

Senior Administrative Officer,
Planning Department
Kildare County Council
Aras Chill Dara
Devoy Park
Naas
Co. Kildare

24th May 2022

Our Ref: 21040

RE: Submission to the Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023-29

Dear Sir/ Madam,

1.0 Introduction

On behalf of our client, Beans Land, c/o Block F4, Maynooth Business Campus, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, we wish to make this submission to the Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029.

Kildare County Council has sought public comment on the policies and provisions which are set out in the Draft County Development Plan 2023 – 2029. We are promoting the change in definition for Celbridge from Self Sustaining Town to a Self Sustaining Growth Town, similar to Newbridge, Leixlip, Kildare and Athy. This is an appropriate approach due to its identification as a large scale strategic residential and economic development area under the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) as set out in the Eastern Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031 which envisage Celbridge as a growth area. This would enable a greater level of development, both residential and employment, to be delivered in this town in line with the highly sustainable nature of its public transport facilities in the area, existing employment in the area, and its potential for growth. This is discussed further below.

It is also necessary, in order to ensure appropriate, managed and sustainable development, that zoning is provided for development in this Development Plan and is not left for local area plans. To ensure appropriate development is achieved this site should be zoned for residential or at the very least a masterplan for the lands around Crodaun to enable this growth in an appropriate plan led manner.

We would also request that Actions under UD A2, as part of policy UD P2, includes an action for the Council to prepare a Masterplan/ Urban Design Framework for the Crodaun area in conjunction with the LAP for Celbridge, to enable the delivery of this land. This land due to its proximity to existing housing development and the strategic development of the area through the last Development Plan along with its proximity to Celbridge town centre is an ideal location to provide for the delivery of new housing and employment, resulting in a highly sustainable development.

2.0 SETTLEMENT STRATEGY & CELBRIDGE

Table 4.2 of the Regional Spatial Economic Strategy for Eastern & Midland Region outlines the Settlement Hierarchy for the region including the main towns in County Kildare.

On the Hierarchy below “Dublin City & suburbs” and “Regional Growth Centres” are “Key Towns” which include Maynooth in the Metropolitan Area, and Naas within the Core Region.

At the next level down in the hierarchy are “Self-Sustaining Growth Towns” which are defined as settlements *“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.”*

Below that category are “Self-Sustaining Towns” which are defined as settlements *“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.”*

The RSES does not identify individual towns for either category but are to be defined in development plans.

Settlement Typology	Description	Areas		
		Metropolitan	Core Region	Gateway Region
Dublin City and suburbs	International business core with a highly concentrated and diversified employment base and higher order retail, arts, culture and leisure offer. Acts as national transport hub with strong inter and intra-regional connections and an extensive commuter catchment.	Dublin City and suburbs		
Regional Growth Centres	Regional Growth Centres are large towns with a high level of self-sustaining employment and services that act as regional economic drivers and play a significant role for a wide catchment area.		Drogheda	Athlone Dundalk
Key Towns	Large economically active service and/or county towns that provide employment for their surrounding areas and with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as growth drivers to complement the Regional Growth Centres.	Bray Maynooth Swords	Navan Naas Wicklow-Rathnew	Graigucullen (Carlow) Longford Mullingar Tullamore Portlaoise
Self-Sustaining Growth Towns	i) Self-Sustaining Growth 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.	To be defined by development plans.		
Self-Sustaining Towns	ii) Self-Sustaining 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.			

The Draft County Development Plan designates Celbridge (along with Kilcock and Monasterevin) as a “Self-Sustaining Town” whilst Kildare town, Athy, Newbridge and Leixlip are designated in the higher order settlement category as Self-Sustaining Growth Towns. This is despite the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan identifying Maynooth, Leixlip, Celbridge and Kilcock as large scale strategic residential and economic development areas that will deliver significant development in the metropolitan area.

Hierarchy	Description	Locations
Key Towns	Large towns which are economically active that provide employment for their surrounding areas. High quality transport links and the capacity to act as regional drivers to complement the Regional Growth Centres.	Naas Maynooth
Self-Sustaining Growth Towns	Moderate level of jobs and services.	Newbridge Leixlip Kildare Town Athy
Self-Sustaining Towns	High levels of population growth and a weak employment base.	Celbridge Kilcock Monasterevin Clane
Towns	Local service and employment functions in close proximity to higher order urban areas.	Sallins Kilcullen Kill Prosperous Rathangan Castledermot Derrinturn

Table 2.7 - Settlement Hierarchy and Typology County Kildare

Celbridge should be placed in the same category as Leixlip as a Self Sustaining Growth Town if Kildare is to achieve “*the critical mass in the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) area*” as set out in section 2.12 of the Draft Development Plan.

We note that the letter from the Office of the Planning Regulator on the 8th March 2021 regarding the Issues Paper identifies that “*a key challenge for the forthcoming plan will be to ensure that housing is delivered in the higher tier towns that have existing or planned employment and access to good public transport options.*”

It also notes that “*In view of GHG emissions from transport (which are second only to agricultural emissions in terms of national emissions¹⁰), and the energy use for transport (highest energy use by sector, accounting for 42% total final consumption in 2018 11), it will be essential for the planning authority to achieve a significant modal shift in the county in order to meet the requirements under section 10(2)(n) of the Act.*”

The summary of this letter advises Kildare “*that a significant proportion of the county’s future homes arising from the housing supply targets, will need to be allocated to the designated key towns and larger settlements consistent with the RSES (including MASP). This settlement hierarchy and associated housing supply targets should also inform the quantum of land zoned for residential development in other settlements, with the allowance allocated to the rural remainder.*”

The planning authority should revisit the categorisation and positioning of settlements in the hierarchy having regard to the asset based approach outlined in the RSES.”

