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# Introduction & Strategic Context



# Chapter 1 Introduction and Strategic Context

**Strategic Vision:** *To build on the strengths of the county in order to improve the quality of life of all residents, through the creation of high-quality job opportunities, by the provision of high-quality residential development supported by adequate community infrastructure, through the provision of a high-quality sustainable transport network, by healthy placemaking and transformational regeneration, by supporting the transition to a low carbon climate resilient environment, by embracing inclusiveness and by enhancing our natural and built environment for future generations.*

## 1.1 Introduction

The Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 is the key strategy document which structures the proper planning and sustainable development of land-use across County Kildare over the six-year statutory time period of the plan. The Development Plan (the Plan) seeks to address the physical, economic, social and environmental needs of the community, in terms of supporting structured new development, protecting the environment, enhancing valued assets and amenities. The preparation of the Plan has regard to key recent development trends and national, regional and local policy documents, in particular, the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern Midland Region (RSES).

The Development Plan relates to the whole functional area of Kildare County Council which includes the five Municipal Districts (see Map 1.1) as follows:

- Naas Municipal District
- Clane-Maynooth Municipal District
- Athy Municipal District
- Celbridge-Leixlip Municipal District
- Kildare-Newbridge Municipal District

## 1.2 Public Sector Duty

All public bodies in Ireland have responsibility, under the Public Sector Duty, to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of their employees, customers, service users, and everyone affected by their policies and plans. This is a legal obligation and is contained in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014. Kildare County Council in preparing the Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 must

- A. assess and identify the human rights and equality issues that are relevant to the land use plan.
- B. identify the policies and practices that they have in place or that they plan to put in place to address these issues and
- C. must report in a manner accessible to the public on their developments and achievement in that regard (such as through the Section 15 (Planning and Development Acts) 2 Year Progress Report on Implementation of the CDP).

Kildare County Council, across all its plan-making functions is committed to ensuring that there is a culture of respect for human rights and equality in the plans we prepare and for the people whom the plans effect. As part of aligning and integrating our Public Sector Duty with our strategic plan making processes, Kildare County Council will seek to ensure all relevant policies, objectives and actions of our plans, address social inclusion, spatial justice and accessibility to all amenities and services. These policies, objectives and actions will be implemented and delivered through the development management processes.

While many of the policies, objectives and actions of the Draft County Development Plan align with the Public Sector Duty, of particular note;

- **Policy SC P3** where it is the stated policy of the Council to *promote social inclusion and spatial justice through equality of access to services and facilities and to assist in the removal of barriers to full participation in society*
- **Policy SC P5** to *“Ensure all buildings, public and open spaces and recreational and amenity areas are accessible for people with disabilities, having regard to the Building Regulations, the objectives of ‘Building for Everyone’ (National Disability Authority) and ‘Access for the Disabled’ (nos. 1 to 3) (National Rehabilitation Board).*
- **Policy SC P8** to *“Consider ethnicity and cultural diversity in planning for the needs of communities and to support the provision of services and community facilities that reflect the varying needs of ethnic minority groups to facilitate ease of integration into local communities”.*

Of further note is **SC O17** where it is a stated objective of the Council to *“work with all target groups, including young people, older people, people with disabilities, migrants, ethnic minorities, including the Traveller Community, to advance and encourage their full participation in society”* and **Objective SC O39** to *“Support the actions and objectives set out in the Kildare Integration Strategy 2014-2019 and the National Migration Integration Strategy 2017-2020 (or any subsequent updated strategies)”*. Further relevant policies, objectives and actions are set out in Chapter 10 of the Draft plan.

