

11. SOCIAL, COMMUNITY & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT



AIM

To ensure that County Kildare is an attractive place to live and work by building strong, inclusive communities that have a sense of place and belonging. This will be supported by the provision of accessible community based facilities from which services and supports can be provided.

11.1 BACKGROUND

Building strong, inclusive communities is a key element in achieving sustainable development objectives. In this regard, the Council will facilitate the delivery of social, community and cultural infrastructure to meet the needs of the existing and future population. The provision of community infrastructure and services is central to fostering sustainable communities and delivering successful places. Access to education, health and community support services, amenities, leisure services and a good quality built environment is a prerequisite for the creation of sustainable communities.

Social inclusion is a key objective at national and local level. It refers to the way in which all persons in a community are integrated in an equal manner by reducing barriers to participation, e.g. discrimination and/or physical barriers such as accessibility. In order to combat social exclusion, actions must be taken at both national and local level to focus on the most disadvantaged areas, ensuring that those at risk of social exclusion have the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social, cultural life and enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in today's society.

11.2 NATIONAL CONTEXT

At a national level *Towards 2016* proposes a 'lifecycle' approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion. The targets and interventions through which agreements are to be achieved are outlined in *The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016*.

Reference has been made in the preparation of this Plan to various national strategies including *The Provision of Schools and the Planning System A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, DEHLG (2008)*, *Childcare Facility Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DELG (2001)*; and *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DEHLG (2009)*.

11.3 LOCAL CONTEXT

A number of recent policy publications specific to Kildare provide guidance on social, community and cultural development. The provision of services must have regard to relevant local policy provisions as follows:

- The Kildare Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) was established in 2014 to develop, coordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016 - 2021 is a central component of the local authority's role in economic and community development.
- The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2015-2017 was adopted by the LCDC and is informed by the LECP. It responds to social inclusion issues throughout the county.
- The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018, prepared to address the accommodation needs of Travellers within County Kildare.
- The Integration Strategy 2015, which outlines strategies to promote and support integration throughout the county.
- (Continue to) Make Inroads: An Arts Development Plan for Kildare County Council 2012-2016.
- IDEAS REALISED: Spreading the word, Kildare County Council Library Services Development Plan 2015 - 2019.
- Kildare Children and Young People's Services Committee Plan 2015-2017.
- The Kildare Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2012-2016.

11.4 STRATEGY

The promotion of social inclusion, cultural development and the provision of community facilities through the planning process will be facilitated in accordance with the following principles:

- Ensure sufficient and appropriately zoned land is identified through the relevant Local Area Plans and village plans to meet community infrastructure requirements over the period of this Plan;
- Promote the retention and enhancement of existing community services;
- Require the provision of services and facilities in tandem with housing developments (e.g. shops, businesses, schools, childcare, recreational/sports areas and community centres);
- Require the provision of neighbourhood centres and community facilities within walking distance of and concurrent with new residential development, and promote the use of shared facilities;

- Use the Council's Development Contribution Scheme to provide benefits to the community, including the provision of open space, recreational facilities and community facilities;
- Facilitate the provision of access and facilities for people with disabilities and the integration of ethnic-minority groups in the county;
- Promote the development of, and access to, public transport and safe pedestrian and cycle routes; and
- Ensure that relevant development proposals incorporate access to facilities for people with disabilities such as level access to buildings, dished kerbs, appropriate parking spaces and accessible toilet facilities.

11.5 KILDARE LCDC & KILDARE LECP 2016-2021

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 required the establishment for the first time of Local Community Development Committees (LCDC) within all Local Authorities. The Kildare LCDC is now established and brings together members and officials of Kildare County Council, representatives of other statutory agencies, community representatives and representatives from civil society. The purpose in this respect is to secure the participation of all stakeholders who can contribute to building a joined-up approach to the development of local and community development in Kildare.

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 also required all local authorities to prepare an integrated Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), that identifies objectives and actions for strengthening economic and community development in the county. The Kildare LECP 2016-2021 was adopted in December 2015 and is a central component of the local authority's role in economic and community development over the lifetime of this Plan. Kildare LECP was developed based on a highly collaborative and integrated model. This ensures that relevant community and economic elements will be implemented in an integrated way. While the Kildare LECP provides the framework for this development, the County Development Plan provides the spatial strategy for the realisation of these objectives and actions in a sustainable and planned manner.

Policies: LCDC and LECP 2016-2021

It is the policy of the Council to:

- LE 1** Deliver on the objectives and actions set out in the Kildare LECP 2016-2021 to strengthen economic and community development in the county.