The current draft Development Plan has not taken on board this advice from the OPR by leaving Celbridge as a lower order designation. This is counter-productive and contrary to the policies of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and RSES. Celbridge is the third largest town in the County (20,288 as per 2016 Census) and only slightly less than that of Naas (21,393) and Newbridge (22,742). It is significantly larger than the other North Kildare towns in the Metropolitan Area (Leixlip - 15,504, Maynooth – 14,585 and Kilcock, 6,093). As is the level of growth attributed to Celbridge. It is noted

that while Kildare Town and Athy are identified as Self Sustaining Growth Towns, the level of growth is less than that of Celbridge and it would therefore be considered appropriate to place these into Self Sustaining Towns and move Celbridge up into the category above.

Table 2.8 – Settlement Hierarchy – Population and Housing Unit Targets Q1-2023 to Q2-2028

Settlement Type	Settlement Name	Census 2016 Population	Settlements percentage per total County population	2021 Population Estimate (based on % growth from 2011-2016)	Housing & Population Target %	Population Target 2023 to 2028 (end of Q4) (persons)	Housing Target 2023 to 2028 (end of Q4) (units) in accordance with HSTGs	Residential Zoned Land Requirement (ha)	Target Residential Density (UPH)
County	Kildare	222,504		235387		260533	9144		
Key Town	Naas	21,393	9.60%	22632	14.9%	3747	1362	40	35-50
	Maynooth (MASP)	14,585	6.60%	15429	10.90%	2741	997 ^a		35-50
Self-Sustaining Growth Towns	Newbridge	22,742	10.20%	24059	11.60%	2917	1061	35	35-50
	Leixlip	15,504	7%	16402	10.20%	2565	933	31	35-50
	Kildare Town	8,634	3.90%	9134	4.70%	1182	430	14	35-40
	Athy	9,677	4.30%	10237	4.80%	1207	439	15	35-40
Self-Sustaining Towns	Celbridge	20,288	9.10%	21463	10.00%	2515	914	30	35-40
	Kilcock	6,093	2.70%	6446	4.00%	1006	366	12	35-40
	Monasterevin	4,246	1.90%	4492	2.60%	654	238	8	35-40
	Clane	7,280	3.27%	7702	2.40%	604	219	7	35-40
Towns	Sallins	5,849	2.62%	6188	1.90%	478	174	6	35-40
	Kilcullen	3,710	1.70%	3925	2.50%	629	229	8	35-40
	Kill	3,348	1.50%	3542	1.30%	327	119	4	35-40
	Prosperous	2,333	1.04%	2468	1.00%	251	91	3	30-35
	Rathangan	2,611	1.20%	2762	0.90%	226	82	3	30-35
	Castledermot	1,475	0.70%	1560	0.50%	126	46	2	30-35
	Derrinturn	1,602	0.70%	1695	0.60%	151	55	2	30-35

Celbridge is identified in the RSES, along with Swords, Malahide, Maynooth, Leixlip, Bray and Greystones as a “highly urbanised” settlement in the Metropolitan Area and which has “strong connections with the city.”

Celbridge, along with the adjoining settlements of Leixlip and Maynooth directly benefit from its location adjacent one of the largest employers in the county, Intel Collinstown, which currently employs over 4,000 full time employees and is expected to increase this by a further 1,600 in the coming years.

The town is well served in terms of social infrastructure including schools, retail, healthcare, etc and does not depend on the other North Kildare town for such services.

The town is also well served by public transport in terms of Dublin Bus and Irish Rail and is comparable to the other Kildare Metropolitan centres in this regard. For instance, there are the same number of Dublin city centre bound train services from Celbridge/Hazelhatch train station before 9am weekdays (11 no.) as there are serving Maynooth and Leixlip.

Furthermore, Celbridge is set to benefit from increased public transport services with the Irish Rail proposed DART expansion programme which will see DART services extended to Drogheda, Maynooth - M3 Parkway and Hazelhatch – Celbridge.

It is evident that Celbridge, which currently has good transport links, and also has “capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining” represents a Self-Sustaining Growth Town. This restructuring of the hierarchy is in line with the advice from the OPR.

We therefore request that the planning authority in the Draft Development Plan update the Settlement Statement for the County, in accordance with Policy RPO 4.1 of the RSES, to designate Celbridge as a “Self-Sustaining Growth Town”.

We also request that the Development Plan should include a review of land zoning in the main settlements as part of the review process and no delay this until the production of the Local Area Plans in line with the advice from the OPR.

3.0 FUTURE POPULATION & HOUSING TARGET FOR CELBRIDGE

It is critical that the next County Development Plan acknowledges the fact that Celbridge is the 3rd largest town in the County, ahead of Maynooth, Leixlip or Athy and to facilitate its continued growth going forward which it currently does not do in the Draft Development Plan.

It is also noted that the population projections are based on the Census 2016 which is now out of date (April 2021 CSO estimates enclosed with this submission) resulting in outdated growth figures in the NPF in terms of both population growth and housing need. The NPF sets a growth of 5.2 million people by 2026, 5.4 million by 2031 and almost 5.7 million by 2040. We note that in April 2021, the population for the state had grown to 5.01 million (CSO.ie), and is currently estimated to be 5.02 million, an increase of 0.75% on last year (Macrotrends.net). It is also noted that Ireland has the highest birth rate and the lowest death rate in the EU27. This increased growth rate, above that projected by the NPF results in the population targets being skewed. The difference in expected and actual growth is clearly demonstrated in Dublin but is replicated across the county. The population of Dublin is estimated to be 1.43 million, which exceeds the minimum population target for Dublin in 2040, i.e. 18,000 in excess of the 2040 target.

It is also noted that the NPF identifies that there is a need for 25,000 new homes between 2018 and 2040 to meet the housing needs. The NPF identifies that there was a housing deficit built up since 2010 and that *“To meet projected population and economic growth as well as increased household formation, annual housing output will need to increase to 30,000 to 35,000 homes per annum in the years to 2027”*. However, due to the unforeseen growth in population, this deficit has been compounded resulting in a continuation of the well reported housing crisis within Ireland.

