



# Kildare Play Strategy 2018-2028



Comhairle Contae Chill Dara  
Kildare County Council



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# Foreword from the Mayor

Kildare County Council has prepared a Play Strategy to inform the future provision of play and recreation in Kildare. The strategy is being developed to inform the future provision of outdoor play and recreation in Kildare over the next 10 years. This is in recognition of the importance of play to support the development of healthy, active children and young people in the county and the fact that over 30% of the population is aged between 0-18.

Extensive consultation has been carried out across the county with various ages groups of children and with the public in an online survey. The opinions and data gathered from this has been used to develop an overall vision for the county which is to have Kildare recognised as a child friendly county and a leader in public play & recreation provision. Building on this the strategy there are five themes relating to:

- Public Awareness, Education and Communication,
- Public Realm & Play, Recreation Infrastructure,
- Health & Well Being,
- Environment, Culture & Heritage
- Partnerships & Collaboration.

A series of objectives and actions have been developed under these themes to develop and improve the provision of play and recreation for 1-18 year olds in Kildare.

I would like to thank Cllr Kevin Byrne Chairperson of the Community & Culture Strategic Policy Committee, the other members of the committee and all of the many stakeholders for contributing and developing the strategy. I look forward to the implementation of this strategy over the next 10 years in Kildare.

**Cllr Martin Miley,  
Mayor of Kildare**



# Foreword from the Chief Executive

Kildare County Council in the last 10 years has invested approximately €5m providing 23 playgrounds across the county. However play and recreation does not revolve solely around playgrounds. This strategy sets out Kildare County Council's objectives towards the further development of play and recreation in the county for the next 10 years. The strategy builds on playgrounds we have provided, support to youth groups through grants, Comhairle na Nog and Play Day. The strategy also highlights how other functions such as Planning, Public Realm, Transportation, Housing, Libraries, Culture, Heritage and Community also have a role in the provision of play and recreation and how Kildare County Council will involve these to improve that provision.

I would like to thank all those involved who contributed to the consultation and preparation of the strategy and I look forward to supporting its delivery.

**Peter Carey,**  
**Chief Executive**



# Introduction

The last two decades has seen Kildare experience the second fastest growing population in the country (Central Statistics Office 2016). Kildare currently has a population of 222,504 making it the fifth largest local authority in the state. This growth is due in part to the higher cost of housing in the capital, families moving to more affordable housing in the suburbs, good transport links to and from Dublin via public transport and major motorways for commuting purposes. This population growth is reflected in our young population. Kildare has the highest rate of young people in the country, representing 37% of the total county population. This equates to over 80,000 young people aged 0-24 years in the county. Moreover, Kildare has the 4th highest rate of 0-4 year olds, and the 2nd highest rate of 5-12 year olds, in the State (Kildare Local Economic & Community Plan 2016 – 2021). Kildare County Council now wish to develop a Play and Recreational Policy which will guide and inform the development of play and recreational opportunities in Kildare as recommended within the Kildare Local Economic and Community Plan 2016 – 2021. This policy provides a very important framework to guide opportunities to develop and support our young and growing population.

The national policies which underpin the need to develop a play strategy are:

-  National Play Policy Ready, Steady, Play, as published by the Department of Health and Children, 2004.
-  Teenspace - The National Recreation Policy for Young People (2007)
-  Better Outcomes Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020
-  National Strategy On Children And Young People's Participation In Decision-Making 2015-2020
-  Healthy Ireland - A Framework for a Framework for Improved Health and Well Being 2013-2025.

In the context of County Kildare the policies which are relevant and inform the development of a play strategy are:

-  The Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023
-  Kildare Local Economic & Community Plan 2016-2021
-  Kildare Culture and Creative Strategy 2018-2022

The aim of Kildare Play Strategy is to identify the play and recreational needs of children and young people growing up in Kildare from 0-18. To inform our policy over the winter of 2016 and early spring of 2017, 411 children and young people across the five municipal areas of Kildare between the ages of 3 – 17 years of age took part in 23 consultation workshops lasting 60 – 90 minutes. Additionally 1,257 parents living in Kildare, who collectively parent 2,525 children and young people contributed via an online questionnaire. In addition key stakeholders both internal and external to Kildare County Council took part in two facilitated workshops.

Following on from this consultation exercise a play strategy has been developed for Kildare setting out a vision, mission statement, value and themes. A series of objectives and actions have been developed under each theme.