Objectives: LCDC and LECP 2016-2021

It is an objective of the Council to:

- LEO 1** Liaise with community and economic stakeholders to promote the sustainable development of economic and community services and infrastructure in the county, in accordance with the objectives and actions set out in the Kildare LECP 2016-2021.
- LEO 2** Develop and expand the Integrated Services Programme (ISP) to help deliver community infrastructure, supports and services in a planned and coordinated manner within the county.
- LEO 3** Utilise the Kildare LECP Baseline Report (2015), and any subsequent update of this evidence base, to inform the development of policies, objectives and actions for the delivery of community facilities and services within LAPs and planning schemes.
- LEO 4** Support and promote volunteerism through participation in the Public Participation Networks (PPN) structure and by supporting the work of Kildare Volunteer Centre.



11.6 COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The provision of community services and facilities creates an environment in which members of the community can meet and access the services and supports essential for health, well-being and social development. The provision of community, leisure and cultural facilities and a good quality environment ensure attractive residential environments. While Kildare has a wide range of community services and facilities (and more are planned) across the county, the county's young and growing population will place considerable pressure on these in the short to medium term. The Council will seek to ensure that an appropriate range of community facilities is provided in all communities, taking account of the population profile and growth targets identified in the Core Strategy.

The Kildare Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2012-2016 sets out measures to increase participation in sport and physical activity. Similarly, the Arts Development Plan for Kildare Local Authorities 2012-2016 presents a number of guiding principles for a local arts service "which engages and inspires citizens, and places the arts at the centre of the economic, social, and cultural development of the county".

The Council will seek the provision of and access to services and facilities to meet the needs of the county's growing population over the period of this Plan.

Policies: Community Services and Facilities

It is the policy of the Council to:

- C 1** Ensure that sufficient lands in appropriate locations are zoned to cater for social and community needs.
- C 2** Promote the shared use of educational and community facilities for community and non-school purposes where possible, so as to maximise the sustainable use of such infrastructure and promote community cohesion.
- C 3** Assess the suitable provision of nursing homes, crèches and other commercially run community facilities and amenities at appropriate locations, during the preparation of Local Area Plans and Village Plans.
- C 4** Promote the highest levels of universal accessibility in all community facilities.

Objectives: Community Services and Facilities

It is an objective of the Council to:

- CO 1** Map current and future anticipated community facilities across the county to respond to population growth and increased service need.
- CO 2** Ensure that community facilities are provided in new communities on a phased basis in tandem with the provision of housing in accordance with approved Local Area Plans or Planning Schemes. In this regard, applicants will be required to submit a Social Infrastructure Assessment (SIA) for the following:
 - Residential schemes on zoned land which are greater than 50 units.
 - Residential schemes on zoned lands in Town and Village Plans which are greater than 10 units,
 - Residential schemes on unzoned lands which are greater than 10 units
 - Other cases where deemed necessary by the Planning Authority.

In certain large mixed use schemes the frontloading of such infrastructure may be required prior to the commencement of development.

- CO 3** Carry out a review of the Social Infrastructure Assessment (SIA) process to assist in the implementation of objective CO 1 above.
- CO 4** Ensure that community buildings are flexible and adaptable and can be used by all age cohorts, including young people (youth programmes, youth cafes, etc).
- CO 5** Progress priority community facilities in Kilcock (Bawnogues), Athy (Former Dominican Church) and Kildare Town (Cherry Avenue).
- CO 6** Support the work of Kildare Sports Partnership in promoting participation in sports and physical activity across the county, through the provision of recreational and sports amenity space.
- CO 7** Progress plans to develop a swimming pool in North Kildare in conjunction with other relevant bodies.

- CO 8** Capitalise on Kildare's strength as a home to regional scale recreational facilities, national and international festivals and sporting events by promoting, encouraging and facilitating further development of the social economy and associated spin offs in a sustainable manner.
- CO 9** Support the development of improved universally accessible facilities and services at Barretstown.

11.7 SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2015-2017 is overseen by the LCDC. SICAP aims to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long-term unemployment through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. SICAP is informed by the LECP and responds to social inclusion issues highlighted in the county.

The Public Participation Network (PPN) was set up in County Kildare. Membership is open to all community and voluntary groups and organisations active in the county. The PPN will be the main link through which the Council will connect with and seek representation from the local Community/Voluntary, Social Inclusion and Environmental sectors.

Policies: Social Inclusion and Community Development

It is the policy of the Council to:

- SC 1** Promote social inclusion through equality of access to services and facilities and to assist in the removal of barriers to full participation in society.
- SC 2** Ensure that all arts and cultural facilities in the ownership and management of the Council are accessible to the wider community and to promote the role of these facilities as focal points for the community.
- SC 3** Support and encourage communities in the restoration and rehabilitation of community halls / centres, thereby facilitating a greater level of social and community inclusion. Assistance in the form of funding would be subject to budget allocations.

11.8 GROUPS WITH SPECIFIC DESIGN / PLANNING NEEDS

There are a number of groups in society with specific design and planning needs including: children, young people, people with disabilities, older people, ethnic minorities and the Traveller community. The Council recognises the importance of planning for the needs of these groups.

