandemic changed the role of open space for the future? If so, how?

What are your ideas for open space in your local area?

## User Satisfaction Survey

As well as seeking your general ideas about open space provision throughout the County, we are also seeking your specific views as a user of parks or outdoor recreation facilities in County Kildare that you use on a regular basis. You can complete our User Satisfaction Survey online: <https://consult.kildarecoco.ie/en/surveys>

## Get in touch

Submissions can be made online or posted to us in the Planning Department of Kildare County Council during a 6 week consultation period. Submissions must be made before 5pm on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020.

Online: Consult - <https://consult.kildarecoco.ie/en>

Or Postal Address:  
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