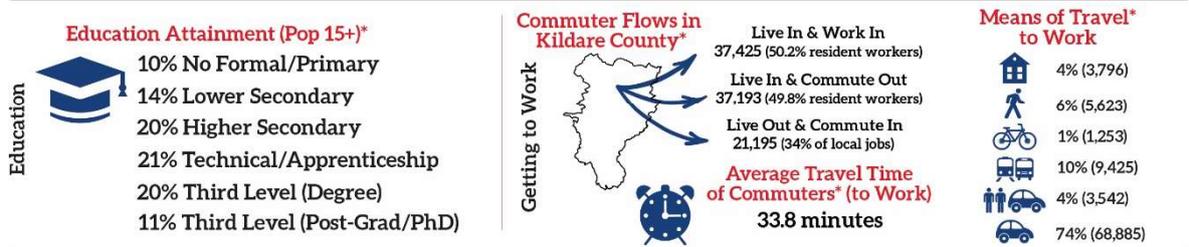
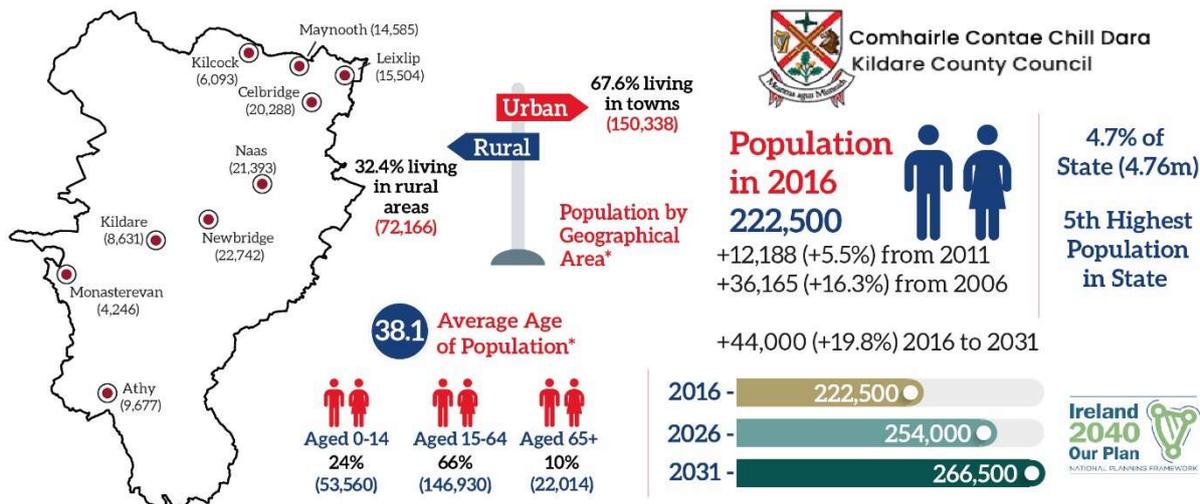
### **1.3 Profile of County Kildare**

Kildare is an inland county covering an area of 169,550 hectares. It occupies a strategic position within the Eastern Region of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly and also forms part of the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). Kildare is both a significant population base and a significant residential base within the State with the eighth largest household stock nationally. The county has grown more than 7.1% in the last 20 years<sup>1</sup>.

The most recent census in Ireland was in 2016. The following infographic (Figure 1) provides highlights of the profile of the county.

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<sup>1</sup> Census 2016.



\* Data sourced from CSO Census 2016

**Figure 1.1 - County Profile**

## 1.4 Policy Context

A development plan shall, as far as practicable, be consistent with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), national plans, policies and strategies which relate to the proper planning and sustainable development of land.



Figure 1.2 - Policy Context Overview

#### **1.4.1 Contents of Development Plans: Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)**

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) sets out a legislative requirement for the making of a Development Plan. The Plan must include a number of mandatory objectives and the Act also sets out a list of discretionary objectives which, where appropriate shall be incorporated into the Plan. The Development Plan shall include the following mandatory objectives:

- Zoning of land.
- Provision, or facilitation of the provision, of infrastructure.
- Conservation and protection of the environment.
- Management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries.
- Promotion of compliance with environmental standards and objectives established for bodies of surface waters and groundwater.
- Integration of the social, community and cultural requirements.
- Preservation of the character of the landscape including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest.
- Protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.
- Preservation of the character of architectural conservation areas.
- Development and renewal of areas identified having regard to the core strategy, that are in need of regeneration.
- Provision of accommodation for travellers and the use of particular areas for that purpose.
- Preservation, improvement and extension of amenities and recreational amenities.
- Control of establishments under the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive.
- Provision, or facilitation of the provision, of services for the community, including, in particular, schools, crèches and other education and childcare facilities.
- Protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht where there is a Gaeltacht in the area of the Plan.
- Promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies, including measures to reduce energy demand, greenhouse gas emissions and address the necessity of adaptation to climate change in particular having regard to the location, layout and design of new development.
- Preservation of public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational utility.
- Provide a framework for the identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes.