11.8.1 Children and Young People

The 2011 Census states that County Kildare is the youngest county in the country, with 37% of the population aged under 24 years. Kildare also has an increasingly high birth rate. In 2013 Kildare had the second highest birth rate nationally (3,417 births). These factors have a bearing on the present and future need for facilities such as childcare, play areas for children, youth spaces, sports facilities, schools and safe walking and cycling routes in the county. The CSO (Central Statistics Office) *Regional Population Projections 2016-2031* projects a nationwide increase in the number of young persons (i.e. those aged 0-14 years) up to 2021, before decreasing again between 2026 and 2031. The Mid-East Region is expected to be the only region to show an increase over the period of 4.7%, while all other regions are expected to experience a decrease in the population in this age group by 2031. Thus the provision of youth facilities will be a priority in future planning for the county.

Kildare Children and Young Peoples Services Committee (CYPSC) brings together the main statutory, community and voluntary providers of services to children and young people. They provide a forum for joint planning and co-ordination of activity to ensure that children, young people and their families receive improved and accessible services. The Council will work closely with CYPSC to implement actions that respond to children and young people's needs.

Comhairle na nÓg is the representative voice of young people in the county.

The Council recognises the importance of the provision of play areas for children as part of the development of communities. All play areas should be located where they can be overlooked by dwellings but will not cause unreasonable nuisance problems for residents. Play areas shall be designed specifically for children's play and include play equipment and safety surfacing which conform to relevant safety standards.



Play should also be provided for in a less formal way. Children use their whole environment to play and it is possible through careful design and landscaping to provide play features that would not have the insurance, supervision, security or maintenance implications of traditional play areas. It is the intention of the Council to encourage the development of built environments where living predominates over traffic to facilitate this.

There is also a particular need to recognise the recreational needs of teenagers and young adults. Depending on the age profile of an area, there are a number of facilities including multi-purpose play areas which would typically provide a hard surfaced area allowing for basketball and other hard court sports, skate parks, youth clubs and internet cafes. The Council recognises the importance of planning for the needs of this group, as this age cohort will become more prominent in the coming years.

Regardless of the form of play provision, planning applications will be required to contain full details of design, management and maintenance for all play provision. The Council will endeavor to ensure that such facilities are inclusive and accessible to relevant age groups.

11.8.2 People with Disabilities

People with disabilities and the mobility impaired face particular physical barriers to access and movement. For people with mobility impairments, ensuring level / ramped access to buildings, dished kerbs and the provision of appropriate parking and toilets facilities are important. For people with visual impairments, tactile paving that can be felt underfoot and audible signals at pedestrian crossings are necessary.

The focus of this Plan is to encourage integration of accommodation within a mix of housing types providing mobility and access for people with disabilities in order to remove barriers to involvement in community and employment activities. Specific planning and design policies will be implemented including the provision of:

- Dwellings located close to community services and public transport;
- Housing units designed to accommodate a live-in carer if required;
- Accommodation for those with disabilities within mixed residential developments; and
- Pavements, pedestrian crossings and street layouts designed for the mobility impaired.

Kildare has made significant progress in access and equality of opportunity in a wide variety of areas. These include staff training, provision of assistive technologies and specialist design of public counters, adaptive work to Council houses, footpath and traffic signal improvements and accessible signage for people with visual impairments and works to community facilities.

The Council will continue to enforce the requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations for all new buildings and refurbishment projects where public access is required.

11.8.3 Older People

According to Census 2011, the '65 and over' age cohort has rapidly increased in Kildare, representing 7.9% of the total population living in the county. This is an increase of 1.2% since 2006. There are very clear spatial differences with the rate of older people in rural Kildare at 10.4% compared to 7% in urban Kildare.

The CSO report *Regional Population Projections 2016-2031* projects that the number of old persons (65 years and over) will almost double in every region over the life-time of the projections, with the most marked increases are likely to occur in the Mid-East (+136.5%) and Midland (+95.1%) regions.

The Kildare Age Friendly Counties Programme was launched in 2010. Arising from the Programme Naas took part in the Age Friendly Town Initiative in 2013. The Age Friendly Towns Project is an initiative of the Ageing Well Network. An Age-Friendly Town

is a town where the community understands and responds to the needs of older people. A set of objectives, key actions and recommendations is set out in the Programme to develop Naas as an age friendly town.

There is widespread recognition of the need to plan and design for housing, community and care facilities for the elderly. The NESC report *Well-Being Matters: A Social Report for Ireland (2009)* points to a number of ways whereby the quality of life of older people can be improved through planning and the built environment. These measures include:

- Availability of a mix of dwelling types (integrated housing and care services) of good design across all tenures;
- Preparation of Housing Action Plans to address special needs and specifically the role of the voluntary and co-operative housing sector;
- Inter-agency co-operation to cater for care needs in accommodation;
- Services to provide enhanced home security and energy conservation, including improved heating systems and insulation; and
- Further development of the rural transport initiative (RTI) to support community based living.