Table 4.1 | Ireland 2040: Targeted Pattern of City Population Growth

City	Population 2016	Population Growth to 2040 ²⁷		Minimum Target Population 2040
		% Range	People	
Dublin - City and Suburbs	1,173,000	20-25%	235,000 - 293,000	1,408,000
Cork - City and Suburbs	209,000	50-60%	105,000 - 125,000	314,000
Limerick - City and Suburbs	94,000	50-60%	47,000 - 56,000	141,000
Galway - City and Suburbs	80,000	50-60%	40,000 - 48,000	120,000
Waterford - City and Suburbs	54,000	50-60%	27,000 - 32,000	81,000

Figure 1 NPF Population targets up to 2040

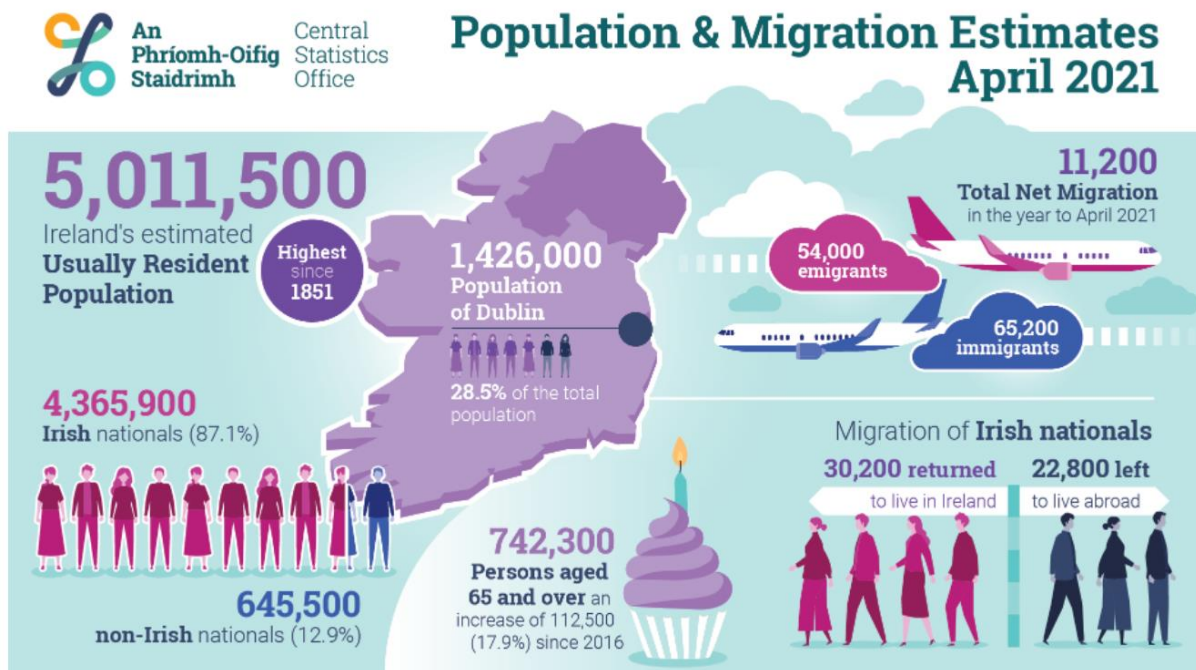


Figure 2 CSO Data April 2021

While the 2028 population for the County is estimated at c.260,533 which is in line with the NPF 2031 projection for the County. These figures, as demonstrated above, are already below the current growth rate with Ireland exceeding the forecast growth rate already. This needs to be addressed and flexibility needs to be provided within in any plan to take account of the findings of Census 2022.

How this additional housing demand is distributed within the County is critical. The table below estimates the 2023 split of residential units across the County (using the 2016 Census split). It is noted that the OPR advised in its letter dated the 8th March 2021 that *“A critical issue for the forthcoming development plan is to ensure that the extent of land zoned for residential development in the county’s towns including settlements that have a statutory LAP is aligned with the population projections and housing supply targets set out in the forthcoming core strategy. This will be necessary in order to demonstrate compliance with national and regional policies for compact and sequential growth, and to achieve a sustainable pattern of development in the county.*

Your authority is required to ensure that the development plan provides sufficient clarity and certainty in terms of the measures proposed under section 10(2)(n) to direct the preparation of future local area plans made consequent to the development plan. In this regard, the Office would strongly advise that all land use zoning objectives for your functional area should be included as part of the development plan rather than delayed to the preparation of local area plans.”

It is noted that despite Celbridge expected to get some of the highest growth rate in Kildare it is still identified as a Self Sustaining Town rather than a Self Sustaining Growth Town which the other areas are identified as which have a similar projected growth.

The other element that is unclear is the difference between the expected growth rate for the MASP and Core areas will accommodate 50% of the population but will have 62% of the houses which appears to enable the continuation of commuting from non-urban locations which does not appear to be a sustainable approach to development. The population growth should also be closer to 60% for the Core and MASP areas to enable more sustainable development. Finally, as set out in the table, it is also considered that the population growth rate for Kildare is underestimated and it will be considerably higher, given the fact that it is based on old census data and that the housing completion targets have been missed every year across Ireland resulting in the existing housing supply crisis.

Region	Settlement	Housing Target 2023 - 28	Population 2023-28	2023-28 housing %	2023 population % -28
MASP	Maynooth	997	2741	11%	11%
	Celbridge	914	2515	10%	10%
	Leixlip	933	2565	10%	10%
	Kilcock	366	1006	4%	4%
Core	Naas	1362	2741	15%	15%
	Newbridge	1061	2917	12%	12%*
	Subtotal	5,633	15,491*	62%	62%*
	Others	3,511	9,655*	38%	38%*
	Total	9,144	25,146	100%	100%

**suggested alternative population targets to ensure more balanced development*

It is critical that the next Development Plan ensure that the main urban centres of the County achieve the majority of the targeted housing delivery.

