



Foreword

A NOTE FROM THE COUNTY MANAGER

Kildare County Development Plan 2005-2011, Volume 1



A note from the County Manager

The adoption of the County Development Plan in 1999 marked a very significant step forward in the overall planning and development of County Kildare. This plan set out the broad development strategy for the County, in the period 1999 to 2005, the main thrust of which was to redirect development to the South and North West of the County. During the course of discussions on the plan it was indicated to members that it would take some time for the overall strategy to be effective but if the county was to develop in a balanced way, and unsustainable pressures avoided at particular locations, it was essential that the agreed policy be pursued with commitment and determination by all concerned.

The Review of the County Development Plan 1999 commenced in May 2003 with the publication of the Background Issues Paper together with public advertisements requesting submissions from interested parties before the 22nd July 2003. A series of public information meetings were held across the county during June 2003 in the towns of Castledermot, Kilcullen, Kildare, Celbridge, Clane and Maynooth.

Approximately 1,000 submissions were received from interested parties and individuals throughout the entire Development Plan process. This plan was drafted having regard to the public submissions, directions from the Elected Members and the wider planning policy framework including Regional, National and Government Guidelines. The process was carried out in accordance with Part II of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2004.

This County Development Plan was adopted by members of the Council on the 18th May 2005 and legally came into effect on the 15th June 2005.

The preparation of this plan differs from its predecessors in that it is the first development plan for County Kildare to be prepared under the Planning and Development Act 2000-2004 and also the first to be prepared within a clear hierarchy of plans at National and Regional level. In particular the Regional Planning Guidelines 2004 have been the single greatest influence in determining the strategy for the future development of Kildare. This County Development Plan complies with the national and regional

policy framework and translates key strategic decisions made at national and regional level to local county level.

Planning sets out to achieve a balance in any particular community and a development plan endeavours to achieve a reasonable balance between the common good or general community interest on the one hand and the interests of individual persons or communities on the other. To date there is an excellent record of participation and partnership at local level between Kildare County Council, public agencies, service providers, the private sector and the community in general.

We are all aware that planning does not exist in isolation and services such as water, transportation and community facilities including schools, shops and recreation facilities must be provided in association with ongoing developments. The approach we adopt to planning our communities must be one of partnership with the local communities, service providers, public agencies, developers and local authorities all playing an important role. Planning is essentially about people and principles such as social inclusion, equity and sustainable development, these principles must permeate our policies and objectives in order to ensure that quality of life is maximised for the community as a whole. Given the level of growth that has taken place in the County in the past number of years the achievement of an appropriate balance in the delivery of residential development, employment opportunities and community facilities has been a significant challenge. This Plan takes due cognisance of the need to ensure that any development proposals are matched with the availability of the necessary services.



The concept of sustainable development is a key issue within the overall context of the statutory County Development Plan, which relates not only to economic development, but also addresses social, community and environmental aspects in a public participatory manner. An integral part of the foregoing is the extent to which Kildare County Council, in carrying out its own direct activities, ensures that sustainable development concepts are given full weight. This, in turn, involves consideration on an integrated basis of the services provided across the various departments and underlines the importance of adopting an approach that facilitates sectoral development and promotes positive synergy.

Kildare County Council, during the period of this County development plan, will continue to set positive community leadership while working in partnership with the community. Significant levels of community co-operation are already being achieved through the County Development Board Strategy and there is a positive working relationship with other agencies and groups participating in community development. The overall impact of the Council's activities continues to be substantial in economic, social and environmental terms. This underpins community confidence and a higher level of investment which facilitates employment creation and maintenance. The policies of this plan will facilitate a sustained and coordinated effort between all the participants involved to maximise the potential of the county.

The activities carried out directly, or supported and underpinned by Council, can give rise to substantial economic development. There is now an even greater need to ensure that the county as a whole is

attractive, from an investment point of view, and that leakage from the local economy is minimised. Identification and implementation of the necessary policy measures to achieve this objective is of central importance to increased economic activity. Successful economic policies attract additional people to live in the area, placing increased demands on housing and employment opportunities, and also requiring higher levels of public services. The balanced sustainable development of the county including the effective provision of essential public services will require significant levels of public and private investment.

The county must continue to build on its strengths and be conscious of the various opportunities that present themselves for improvement. Strong urban centres need to be developed to optimise the use and availability of public services, while at the same time policies to encourage and promote rural development in association with other agencies and groups will need to be identified and advanced. The need to achieve an appropriate balance has been referred to on a number of occasions and can be primarily facilitated by the adoption and implementation of the developmental policies contained in this plan. The National Spatial Strategy provides the overall policy framework for the country for the next 20 years and the Regional Planning Guidelines give increased emphasis to regional population and employment growth over a shorter timeframe.

Kildare County Council, through the Corporate Plan and County Development Strategy, has indicated a clear vision of the way forward for the county and this will be actively pursued. Local Government consists of much more than the provision of public services and in recent years the Council has increasingly performed the role of enabler and facilitator operating on the basis of a partnership with other agencies and the community generally with a view to promoting sustainable development. This process will be continued under this Development Plan.

Finally, the Development Plan process is of central relevance and importance to the lives of citizens individually and collectively. If we are to ensure that the county develops in a way that will facilitate and enhance quality of life, a coordinated, cooperative and participative approach involving all our citizens will continue to represent the best way forward. In this regard this Development Plan offers an enlightened and integrated approach to the future development of the County in a manner that will truly reflect the interests of the common good.

Niall Bradley
County Manager