### 1.4.2 Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (NPF)

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of the country to the year 2040. The NPF sets out ten National and Strategic Outcomes and 75 National Policy Objectives. The purpose of the NPF is to enable all parts of Ireland, whether rural or urban, to successfully accommodate growth and change, by facilitating a shift towards Ireland's regions and cities other than Dublin, while also recognising Dublin's ongoing key role.



Figure 1.3 - National Strategic Outcomes

Source: National Planning Framework

### 1.4.3 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly

The aim of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) is to strengthen the settlement structure of the Region and to capitalise on the individual and collective strengths of the region's cities, towns and rural areas. It provides policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives to ensure that people's needs, such as access to housing, jobs, ease of travel and overall well-being are met. The Strategy is underpinned by three key principles: healthy placemaking, climate action and economic opportunity.

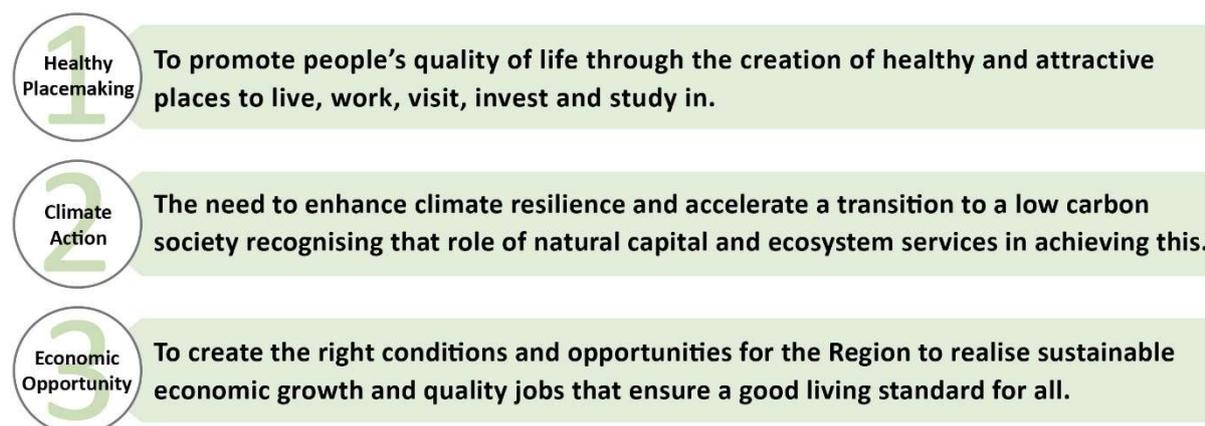


Figure 1.4 - Three Key Principles of the RSES

### 1.4.4 Ministerial Guidelines

The Development Plan must have regard to guidelines issued by the Government, known as Section 28 Guidelines. Many of these Guidelines contain Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) which need to be applied across the relevant sections of the Plan. Appendix 8 provides a Statement of Compliance with the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines.

## 1.5 Climate Change

This Plan is set in a context where climate change is accepted as a global challenge and requires climate action responses in adaptation and mitigation to ensure a healthy, economically thriving, liveable built environment. The Government has adopted the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 which provides for the approval of plans by the Government for the purpose of pursuing the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich and climate neutral economy by no later than the end of the year 2050. These plans will provide for carbon budgets and sectoral emissions and ceilings to different sectors of the Irish economy.

The government has previously published the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, the National Mitigation Plan 2017, and the National Adaptation Framework 2018. Towards the end of 2019, the Kildare County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 was finalised. The Strategy forms part of Ireland's national strategy for climate adaptation as set out in the National Adaptation Framework 2018 (NAF) which was mandated under the provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015.

The purpose of this Strategy was to ensure that climate adaptation considerations are mainstreamed into all plans and policies and integrated into all operations and functions of the local authority. The land use and development objectives contained within the Strategy seek to; integrate climate action consideration into land use planning policy, explore policies to help the transition to a climate resilient low carbon society, and promote and maximise the most efficient and sustainable use of land. Therefore, climate change adaptation considerations are at the forefront of the formulation of this Plan in order to build resilience in our economy, environment and communities.