Achieving the vision for the MASP area which includes the Metropolitan towns in Kildare will require the following objectives to be achieved, as per Section 5.3 of the RSES:

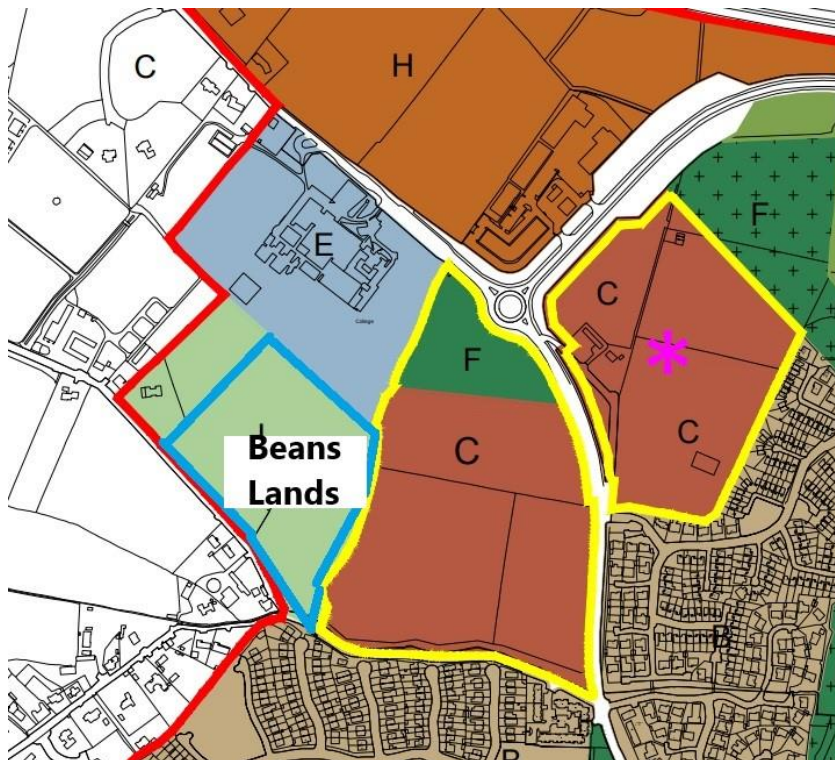
- *“compact sustainable growth”*
- *“accelerated housing delivery”*
- *“a steady supply of sites...to accelerate housing supply”*
- *“growth along existing and proposed high quality public transport corridors and nodes on the expanding public transport network and to support the delivery and integration of ‘Bus Connects’, DART expansion...”*
- *“Alignment of growth with enabling infrastructure”*

To achieve this and as set out in the OPR Letter *“all land use zoning objectives for your functional area should be included as part of the development plan rather than delayed to the preparation of local area plans”*. This will enable a clear vision for continued and sustained residential and population growth which is required within these towns including Celbridge, and in Naas and Newbridge, in the short term.

The table above suggests a distribution of this housing target between the centres based on a housing growth rate range of between c. 30% for each town over the life of the Plan. Celbridge will require sufficient land to facilitate at least 2,515 additional residential units (if not more) which it currently does not have. It is therefore necessary to identify additional lands at Crodaun within the Development Plan, which is appropriately located to the existing KDA and will enable its continued growth and expansion.

4.0 Future Growth of Celbridge

As identified in the Celbridge Local Area Plan, it is essential to continue the consolidation of the growth to date within the Celbridge area. It is noted that all the KDA lands have now been granted permission and new lands are required to accommodate the further growth of Celbridge in this area. To this end it is important to consolidate and infill growth in the town, particularly around Key Development Areas with extant permission to enable sustainable development that can build on existing and permitted community and retail facilities that have been delivered through the LAP. This could be achieved through the continuation of Crodaun on our clients site, which is immediately adjacent to the permitted development in this area. This would continue the provision of the Maynooth Road Gateway confirming it as a key driver for development to the north.



The continued development of this area should be encouraged and enabled to ensure that the existing and proposed facilities, including access to employment in the existing Business Park, and excellent schools and retail, have the population to support their future use and continued development while also providing an attractive gateway into Celbridge in line with the aims of the LAP, National Planning Framework and recent decisions by An Bord Pleanála as an appropriate area for sustainable development.

This strategy has been successful to date as set out in section 12.2.4 KDA 4 – Crodaun and this success should be built on and continued. It was on the basis of the vision for “*a residential area and public park that consolidates development to the north of the town and presents a landscaped edge to the Maynooth Road*” that recent permissions in the area have been granted. This vision should be completed including new road, streets and residential development all of which provide connection to the Beans lands.



Figure 12.3 Design Concept for KDA 4 Crodaun

Proposed amendments to the Development Plan 2023- 2029

We request Kildare County Council in the new Development Plan 2023 – 2029 restructure the Settlement Hierarchy for Kildare to include Celbridge as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town and that the supporting tables this will enable the critical growth identified as required and appropriate by the RSES to be achieved.

We also request that in Action UD A2 is updated to include Lands at Crodaun, Celbridge so that the policy reads as follows:

UD A2	<p>Prepare a series of Masterplans/ Urban Design Frameworks over the lifetime of the Plan, in co-operation with relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Northwest Quadrant, Naas - The Canal Quarter, Naas - Lands at Confey, Leixlip - Dominican Lands, Athy - Lands at St Raphael's/ Oakley Park, Celbridge - Lands at Simmonstown, Celbridge - Collinstown (Strategic Employment Lands), Leixlip - Collegelands (lands to west of Maynooth, adjoining Maynooth university and St Patricks College) - Lands at Crodaun, Celbridge
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We would also request that a review of land zoning in the main settlements including Celbridge is included within the Development Plan now and not delayed until the production of the Local Area Plan. This is in line with the OPR letter which states that *“all land use zoning objectives for your*

functional area should be included as part of the development plan rather than delayed to the preparation of local area plans.”