The 'National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland' published by the Health Information and Quality Authority (February 2009) set standards for the provision of care facilities for the elderly. These standards provide a baseline for those with the responsibility for providing nursing home facilities and include specific standards for the design and layout of the internal and external environment of care facilities. This Plan will provide for a mixed urban/rural setting for nursing homes in the county.

11.8.4 Traveller Community

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 assessed the need for Traveller accommodation in the county. It sets out the Council's policy regarding the provision of Traveller accommodation. The Council will, as necessary, continue to update its accommodation programme for the Travelling Community. The Council will endeavour to provide accommodation for members of the Travelling Community.

The continuing implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme will address the provision of accommodation appropriate to the particular needs of Travellers. The promotion of mainstream public services that are accessible,

relevant and welcoming to Travellers is vital, as well as ensuring that members of the Travelling Community can easily access facilities such as shops, schools, childcare and community facilities.

11.8.5 Ethnic Minority Groups

Kildare is becoming an increasingly diverse county. Certain areas of the county have a more ethnic or culturally diverse population than others and service provision and community facilities in these areas should reflect the varying needs of the community. A very clear spatial pattern is evident with the highest concentration of non Irish nationals in Urban (14.4%) compared to Rural Kildare (4.7%).

11.8.6 Groups with Specific Design / Planning Needs

Policy: Young People and Children

It is the policy of the Council to:

- SN 1** Consider the needs of children and young people, including those with disabilities and additional needs, in the provision of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities (refer to Chapter 14 Landscape, Recreation & Amenity for more detail).

Objectives: Young People and Children

It is an objective of the Council to:

- SNO 1** Develop open spaces throughout the county which will encourage a range of recreational and amenity activities that will cater for both active and passive recreation.
- SNO 2** Carry out an audit of leisure facilities and to facilitate local community groups / sporting organisations in the development of sport and recreational facilities, in particular, through land use zoning within the local area plan process as appropriate.
- SNO 3** Increase and improve the provision for children's play across the county. The provision of facilities such as play areas should have regard to the appropriateness of the location, the suitability of the building, the relationship to adjoining uses, the requirement for car parking and the amenity of adjacent uses. The provision of facilities such as play areas should have regard for children with special needs.

SNO 4 Develop a partnership approach in funding and developing play opportunities throughout the county and in accordance with any forthcoming Council Play Policy.

SNO 5 Seek to integrate the design of youth space facilities as part of all newly planned community facilities in the county.

Policies: People with Disabilities

It is the policy of the Council to:

PD 1 Ensure that all buildings, public and open spaces, 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' (No. 1 to 3) (National Rehabilitation Board).

PD 2 Provide for the needs of people with visual difficulties in the design of pedestrian facilities, by assessing the options available and choosing the most appropriate design to implement on a case by case basis.

Objectives: People with Disabilities

It is an objective of the Council to:

PDO 1 Ensure that parking spaces provided for people with disabilities are appropriately indicated and are located in a manner which has regard to dismounting, safety of driver and passengers, etc.

PDO 2 Ensure that all footpaths and public areas are accessible and safe for people with disabilities and/or reduced mobility, etc. by continuing a programme of footpath development and improvements.

Policies: Older People

It is the policy of the Council to:

OP 1 Facilitate the provision of continuing care facilities for the elderly, such as own homes (designed to meet the needs of elderly people), sheltered housing, day-care facilities, nursing homes and specialised care units (e.g. dementia specific units) at appropriate locations throughout the county.

OP 2 Cater for the diversity of older people's needs by promoting adaptability and flexibility in the design of homes, and the promotion of appropriate commercial and community facilities in population centres with higher proportions of older people.

OP 3 Provide for a mixed urban/rural setting for nursing homes in the county and to site residential care facilities for the elderly in accordance with the following:

- (i) Facilities should be located close to community and social facilities required by occupants (e.g. shops, post office, community centres, etc) thereby ensuring that older people can remain part of existing communities.
- (ii) Facilities should be easily accessible for residents, employees, visitors and service providers. Such facilities will generally be acceptable in villages and rural settlements to cater for local demand. A mobility strategy shall be provided detailing connections to town and village centres for residents, employees and visitors.
- (iii) Facilities should be located within an environment that is suitable for their stated purpose, integrating within the wider community while providing a safe environment for residents.
- (iv) Facilities should be located in an area which can benefit from the creation of strong links between the care for the elderly facilities and the local community including activities linked to other community groups.