## 1.6 Sustainable Development Goals

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (Global Goals) are a call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity vital for a recovery that leads to greener, more inclusive economies and stronger, more resilient societies.



There is significant alignment between the UN SDGs and the National Planning Framework's National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) in areas such as climate action, clean energy, sustainable cities and communities, economic growth, reduced inequalities and innovation and infrastructure, as well as education and health. The Development Plan seeks to make the right choices now to improve life, in a sustainable way, for future generations.

## **1.7 Composition of the Plan**

The Development Plan consists of a written statement indicating the development objectives for the county. The written statement is accompanied by a number of Volumes and supporting Appendices.

### **1.7.1 Volume 1 Written Statement**

The Written Statement constitutes the main body of the document which comprises the Vision, Core Strategy, development management standards and the overarching policies and objectives of the Plan.

Chapter 1	Introduction & Strategic Context
Chapter 2	Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy.
Chapter 3	Housing
Chapter 4	Resilient Economy & Job Creation
Chapter 5	Sustainable Mobility & Transport
Chapter 6	Infrastructure & Environmental Services
Chapter 7	Energy & Communications
Chapter 8	Retail
Chapter 9	Our Rural Economy
Chapter 10	Community Infrastructure & Creative Places
Chapter 11	Built & Cultural Heritage
Chapter 12	Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure
Chapter 13	Landscape, Recreation & Amenity
Chapter 14	Urban Design, Placemaking & Regeneration
Chapter 15	Development Management Standards
Chapter 16	Implementation & Monitoring Framework
Chapter 17	Infrastructural Assessment Report

### **1.7.2 Volume 2 Small Towns and Villages Strategy**

The Small Towns and Villages Strategy (STVS) provides a coherent planning framework for the small towns, villages and rural settlements across the county. The Strategy includes land use zonings maps and specific objectives which are underpinned. When zoning land within the settlements, due regard was had particularly to NPO 18b of the National Planning Framework in identifying serviced sites in order to promote compact growth and to alleviate further pressure on the rural areas of Kildare for one-off housing.

### **1.7.3 Volume 3 Environmental Assessments**

A number of standalone environmental assessments are required under specific environmental legislation which are being prepared to inform the Plan and will be published alongside the written statement of the Draft Plan. These comprise of a Strategic Environmental Assessment, an Appropriate Assessment and a Strategic Flood Risk assessment.

#### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the term which has been given to the formal systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. It is a systematic process of predicting and evaluating the likely environmental effects of implementing a plan, to ensure that these effects are appropriately addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision-making.

A formal process of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is being undertaken as an integral part of the preparation of this Plan, pursuant to the requirements of the EU SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and the Planning and Development (SEA)

Regulations 2004 (as amended). The SEA Environmental Report will provide a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the future development of County Kildare and will guide the preparation of objectives, policies and development alternatives for the Development Plan, with the aim of achieving sustainable development in the county without causing adverse harm to the environment.

#### Appropriate Assessment (AA)

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) place an obligation on competent authorities to consider the effects of every plan and project on its own or in combination with other plans or projects on one or more European sites (Natura 2000 sites) through a process known as Appropriate Assessment. Natura sites are Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for habitats and species. A formal process of Appropriate Assessment was carried out as part of the preparation of this County Development Plan. On the basis of the screening for Appropriate Assessment, it was concluded that the Plan could, in the absence of mitigation, result in adverse impacts on the Natura 2000 network, therefore in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is being carried out.

#### Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

In accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) and Circular PL02/2014 (August 2014) the purpose of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) is “to provide a broad (area wide) assessment of all types of flood risk to inform strategic land use planning decisions. A SFRA is being carried out as part of the process of preparing the Plan and will be taken into consideration when determining appropriate sites for development.