These lands should be identified for residential development within the lifetime of this Development Plan or at the very least a Strategic Residential Reserve for the long term development of this area, enabling the Development Plan to have the flexibility to meet future residential need and address the rapid growth in population and the housing deficit which are not addressed in the current population forecast as set out in the Development Plan.

These proposed amendments are appropriate and will enable the controlled, planned and sustainable future development of Celbridge in line with the RSES, NPF and National Planning Policy.

3.0 Conclusion

It is evident from the adopted LAP and recent SHD permissions by An Bord Pleanála for development in the area that the vision for Crodaun is appropriate and in line with regional and national planning policy. The continued implementation of this vision to develop Crodaun as a gateway into Celbridge from the north should be facilitated and in accordance with 12.2.4 of the current LAP. As such it is appropriate to identify additional lands at Crodaun to continue the growth of this area. This will enable the continued development of this area and the opportunity for the future growth of the town to be delivered in a highly sustainable manner in accordance with national and regional policy.

First and foremost, however, it is critical that Celbridge, the third largest town in the County, is given a higher ranking in the next Settlement Strategy as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town. Furthermore, the future distribution of population and housing over the next 6 years has to be targeted toward Celbridge and the other main towns in the county, to ensure that the housing targets are reached and are also located optimally within these towns which have the required social and physical infrastructure to accommodate this growth.

We trust that the planning authority will take on board the above submission and look forward to future engagement once the Draft County Development Plan has been published.

Yours,



Trevor Sadler

Enclosed

- CSO Data April 2021
- Irish Times report

CSO April 2021



Population and Migration Estimates, April 2021

COVID-19 Release Information

This publication was compiled during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results contained in this publication reflect some of the demographic and social impacts of COVID-19. Additional information and methodological detail are contained in the background notes of this release.

Main Results

Ireland's population estimated to be just over five million in April 2021

Ireland's population was estimated to be 5.01 million in April 2021, which is the first time the population has risen above five million since the 1851 census, when the comparable population was 5.11 million. See table 1.1 and figure 1.1. The total population on the island of Ireland in 1851 was 6.6 million.

Table 1.1: Population and Migration Estimates

Components of population change	Year ending April 2020	Year ending April 2021
Immigration	85,400	65,200
Emigration	56,500	54,000
Net migration¹	28,900	11,200
<i>(of which Irish nationals)</i>	<i>(500)</i>	<i>(7,300)</i>
Births	58,300	55,500
Deaths	31,200	32,700
Natural increase	27,100	22,800
Population change	55,900	34,000
Population	4,977,400	5,011,500

¹ Net migration = Immigration less Emigration

Open in Excel: [Population and Migration Estimates 2021 Table 1.1 \(XLS 12KB\)](#)

Figure 1.1: Population, 1

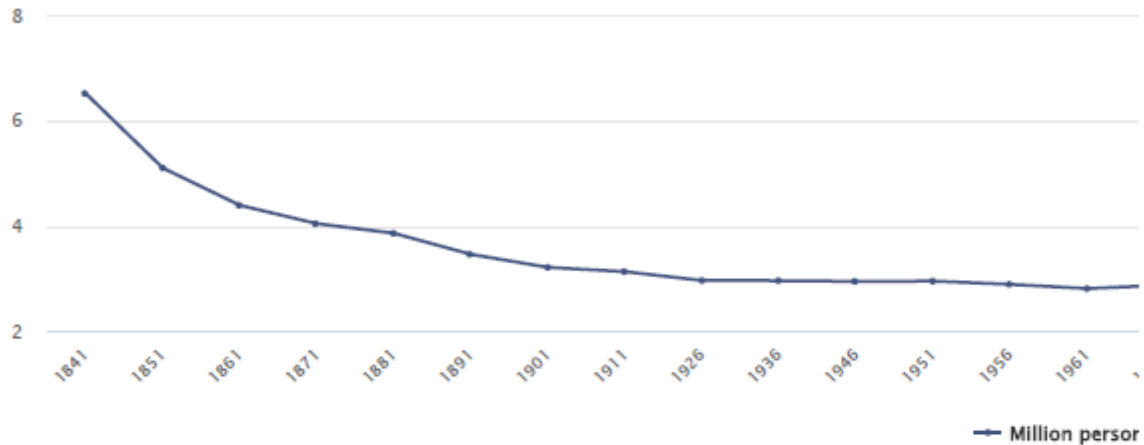


Figure 1.1: Chart data up to and including 1986, is sourced from the Census of Population.

Population growth of 34,000 (+0.7%) in the year to April 2021, the smallest population increase since 2014

The combination of natural increase and positive net migration gave population growth of 34,000 (+0.7%) in the year to April 2021. This was smaller than the rise of 55,900 (1.1%) in the year to April 2020. This is the smallest population gain since 2014 when the population increased by 30,800. See figure 1.2 and table 1.2.

There were 55,500 births and 32,700 deaths in the year to April, giving a natural increase (births less deaths) in the population of 22,800. This is the lowest level of natural increase recorded since the 2000 population estimates. See figure 1.2 and table 1.2.

The number of immigrants to the State in the year to April 2021 is estimated to have decreased by 23.7% to 65,200 from 85,400 in the year to April 2020. The number of emigrants also decreased over the same period to 54,000 from 56,500. These combined flows gave positive net migration, (i.e., more people arrived than left), of 11,200 in the year to April 2021, compared with 28,900 in the previous year, a decline of 61.2%. See figure 1.3 and table 1.2.