## Vision

Our Vision is to have Kildare recognised as a childfriendly county and a leader in public play & recreation provision



## Mission

To promote, develop and support play & recreation in Kildare



## Values

**Inclusiveness:** We aim to create accessible play and recreation opportunities for children, young people and their families in Kildare

**Best Practice:** We aim to use best practise in the provision of play and recreation for childreand young people in Kildare

**Collaboration and Partnership:** We aim to consult and collaborate with all key stakeholders to improve play and recreation provision in Kildare

**Integrity:** We undertake our work with integrity, transparency, and in an ethical manner at all times

# Themes

**1**

**Public Awareness  
Education and  
Communication**

**2**

**Public Realm & Play  
and Recreation  
Infrastructure**

**3**

**Health &  
Well Being**

**4**

**Environment,  
Culture & Heritage**

**5**

**Partnerships  
& Collaboration**

# 1

## Public Awareness Education and Communication



	Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
1.1	To ensure that the findings and learning from the consultation undertaken for this strategy informs play and recreation developments in Kildare.	To make the consultation and research findings carried out for the policy available to the public	KCC CYPSC	2018-2028
1.2	To promote play and recreation in Kildare	Provide information on the Council website on existing playgrounds around the county	KCC	2018-2019
		Continue to hold the Annual Play Day and develop the range of events and the target audience	KCC	2018-2028
		Investigate the promotion of play and recreation with the programme of festivals held throughout the county annually	KCC and Festival Organisers	2019
		Continue to develop outdoor play and recreation facilities in our libraries	KCC	2018-2028
1.3	To research how and whom existing play spaces and playgrounds are used to inform the future design of play spaces in Kildare	Survey existing playgrounds to identify trends in use.	KCC & local communities	2018-2021

	Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
1.4	Provide ongoing training and development in play and recreation provision and design for Kildare County Council Staff	Identify skill & knowledge deficits and training which can address these	KCC	2018-2028
		Ensure all staff are trained and vetted for child protection.	KCC	2018-2028
1.5	To ensure that parents, children, young people and the wider community are consulted on an on-going basis in the planning, development & use of play and recreation amenities	Develop a user-friendly consultation process & tools for use by Kildare County Council staff in consulting with children & young people.	KCC	2018-2028
		Train Kildare County Council staff & relevant others in consultation process & tools.	KCC	2018-2020
		Make parents, children, young people and the wider community aware of the system & process for inputting into the planning & development of new play & recreation amenities, including those in housing development and public spaces.	KCC	2018-2028
		Act as an information hub and support service for communities setting up playgrounds	KCC	2018-2028

	Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
1.6	Promote STEAM (Science, Technology Education Arts & Maths)	Increase the range of activities in playgrounds and the public realm which promote STEAM	KCC & Partners	2018-2028
1.7	Promote education in numeracy in play	Provide equipment in playgrounds and the public realm which develop numeracy skills	KCC	2018-2028
1.8	Promote the Irish Language	Develop facilities and tools to promote the Irish language through play	KCC	2018-2028