#### **1.7.4 Appendices**

The Plan is also supported by a number of evidence-based supporting documents which provide the background work for the formulation of policies and objectives of the Plan. The Appendices are as follows:

**Appendix 1** Housing Need & Demand Assessment and Housing Strategy

**Appendix 2** Wind Energy Strategy

**Appendix 3** Open Space Strategy

**Appendix 4** Rural Design Guide

**Appendix 5** Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)

**Appendix 6** Record of Protected Structures (RPS)

**Appendix 7** Scenic Routes

**Appendix 8** Statement of Compliance with Section 28 Guidelines.

**Appendix 9** Core Strategy Methodology

**Appendix 10** Rural Housing Policy Report (AIRO)

**Appendix 11** Single Rural Dwelling Density Toolkit

**Appendix 12** KCDP Implementation & Monitoring Framework

## 1.8 Strategic Vision

The 'Strategic Vision' for the County, as set outlined at the start of this chapter, is '*To build on the strengths of the county in order to improve the quality of life of all residents, through the creation of high-quality job opportunities, by the provision of high-quality residential development supported by adequate community infrastructure, through the provision of a high-quality sustainable transport network, by healthy placemaking and transformational regeneration, by supporting the transition to a low carbon climate resilient environment, by embracing inclusiveness and by enhancing our natural and built environment for future generations.*'

### 1.8.1 Overarching Guiding Principles

The following 15 chapters set out the planning policy framework within which the vision as set out above will be realised by 2029. Each chapter identifies an 'Aim' supported by policies, objectives, actions and targets (as appropriate), through which this common vision for County Kildare will be realised. The key principles for this Development Plan are as follows;

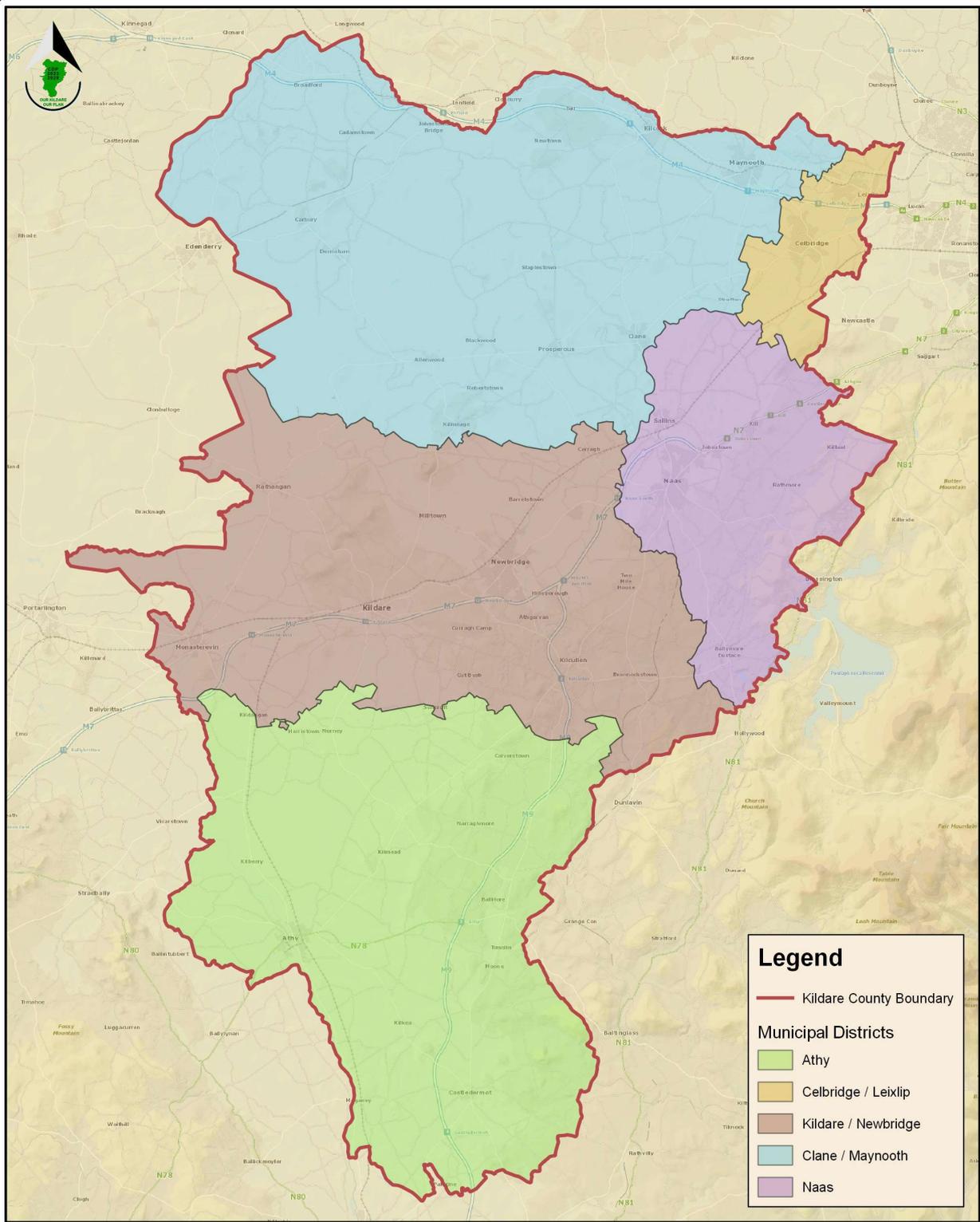
- (i) To develop a county that is resilient to climate change, plans for and adapts to climate change and flood risk, facilitates a low carbon future, supports energy efficiency and conservation and enables the decarbonisation of our lifestyles and economy
- (ii) To ensure the compact growth and regeneration of lands within all settlements across the Settlement Hierarchy
- (iii) To promote the sustainable development of communities by locating residential, employment, social and community facilities in close proximity to each other.
- (iv) To support national investment in public transport services to achieve the better integration of land uses and high-quality public transport provision and to reduce car dependency throughout the county;
- (v) To achieve a quantum of services and infrastructure in all settlements to match existing and future population demands.
- (vi) To promote economic development and employment opportunities within defined Strategic Employment Development Areas in the North-West corridor of the Metropolitan Area, in line with the overall Growth Strategy.
- (vii) To recognise the role of the rural countryside in supporting the rural economy and its role as a key resource for agriculture, equine, bloodstock, forestry, energy production, tourism, recreation, mineral extraction and rural based enterprises.
- (viii) To support, facilitate and promote the sustainable development of renewable energy sources in the county.
- (ix) To protect local assets by preserving the quality of the landscape, open space, recreational resources, natural, architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage and the material assets of the county.
- (x) To promote social inclusion and facilitating the delivery of objectives contained in the Kildare Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021 and any succeeding Plan.