Figure 1.2 Annual components of popul:

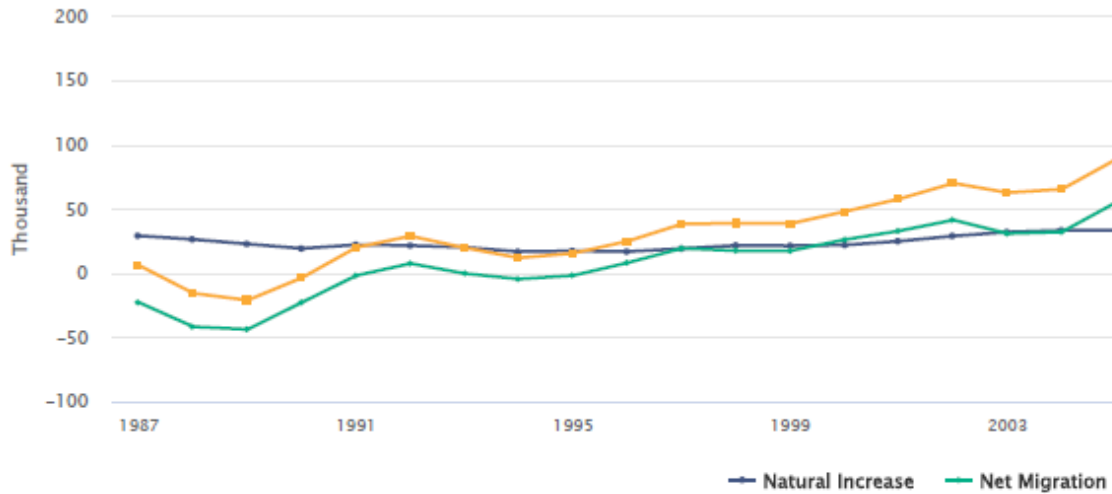
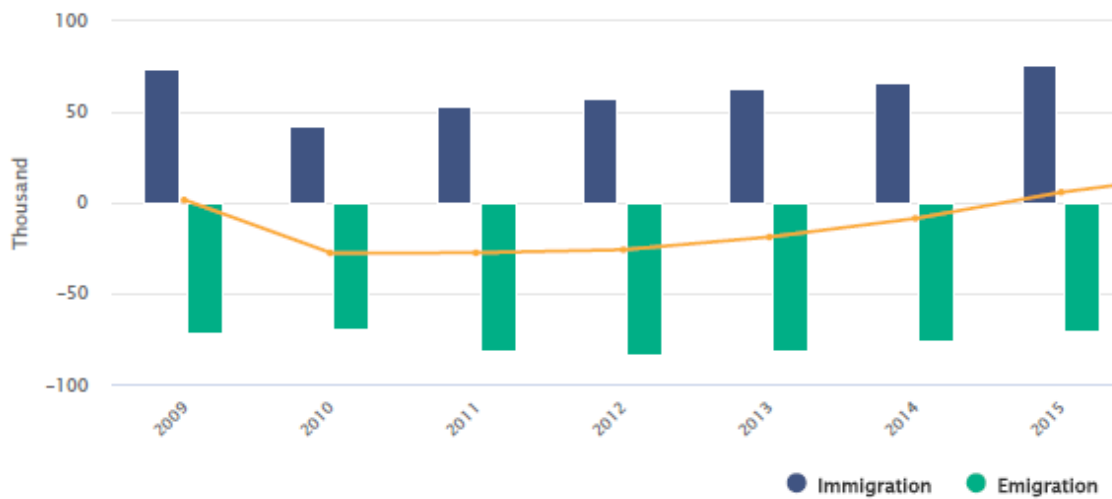


Figure 1.3: Immigration, Emigration and

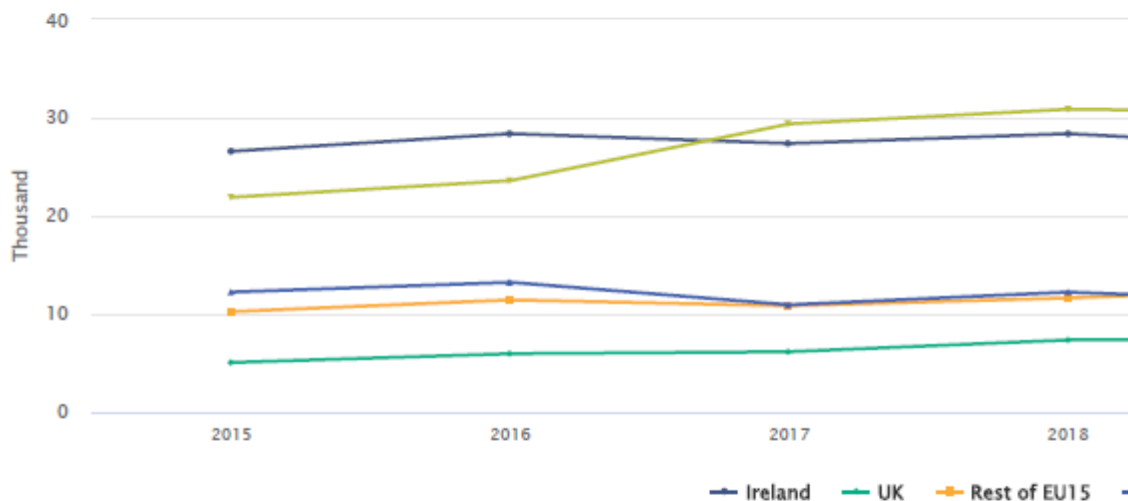


Show Table: Table 1.2 Components of the annual population change, 1987 - 2021

More Irish nationals returning to live in Ireland

There were 30,200 immigrants and 22,800 emigrants who were Irish nationals in the year to April 2021. Therefore, the number of Irish nationals who arrived here to live was just over 7,300 higher than the number who left to live abroad. In contrast, inflows of non-EU nationals (rest of world) declined to 14,100 in the year to April 2021, from 30,400 the previous year, a decrease of 16,300 (-53.6%). See figure 1.4 and table 1.3.

Figure 1.4: Immigration classified by broad r



Show Table: Table 1.3 Estimated Migration classified by Sex and Nationality, 2015 - 2021

Strong migration flows to and from the UK, in the year to April 2021

In the year to April 2021, The UK experienced strong migration flows. 18,200 persons left Ireland to live in the UK, up from 10,000 last year, 19,100 persons moved to Ireland from the UK, up from 15,300 in 2020. See figure 1.5 and table 1.4.