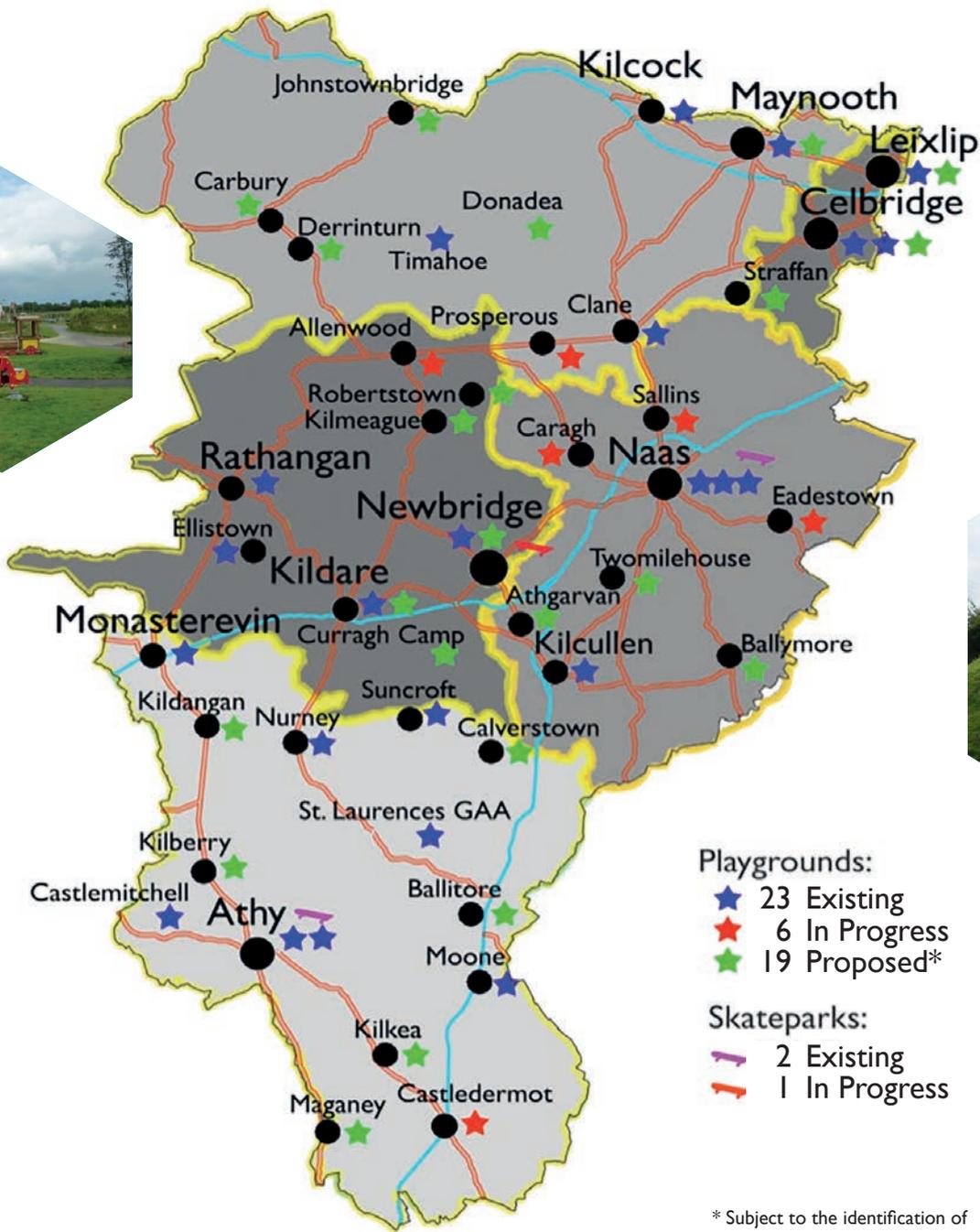
# 2



## Public Realm & Play and Recreation Infrastructure



	Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
2.1	Continue to develop public playgrounds which comply with best practise in relation to European Safety Standards	Ensure all playgrounds meet European Safety Standards	KCC	2018-2028
		Continue the annual programme of safety inspections and independent safety inspections	KCC	2018-2028
		To develop play with risk	KCC	2018-2028
2.2	Continue to develop a network of playgrounds throughout the county	Identify locations in towns and villages as outlined in the County Settlement Centres (see Fig 1)	KCC & local communities	2018-2028
		To develop a programme for the refurbishment and improvement of the existing playgrounds which are 8 years or older.	KCC	2018-2028
		Continue the annual programme of maintenance and safety inspections in existing playgrounds	KCC	2018-2028
		Continue and develop partnerships with sporting and community organisations to deliver and promote play.	KCC	2018-2028



\* Subject to the identification of suitable sites and resources.

	Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
2.3	To provide best practise for the design of playgrounds and play spaces	Facilitate where possible the inclusion of zip lines, and trees within playground designs larger swing slides and monkey bars identified as the most popular play equipment in the consultation for this strategy.	KCC	2018-2028
2.4	To provide accessible play opportunities	To continue to use existing accessible equipment which is popular for disabilities. These include the basket swing, wide slide, swings with harnesses and sensory equipment identified in the consultation for this strategy.	KCC	2018-2028
		Increase the diversity of accessible play equipment in playgrounds in consultation with disability representative groups.	KCC & Disability Groups & Organisations	2018-2028
		To provide family friendly playgrounds in Kildare	KCC	2018-2028

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	
2.5	Ensure that the built environment is child friendly and accessible for children	Develop a check list for developers of new housing estates to comply with when applying for planning permission in relation to play friendly design.	KCC	2018-2028
		Promote permeability within towns villages and housing estates and between estates to facilitate to allow children to access play space safely and facilitate opportunities for them to play and socialise.	KCC	2018-2028
		Ensure that back gardens are kept as part of housing developments given the importance identified in the strategy consultation.	KCC	2018-2028
		Promote the use of best practice guidelines in the design of outdoor play spaces	KCC	2018-2028
		Develop cycle lanes to facilitate easier access to play and recreational opportunities for children and allow for independent mobilisation	KCC	2018-2028

	Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
2.5	Ensure that the built environment is child friendly and accessible for children	Provide and improve public lighting around the county to improve safety and access to public spaces	KCC	2018-2028
		Recognise the use of paths and roads as play spaces and that design of these is considered in public realm projects	KCC	2018-2028
		Investigate the feasibility of indoor play spaces and all weather play facilities to overcome weather as a barrier to play identified in the consultation for this strategy	KCC	2018-2028
		Investigate the feasibility of access to wifi in public open spaces which was identified in the consultation for this strategy.	KCC	2018-2028
		Encourage and promote imaginative and innovative design of public realm to cater for free and structured play & recreation and allow children to socialise.	KCC	2018-2028
2.6	To develop appropriate play and recreation spaces for older young people (teens) in which they feel welcome and safe	Taking account of the research findings develop a pilot project in the county in relation to play & recreation spaces for teens.	KCC	2018-2028

# 3

## Health & Well Being



	Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
3.1	Promote play & recreation as for health benefits	Promote activity and exercise in children and young people in conjunction with Kildare Sports Partnership	KCC & HI	2018-2028
		Develop play opportunities for children & young people which develop their strength flexibility and co-ordination	KCC	2018-2028
		Promote play as one of the providers and protectors of physical and mental health and wellbeing	KCC	2018-2028

4

# Environment, Culture & Heritage



Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	
4.1	To provide natural open spaces and opportunities for children and young within the county to play and socialise	Promote the existing natural amenities in the county which provide play opportunities	KCC & Partners	2018-2028
		Develop natural play areas in close proximity to woodlands, rivers, grassland, canal	KCC	2018-2028
		Develop activities within natural play and recreation resources to encourage their uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “mud and mischief” events</li> <li>• Natural treasure hunts</li> <li>• Historical treasure hunts</li> <li>• Wet and wild days</li> <li>• Biodiversity of parks and open spaces</li> </ul>	KCC	2018-2028
		Develop appropriate forms of interpretation, for built, biodiversity and cultural heritage of parks, to encourage exploration of Kildare Parks.	KCC	2018-2028
		Promote & develop outdoor classrooms where feasible with the appropriate educational material for use within them.	KCC	2018-2028
		Develop & promote child friendly events in conjunction with Biodiversity Week, Culture Night and Heritage Week.	KCC	2018-2028

# 5

## Partnerships



Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	
5.1	To develop and continue partnerships with other state and semi state organisations with a remit for children, young people play and recreation	Investigate the feasibility of developing play and recreation facilities and opportunities around forests and canals and other public amenities owned by other public bodies such as Waterways Ireland, Coillte and the Department of Defence	KCC	2018-2028
		Map and promote, in partnership with Waterways Ireland, Coillte, and IPCC, the natural play resources in Co Kildare	KCC	2018-2028
		Continue existing partnerships with Children and Young Persons Services Committee and the County Kildare Childcare Committee	KCC, CPYSC, CKCC	2018-2028
		Seek the input of the Youth Officer for Kildare into the development of play in the county.	KCC & KWETB	2018-2028

	Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
5.2	Continue to develop partnerships with communities throughout Kildare	Promote and support community involvement in the location, design and management of existing and new play facilities and spaces	KCC	2018-2028
5.3	To seek the co-operation of internal Departments in Kildare County Council in the implementation of the findings in the consultation for the strategy	Promote play and its incorporation into other functions ie planning, transportation, Sports Partnership, Libraries and Arts & ISP	KCC	2018-2028



Thank you

# Acknowledgements

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Cllr Bernard Caldwell, Community & Culture Strategic Policy Committee

Cllr Carmel Kelly, Community & Culture Strategic Policy Committee

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Mr Dermot O'Donnell, Community & Culture Strategic Policy Committee

Ms Sonya Kavanagh, Director of Services

Mr Simon Wallace, Senior Executive Parks Superintendent

Ms Emma Berney, Coordinator Kildare Children and Young Persons Committee

Ms Julie McNamara, Chief Executive Officer County Kildare Childcare Committee

Ms Catriona O'Toole Maynooth University, Lecturer in Psychology of Education and Course Leader of the Masters in Education

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Mr Michael Hurley, Health & Safety Officer

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Ms Sharon Whelan, Executive Architect, Housing Department

Ms Laura Cusack, FAI Development Officer

Ms Susan Bookle - LCDC Co-ordinator

Ms Marian Higgins, County Librarian

Ms Lucina Russell, Arts Officer

Ms Sandra Turner, Senior Executive Librarian

Ms Bridget Loughlin, Heritage Officer







Comhairle Contae Chill Dara  
**Kildare County Council**