OP 4 To require the design and layout of residential care facilities for the elderly to comply with all relevant standards set out in the 'National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland' published by the Health Information and Quality Authority (2009) or the relevant standards for any subsequent national guidelines.

OP 5 Continue to develop and implement the Age Friendly Programme and Actions in Naas and to investigate the possibility of expanding the programme into other towns and villages throughout the county.

OP 6: To adopt the ethos of McAuley Place, Naas as a recognised model of Positive Ageing and best practice in Ireland in planning and delivering services to older people.

Objective: Older People

It is an objective of the Council to:

OPO 1 Assess the suitability and demand for care facilities for the elderly as part of the review of Local Area Plans and to facilitate the use of appropriate sites within towns and villages for such uses.

11.9 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT / COMMUNITY GROUPS

The Council recognises the important role played by local development / community groups in the overall development of the county and will continue to support these groups in the development of facilities through the reservation of suitable land and the provision of funding where available and appropriate.

As part of Local Government Reform, the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) replaced the former County Development Boards in 2014. Its role is to coordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. The LCDC brings together local authority members and officials, representatives from state agencies, the Local Development Company, and the Public Participation Network.

In addition to the LCDC, the Integrated Services Programme (ISP) is operational as a pilot scheme in County Kildare. The ISP identifies needs in targeted towns with state agencies, voluntary sector organisations, local businesses and community leaders. A number of the priorities identified require planning support.

Examples to-date include the Hive youth facility in Kildare Town and the integrated development plan for the Bawnogues in Kilcock. This County Development Plan will support the ISP in delivering its priorities.

Policies: Local Development/Community Groups

It is the policy of the Council to:

LDG 1 Continue to co-operate with statutory bodies, in particular the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and other agencies including the voluntary sector, resident, business and environmental groups to counter disadvantage and social exclusion, to secure improvements in

the quality of community facilities and to promote equality of access to public and social services for all members of the community.

LDG 2 Support the Kildare Integrated Services Programme in the delivery of its objectives in County Kildare.





11.10 ARTS AND CULTURE IN THE COMMUNITY

(Continue to) Make Inroads: An Arts Development Plan for Kildare County Council 2012-2016 outlines a framework for arts development in the county. The plan recognises Kildare as a county in transition, on the border of Dublin city. The cultural and physical landscape of north Kildare is changing with the increase in population and new communities. At the same time, however, many parts of the county remain rural and isolated. The plan is interactive, flexible and responsive to the citizens of County Kildare.

Strategic objectives for the delivery of key developments are set out. Kildare County Council regards the partnership approach set out in (Continue to) Make Inroads as fundamental for sustainable arts development.

Policies: Arts/Culture in the Community

It is the policy of the Council to:

- AC 1** Develop and improve the physical infrastructure of cultural facilities countywide.
- AC 2** Ensure that all arts and cultural facilities in the ownership and management of the Council are accessible to the wider community and to promote the role of these facilities as focal points for the community.

Objectives: Arts/Culture in the Community

It is an objective of the Council to:

- ACO 1** Continue the physical enhancement programme of arts spaces in libraries, including visual arts and gallery performance and workshop facilities.
- ACO 2** Support the existing Heritage Centres by the promotion of further heritage services within the county.

ACO 3 Develop Kildare town as a tourism centre within the county and seek the development of a museum or a cluster of museums featuring the heritage and attractions of the town including natural heritage, history, the equine industry and the Defence Forces.

ACO 4 Support the provision of a performing arts space in North Kildare.

ACO 5 Support the delivery of the strategic objectives set out in "(Continue to) Make Inroads: An Arts Development Plan for Kildare Local Authorities 2012 – 2016" (and any future plan) in delivering sustainable arts development in the county.

ACO 6 Promote and support Kildare as a film destination and to support the emerging film industry within Kildare by building on the progress to date to attract and develop film across Kildare and identifying potential suitable sites for film studios in Kildare.

ACO 7 Support the development of Athy Heritage and Museum, including the Shackleton exhibition and incorporating the potential of the Dominican site and Library and Community Arts Centre, as a unique cluster of Arts, Culture and Heritage in the south of the county.

ACO 8 Support and promote additional cultural and arts spaces throughout Kildare.

11.11 LIBRARY SERVICES

Library services, arts service and cultural facilities all play an important role in helping communities in Kildare to become better places to live, where people feel connected and part of the broader community. Kildare County Council has a network of 15 branch libraries throughout the county. There is also a Mobile Library service, a Local Studies service (Kildare Collections and Research Service) with a genealogy service and the county archives. Kildare's public libraries are being re-imagined as facilities for community, arts and cultural activities.

This is a particular focus of the policy document prepared by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government entitled 'The Public Library as a Catalyst for Economic, Social, and Cultural Development – a Strategy for Public Libraries 2013-2017'. Reflecting this, 'Ideas Realised: Spreading the Word (The Kildare County Council

Library Services Development Plan 2015 – 2019)' charts the future direction of Kildare's library service through strategies and actions that take cognisance of the changing technological, economic and social profile of county.