Figure 1.5: Migration flows to and fro

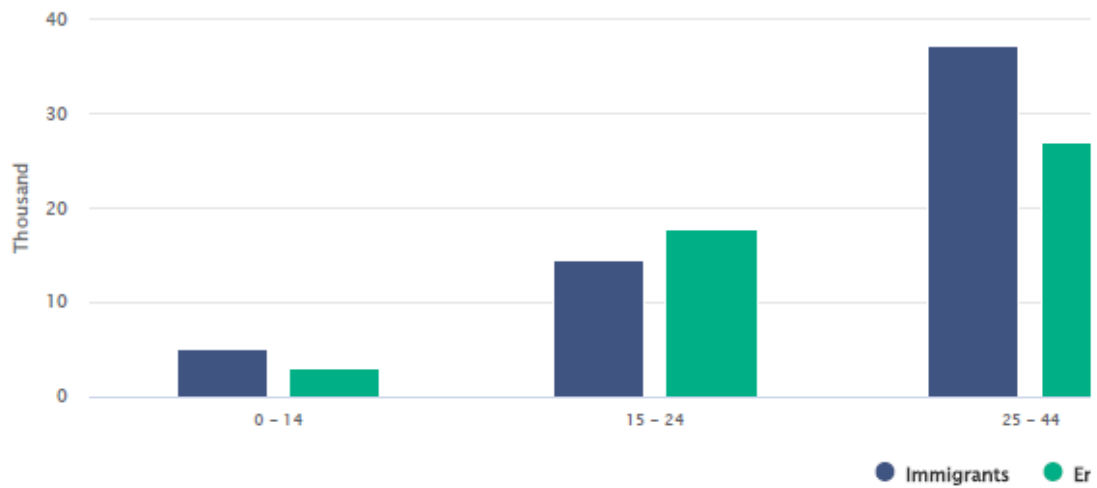


Show Table: Table 1.4 Estimated Migration classified by Sex and Country of Origin/Destination, 2015 - 2021

The majority of migrants were aged between 25-44 and had a 3rd level qualification

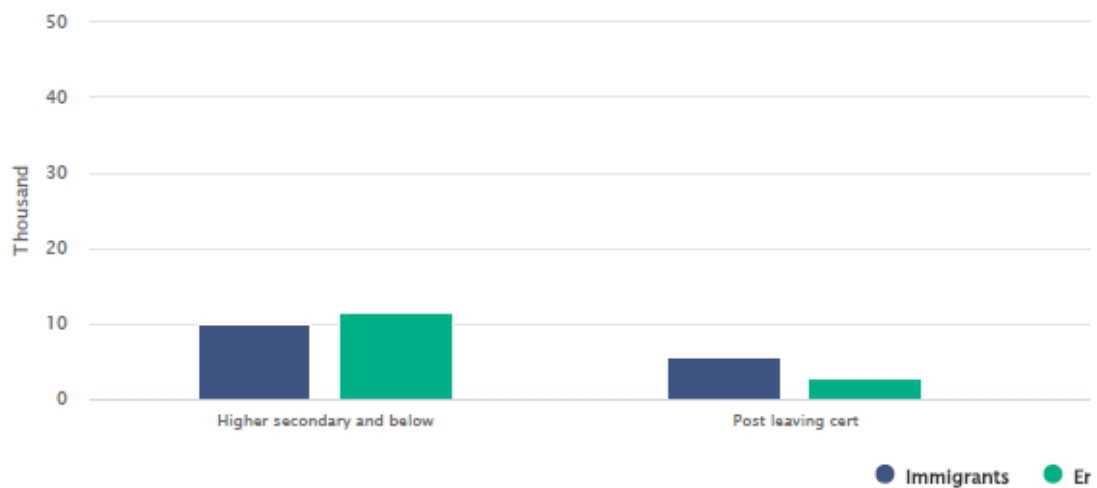
In the year to April 2021, most migrants were aged between 25-44, 37,400 immigrants, about 3 in 5 (57.3%) of the total and 27,000 emigrants, half of the total, were within this age group. See figure 1.6 and table 1.5.

Figure 1.6: Migration classified by age group



In the year to April 2021, 42,600 (70.8%) immigrants aged 15+ had a 3rd level qualification, 32,500 (63.7%) emigrants had a 3rd level qualification. See figure 1.7 and table 1.6.

Figure 1.7: Migration classified by level of education



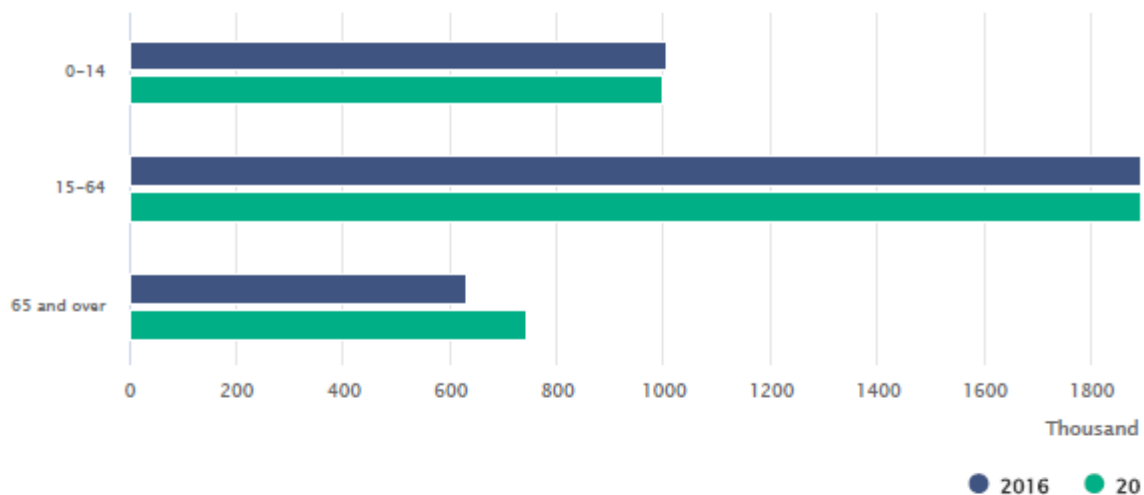
Show Table: Table 1.5 Estimated Migration classified by Sex and Age Group, 2015 - 2021