## **1.9 The Role of the Office of the Planning Regulator**

The Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) plays a key role in the preparation of development plans in ensuring the overall plan is consistent with national and regional planning policies and guidance. The OPR has a range of functions including the independent assessment of all local authority and regional assembly forward planning, including the zoning decisions of local authority members in local area and development plans. Throughout the statutory public consultation of the plan process the OPR provides statutory observations to ensure consistency with relevant regional or national policies. In performing its functions, the OPR takes into account the objective of contributing to proper planning and sustainable development and the optimal functioning of planning under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Kildare County Council takes all observations received from the OPR into consideration throughout the plan process and commits to working with the office to realise the optimal planning and development outcomes within the plan area.

## **1.10 Monitoring and Implementation**

It is important that the Development Plan provides for a circular process of action, where the adopted Plan is routinely monitored during its lifetime to assess and ensure the implementation of the various policies, objectives, actions and targets. In this regard, an 'Implementation and Monitoring Framework' is included in this Plan (Appendix 12). This will be continuously updated as the Plan progresses and will identify each of the objectives, targets and actions under the various chapters of the Plan, assigning each to a specific body/bodies for implementation and identifying a series of Key Performance Indicators against each one.




 Kildare County Council  
 Planning & Strategic  
 Development Department  
 Aras Chill Dara,  
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**Draft County  
 Development Plan  
 2023-2029**

**Municipal District Map**

Stage	Date	Description
Draft County Development Plan	12/12/2021	Draft Plan Issued to the Elected Members
Draft County Development Plan	14/03/2022	Draft Plan Issued For Public Consultation

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Scale: N.T.S.	Map Ref: V1-1.1
Date: Feb 2022	Drawing No.: 200/22/1221
Drawn By: HOL/Longh Date 16/02/2022	Checked By: L Crawford Date 16/02/2022
Approved By: C O'Donnell Date 16/02/2022	

**This drawing is to be read in conjunction  
 with the written statement**