Policies: Library Services

It is the policy of the Council to:

- LS 1** Support the delivery of libraries, arts and cultural facilities and services across communities in Kildare, particularly those that have grown rapidly.
- LS 2** Provide and improve access to library services and provide an integrated approach to the delivery of library, arts, genealogy, archives and local studies services.

Objectives: Library Services

It is an objective of the Council to:

- LBO 1** Improve library provision and services to all settlements/areas in which population and/or demands have increased, subject to the availability of resources and finance.
- LBO 2** Support the development of the county's library services and the implementation of the objectives and actions set out in the Kildare Library Service Plan 2015-2019 (and any future Plan) in delivering educational, cultural, training and learning centres across the county.
- LBO 3** Provide and improve access for the disabled in both proposed and existing library accommodation.





11.12 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Strong educational attainment is an essential platform to develop and maintain thriving communities. While educational progression is generally high across the county, localised factors associated with educational disadvantage exist across Kildare. The rapid population growth experienced in Kildare has also impacted on the service delivery, with the county having the second highest pupil/teacher ratio of primary schools in the state.

At central government level, *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children & Young People 2014-2020*, published by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2014), sets objectives to increase the numbers of children and young people “engaged in learning and achieving in education” and being part of “positive networks of friends, family and community”.

In supporting these outcomes, local authorities will increasingly need to participate in a wider multi-agency effort to build on existing good practice around clustering of schools to enable better access to educational supports, particularly for children with special educational needs, and to position these cluster arrangements to encourage greater connections between schools and community and State services.

An emphasis on forward planning is required to ensure that all children can avail of their education as locally as possible. The *Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*, DEHLG (2009), highlight the importance of schools and their provision in tandem with residential development. The Department of Education and Skills is responsible for the delivery of educational facilities and services. *The Provision of Schools and the Planning System, a Code of Practice for Planning Authorities*, published jointly by the Department

of Education and Science and the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government, sets out the best practice approach that should be followed in facilitating the timely and cost effective roll out of school facilities. Kildare County Council will work with the Department of Education and Skills, under the nationally agreed Memorandum of Understanding on the provision of school sites, to support the Department’s Schools Building programme and to proactively identify and acquire sites for new primary and post primary schools where the Department has identified a need or evidence of demonstrable need is presented by the local community.

Kildare is fortunate in that it is one of only five counties in the State to have a university. Maynooth University is Ireland’s fastest-growing university with 11,200 students registered in 2015, having more than doubled in size since 1999. It is projected that the number of students attending the University will increase to 13,000 by 2020. The University acts as a leading centre for international, national and local “lifelong learning and development” and is of both social and economic importance to the development of the county and the region.

Policies: Educational Facilities

It is the policy of the Council to:

- EF 1** Work in conjunction with the relevant education authorities to promote and support the provision of primary and post-primary schools in the county and to support the Department of Education and Skills School Building Programme by planning for future schools based on forecast need.
- EF 2** Promote, in conjunction with the relevant authorities, the provision of improved third level facilities within the county.
- EF 3** Establish local centres of education and training excellence across Kildare to engage people to up-skill, train and re-train to fit employer needs and employment growth areas (LECP Action 6.2.1).
- EF 4** Work in conjunction with the relevant education authorities to promote the provision for after-school care and community use of school buildings / facilities, by the incorporation of design specifications appropriate to such use in any new schools programme and in existing school expansions or upgrades.

- EF 5** Facilitate the further development of the primary school and its facilities at Ballyshannon.

Objectives: Educational Facilities

It is an objective of the Council to:

- EFO 1** Co-operate with the Department of Education and Skills, the Kildare Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB) and School Management Boards in the identification of appropriate sites for school facilities in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development.
- EFO 2** Engage with the Department of Education and Skills to develop a clear analysis of projected school demand across all age cohorts, in order to plan appropriately for the expansion and development of new schools within the county.
- EFO 3** Support the development of Maynooth University as a leading centre for international, national and local “lifelong learning and development”.
- EFO 4** Promote the clustering of education-related services and facilities proximate to existing third-level facilities.
- EFO 5** Explore the potential for a dedicated technical college within the county.
- EFO 6** Promote links between Maynooth University and other education and training facilities in the county.
- EFO 7** Promote the clustering of educational facilities and ensure that new schools are located and designed so as to facilitate walking and cycling. The transport network in the vicinity of schools should also seek to facilitate the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists.

11.13 CHILDCARE FACILITIES

The provision of childcare facilities, in its various forms, is recognised as a key piece of social infrastructure required to enable people to participate more fully in society. Childcare services in Kildare are delivered primarily by the private and voluntary sectors and regulated under the Childcare Act 1991 and the Childcare Regulations 2016.