Show Table: Table 1.6 Estimated Migration (aged 15 and over) classified by Sex and Education Attainment, 2016 - 2021

In April 2021, more than 1 in 7 people living in Ireland were aged 65 or older

There were 742,300 people living in Ireland aged 65 and over in April 2021. Those aged 65 and over are the only group to gain population share between 2016 and 2021, increasing from 13.3% to 14.8% of the total, this equates to a volume increase of 112,500. The traditional working age population i.e. those aged 15-64 have grown by around 170,000 persons since 2016, but have seen their population share decline slightly from 65.5% to 65.3%. The population aged 0-14 has seen its population share decline by 1.3 percentage points (10,000 persons) since 2016. See figure 1.8 and PXStat table of the population classified by single year of age, [PEA11](#).

Figure 1.8: Population by broad age st



Show Table: Table 1.7 Estimated Migration (aged 15 and over) classified by Sex and Principal Economic Status, 2015 - 2021

Show Table: Table 1.8 Estimated Population classified by Sex and Age Group, 2015 - 2021

Show Table: Table 1.9 Estimated Population classified by Sex, Age Group and Region, April 2021

Show Table: Table 1.10 Estimated Population classified by Sex and Nationality, 2015 - 2021

Irish Times September 2021

Bucking the trend: Ireland's population is still growing relatively strongly



[Eoin Burke-Kennedy](#)

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No European country, perhaps no modern country, has experienced a more unique, a more traumatic population trajectory than [Ireland](#). It is the only European country where the population is still lower than it was 170 years ago. [Central Statistics Office \(CSO\)](#) figures, [published on Tuesday](#), put the State's population in April 2021 at 5.01 million. The last time it was over five million was in 1851 when it was 5.11 million. It is also the only country in [Europe](#) where the population is 78 per cent bigger than it was just 60 years ago. In 1961, the population was 2.8 million, an all-time low. If you knew nothing of Ireland's history, knew nothing of the Famine or the country's long pattern of emigration or the State's early and persistent economic failures, you could tell something difficult, something tumultuous had happened just from our demographic footprint.

We missed out on the post-war baby boom, which spurred massive population surges in the US and Europe. In the 1990s, we were still experiencing net outward migration – unique in western European terms back then and a reflection of the economic mismanagement that reigned in the 1970s and 1980s. As historians like to say, the Celtic Tiger was preceded by a Celtic Tortoise.

If we bucked the trend back then, we're still bucking it now. Our population is still growing relatively strongly when other countries are experiencing declines. We have the highest birth rate and the lowest death rate in the EU27.

What you tend to see across the world is that when countries become more prosperous, the birth rate goes down. While the Republic's has been declining since 2008, it is still comparatively strong.

The CSO's 2021 data does point to a marked slowdown in the pace of population growth. The annual change in the year to April 2021 was 34,000, the smallest gain since 2014 and notably lower than 56,000 increase recorded in the previous year.

While some of this slowdown might be what demographers call "trend easing", much of it has to relate to the pandemic, specifically the curbs on international travel.

Inward migration

As [KBC Bank Ireland](#) economist Austin Hughes noted, the slowdown in Irish population growth in 2021 was primarily driven by a sharp fall-off in net migration reflecting health-related restrictions on travel.

Net inward migration was markedly lower at just 11,000 compared to 29,000 in 2020. "While the 'natural' increase (births less deaths) also slowed marginally to 23,000 from 27,000, this was largely due to the persistence of a downward trend in

births rather than a marked change in the death rate that rose only modestly from just over 31,000 to just under 32,000," he says.

"The comparatively rapid increase in Ireland's population offers substantial economic opportunities in the shape of an increasing labour force and less immediate ageing pressures that provide an altogether more supportive backdrop than that now facing many EU countries," Hughes says.

"While there is no automatic relationship between population and GDP growth, Ireland's continuing demographic dividend should provide a positive impetus to economic activity in coming years," he says.

What he's saying here is that our population is being boosted by two forces. First the strong natural increase, which has resulted in a relatively younger, more educated workforce.

Second, our inward migrants tend to be economic migrants rather than refugees. Both these forces have boosted the country's stock of human capital, a point that's often cited by multinationals as a reason for locating here.

Major bottlenecks

Having a bigger, younger, potentially more educated workforce means additional economic output and additional tax revenue, and ultimately a more prosperous society. But if these population trends aren't facilitated with a significant increase in public investment, they can backfire. We've already begun to experience major bottlenecks in housing, health, water and education. Prior to the pandemic, analysts had linked a slowdown in net inward migration to capacity issues. The population of Dublin is now estimated to be 1.43 million, 28.5 per cent of the total population.

Managing these capacity issues is perhaps the biggest challenge facing the Government besides climate change.

Bottlenecks in areas such as health are also likely to become more acute as the population ages. The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) warned the Government recently that future spending pressures linked to demographics – combined with potential declines in corporation tax – are likely to result in higher taxes, not in the longer term, but in the near to medium term.

The CSO figures show those aged 65 and over were the only group to gain population share between 2016 and 2021, increasing from 13.3 per cent to 14.8 per cent of the total, equating to a volume increase of 112,500.

A key problem brewing at the heart of Irish society centres on the interaction between population, housing and pensions. A bigger, younger population needs more houses, which we're struggling to build. This is compounded by the fact that housing has become too expensive in the cities, meaning most young workers must rent. But what happens when these workers retire? Will they be able to afford the requisite rent in retirement and with the meagre level of pension coverage that currently exists?

This article was updated on September 1st as a previous version stated the 1961 population was 2.1 million. This has been corrected.