The population of County Kildare has the youngest age profile of any county in the State. It is therefore essential that the infrastructure, services and supports required to enable children and young people to reach their full potential and to support an economically active population are in place and easily accessible. Central to this is the provision of good quality and accessible childcare and early education facilities at community level.

Kildare County Council is working with Kildare County Childcare Committee to improve the quality, provision and affordability of childcare in the county. Government policy seeks to support the development of stable, integrated and sustainable infrastructure that meets regulation standards. This can be supported by Kildare County Council through the County Development Plan and other Council policy.

The Council will have regard to the criteria specified in the *Childcare Facilities for Planning Authorities, DEHLG (2001)* and any updated policy guidance, regarding the provision of childcare and early years education facilities, together with the requirements of Chapter 17, Development Management Standards.

The provision of childcare facilities will be encouraged at the following locations:

- Business Parks and major employment centres;
- Neighbourhood and district retail centres;
- Large scale retail developments;
- In, or in the vicinity of, schools and major educational facilities;
- In, or adjacent to, community centres and facilities;
- Adjacent to public transport nodes; and
- Convenient to new and existing residential developments.

Policies: Childcare and Pre-School Facilities

It is the policy of the Council to:

- CPF 1** Work with national (e.g. TUSLA) and local agencies (e.g. Kildare Childcare Committee) to improve the quality, provision and affordability of childcare in the county.
- CPF 2** Facilitate and encourage the provision of childcare facilities, including community crèche facilities, of an appropriate type and scale, at appropriate locations throughout the county and to identify suitable locations through the Local Area Plan process, where appropriate.

Objectives: Childcare and Pre-School Facilities

It is an objective of the Council to:

- CPFO 1** Ensure the provision of childcare facilities in accordance with the Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG) and the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 1996 and 1997, 'Ready, Steady, Play! A National Play Policy' (2004) and any other relevant statutory guidelines which may issue during the period of this Plan.
- CPFO 2** Facilitate and encourage the provision of childcare facilities, including community crèche facilities, of an appropriate type and scale, at appropriate locations throughout the county.
- CPFO 3** Work with national and local agencies to develop childcare policy and initiatives which achieve a range of viable childcare options and to work towards a standard of excellence for the county. The Council (through the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC), in consultation with national and local agencies, will undertake a study of early years childcare and education needs in County Kildare (inc. school age provision) and develop a series of multi-agency actions and targets to support the provision of good quality infrastructure and services at optimal locations throughout Kildare.
- CPFO 4** Work with Kildare County Childcare Committee in delivering high quality accessible childcare at community level.
- CPFO 5** Ensure that there is a planned approach to economic and community development that takes account of the need for high quality accessible childcare.
- CPFO 6** Assess, in conjunction with the Kildare County Childcare Committee, the continuing needs around childcare and related facilities and review progress on provision during the two year progress report of this Plan.

11.14 HEALTH SERVICES

Access to health services is very challenged in Kildare. There are variations in terms of the level of GP services across the county, with Kilcock and Kildare Town having the lowest rates in the county. Naas General Hospital serves the catchment area of Kildare and West Wicklow. The hospital currently has 243 patient beds which include 18 day service beds. An important aspect of the hospital's role is the provision of a 24-hour Emergency Department. The hospital was granted planning permission in 2014 for an extension to accommodate additional day services and an extended Oncology department.

A new direction for healthcare provision has been set out in national policy documents such as *Healthy Ireland; A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2015*, the Mental Health Commission's *Quality Framework for Mental Health Services in Ireland (2007)*, and the Department of Health's suicide reduction strategy, *Connecting for Life: Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020*.

The emerging emphasis in the delivery of health services is on a multi-agency approach to service provision. There is a growing emphasis on primary health care services delivered in community settings, with an expectation that local authorities will become increasingly involved in facilitating and enabling these services. Planning to participate in this multi-agency approach is an important strand in the County Development Plan.

Provision of public health care services for County Kildare is the responsibility of the Health Service Executive (HSE). The HSE is rebalancing its approach with a shift from secondary care to primary care provision. The primary care model has a stronger emphasis on working with communities and individuals to improve their health and well-being. Building on the National Health Strategy *Quality and Fairness- A Health System for You*, the primary care model aims to ensure everyone has ready access to a broad spectrum of care services through a local primary care team.

Several Primary Care Centres have been developed in the county in recent years. They will continue to be facilitated on suitably zoned lands and in close proximity to new and existing residential areas, to allow communities access to multidisciplinary health care in easily accessible locations throughout the county.

In new development areas, medical practices should be provided for at the planning and design stage, either within the town, district or local / neighbourhood centres or within housing areas, preferably in purpose built premises, the locations of which should have minimal impact on residential amenity.

Policies: Health Services

It is the policy of the Council to:

- HS 1** Respond to current and future health needs to support healthy communities across the county and to facilitate and enable a multi-agency approach to service delivery in community settings.
- HS 2** Support and co-operate with promoters or operators of public and private health care facilities by facilitating and encouraging the provision of improved health care facilities in appropriate locations.
- HS 3** Facilitate the integration of appropriate healthcare facilities within new and existing communities.
- HS 4** Support the provision of 'one stop' primary care medical centres and GP practices, particularly along public transport routes and at locations easily accessible to members of the wider community.
- HS 5** Facilitate the further development of Naas General Hospital as an important and major centre for healthcare in the county.

Objectives: Health Services

It is an objective of the Council to:

- HSO 1** Support the provision of after-care facilities for vulnerable groups (such as older people, people undergoing addiction treatment, people with disabilities, etc.) within appropriately located and designed Primary Health Centres, in order to improve social inclusion across the county.
- HSO 2** Support the increased provision of accessible and equitable primary care and mental health services at appropriate locations across the county.

HSO 3 Support the delivery of infrastructure, facilities and services that promote and support healthy communities across Kildare. This includes progress to establish primary care centres in Kilcock, Celbridge and Kildare Town and the provision of high quality amenity space that promotes healthy lifestyles.

HSO 4 Support the work of Kildare Sports Partnership and the Sports National Governing Bodies to increase participation in sports and physical activity.

HSO 5 Support the implementation of Healthy Ireland Strategy and the Healthy Schools programme across Kildare.

11.15 FIRE SERVICES

The Council provides a Fire Service to the citizens of County Kildare, currently having six Fire Stations at Newbridge, Naas, Athy, Maynooth, Monasterevin and Leixlip. In addition the Fire Service headquarters service provides support to the stations as well as fire safety and emergency planning services. The Council will seek to ensure that this service is maintained and improved to meet the needs of all citizens in the county.

Policy: Fire Services

It is the policy of the Council to:

- FS 1** Improve fire service provision where required to all settlements/areas in which population and/or demands have increased subject to the availability of resources and finance.

11.16 PLACES OF WORSHIP/ BURIAL GROUNDS

The Council has responsibility for the provision of burial grounds including, as necessary, the acquisition of lands and the undertaking of any necessary works on these lands. Local Area Plans and Village Plans within this Plan will ensure that adequate land is reserved to accommodate such a use in accordance with the future needs of the county. A number of burial grounds may need to be extended and / or new sites identified over the period of this Plan.

The Council recognises the importance of places of worship and multi-faith centres in meeting the diverse religious and cultural needs of Kildare's citizens. Given the potential noise and traffic impacts associated with the use of a building as a place of public worship or religious instruction, it is important that places of worship and associated uses are suitably located.

Policies: Places of Worship and Burial Grounds

It is the policy of the Council to:

- BG 1** Protect the cultural heritage of historical burial grounds within the county and to encourage their management and maintenance in accordance with conservation principles.
- BG 2** Provide or assist in the provision of burial grounds and extensions to existing burial grounds at appropriate locations throughout the county.
- BG 3** Support and facilitate the development of places of worship and multi-faith facilities at appropriate locations, such as town and village centres.

Objectives: Burial Grounds

It is an objective of the Council to:

- BGO 1** Facilitate the development of new or extended burial grounds and crematoria by reservation of land at suitable locations and provision of local authority burial grounds subject to appropriate safeguards with regard to environmental, noise and traffic impacts.
- BGO 2** Explore the feasibility of the provision of a district-type burial ground, including crematoria and a natural wood cemetery (subject to a site specific feasibility study), at two locations as follows;
 - (i) North-east of the county
 - (ii) Centre of the county

- BGO 3** Investigate the feasibility of developing lands adjacent to Bodinstown cemetery to facilitate an extension to the existing graveyard and to facilitate development of suitable facilities for visitors to Wolfe Tone's grave.

11.17 SOCIAL, COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL EVENTS

Annual social, community and cultural events, such as outdoor concerts and annual festivals have taken place in a number of locations throughout the county. The Council will continue to support such events in accordance with planning regulations and health and safety requirements. The locations for these events will take into account the needs of local residents including noise levels, traffic management and car parking arrangements, security and liaison with Gardaí, health and safety issues and litter prevention.

Policy: Social, Community and Cultural Events

It is the policy of the Council to:

- SCC 1** Plan sustainable social, cultural and community facilities events across the county as a mechanism to promote and support community development, healthy lifestyles, training, education and recreational opportunities.

Objective: Social, Community and Cultural Events

It is an objective of the Council to:

- SCCO 1** Support social, community and cultural events in the county, such as outdoor concerts and annual festivals, at appropriate locations and at an appropriate type and scale, in accordance with planning regulations and health and safety requirements.

