



## CHAPTER 11

Social, Community and Cultural Development

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**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, with the provision of accessible social and community facilities.*

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## 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. 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.

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 *National Development Plan 2007–2013*; *The National Action Plan*

*for Social Inclusion 2007–2016*; *The Provision of Schools and the Planning System, A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, 2008*; *Childcare Facility Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001*; *Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009–2013* and *The Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2009*.

## 11.2 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 provisions:

- Ensuring 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, 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.

- Using 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 and access to public transport and safe pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 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.

### 11.3 Community Services and Facilities

The provision of community services and facilities creates an environment in which members of the community can interact. Essential for health, well-being and social development, the provision of community, leisure and cultural facilities and a good quality environment ensure places are attractive residential environments. Throughout the last 10 to 15 years, residential and economic development has facilitated the provision of a range of community and recreational facilities in the county. However, in some areas of the county this provision has not kept pace with the growth of residential development, and the level of community, recreational and cultural facilities remains inadequate to serve the needs and expectations of many local communities.

The County Development Board Strategy *Kildare 2012 – Social, Economic and Cultural Development of Kildare* sets out the policy mechanism for the co-ordination of local delivery of community infrastructure and services. 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.

### 11.4 Social Inclusion and Community Development

The *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007–2016* recognises the distinct groups in society and the needs of each in achieving social inclusion, tackling poverty and access to quality services. The Council recognises the direct impact of planning on the well-being of individuals and communities and in particular the potential for good planning to promote social inclusion.

### 11.5 Groups with Specific Design / Planning Needs

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

#### 11.5.1 Young People and Children

The 2006 Census indicates that County Kildare has a comparatively youthful population with 23.7% under 15 compared with 20.4% at a national level. Between 2002–2006 Kildare had the highest average annual birth rate per thousand population in the Mid-East region at 12.4, followed by Meath (11.7), Wicklow (10.7) and Dublin (10.2). These factors have a bearing on the present and future need for facilities such as childcare, play areas for children, sports facilities, schools and safe walking and cycling routes in the County. The 2008 CSO (Central Statistics Office) report *Regional Population Projections 2011–2026* projects a nationwide increase of 28.8% in the population aged under fourteen years between 2006 and 2026. In the Mid-East region this increase is expected to be even larger, at 53.3%. Thus the provision of youth facilities will be a priority in future planning for 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 conforms to relevant safety standards.

Play can 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 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.

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 endeavour to ensure that such facilities are inclusive and accessible to relevant age groups.

### **11.5.2 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 NESC (National Economic and Social Council) report *Well-Being Matters: A Social Report for Ireland* (2009) indicates that nationally less than one-third of people with disabilities can enter non-residential buildings built in the last ten years and only 12% feel that Part M of the Building Regulations are being enforced. Furthermore, the report found that people with disabilities are likely to achieve a lower level of education and have a lower participation in the work force than most other western European countries.

The focus therefore should be on the 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 County Council has made significant progress in access and equality of opportunity in a wide variety of areas including staff training, provision of assistive technologies, specialist design of public counters, adaptive work to Council houses, footpath and traffic signal improvements, accessible signage for people with visual impairments and works to community facilities.

It 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.

### 11.5.3 Older People

The Census of 2006 records 6.7% of the population of the county as being over 65 years of age. This is well below the national figure of 11%. The CSO report *Regional Population Projections 2011–2026* (2008) projects a nationwide doubling in numbers of older persons (65 years and over) between 2006–2011, with the most marked increases likely to occur in the Mid-East Region at 164%.

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.

### 11.5.4 Traveller Community

The Travellers Accommodation programme 2009–2013 adopted by Kildare County Council in February 2009 assessed the needs for traveller accommodation in the county. 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.

### 11.5.5 Ethnic Minority Groups

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.

## 11.6 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.

The County Development Board, which is representative of the major statutory and voluntary / community sectors, is the main driver of integrated service delivery at local level and promotes partnership and collaboration across the county. The Council will continue to support and facilitate the County Development Board in its key objectives of strengthening the community sector throughout the county and developing a long-term strategy of social investment at community level.

## 11.7 Arts and Culture in the Community

*Making Inroads: An Arts Development Plan for Kildare County Council 2006–2011* 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 *Making Inroads*, as fundamental for sustainable arts development.

## 11.8 Library Services

The Council Library Service leads and supports a wide range of activities and programmes including public libraries, arts services, local studies, genealogy, archives, services to primary schools, a mobile library and a quaker museum. The design and provision of the county's library service is set out in *Ideas Matter – Library Service Development Plan 2006–2011*. The plan is underpinned by two key themes, cultural inclusion and co-operative networking, in order to make cultural experiences and opportunities available to the citizens of County Kildare.

## 11.9 School Facilities

The Guidelines on *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (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.

## 11.10 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.

Many parents/guardians prefer to avail of a childminder rather than a crèche facility. Small childminding operations for six children or less are normally exempt from requiring planning permission.

Kildare County Council is working with Kildare Childcare Committee to improve the quality, provision and affordability of childcare in the county. *Kildare County Childcare Committee Strategic Plan 2007–2010* sets out key objectives with the aim of delivering quality childcare and educational services centred on the needs of the child.

The Council will have regard to the criteria specified in the *Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities* published by the DoEHLG, (2001) regarding the provision of such facilities, together with the requirements of Chapter 19, 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
- Within new and existing residential developments.

### 11.11 Health Services

Provision of public health care services for County Kildare is the responsibility of the Health Service Executive (HSE). The HSE is seeking to rebalance 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.

Primary care centres will 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.

Location of medical practices within housing areas is generally only appropriate for smaller-scale practices (excluding veterinary practices). In such cases, the locations should have minimal impact on residential amenity, adequate parking provision and located on a main road, or on a public transport route.

### 11.12 Burial Grounds

The Council has responsibility in the provision of burial grounds including as necessary, the acquisition of lands and the undertaking of any necessary works on these lands. Development plans / local area plans 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 (2011–2017).

### 11.13 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, liaison with Gardaí, health and safety issues and litter prevention.

### 11.14 Policies

#### 11.14.1 Community Services and Facilities

It is the policy of the Council:

- C 1: To ensure that sufficient lands are zoned to cater for social and community needs.
- C 2: To actively promote the provision of community, educational, social and recreational facilities in tandem with future housing development. In certain large mixed use schemes the frontloading of such infrastructure may be required prior to the commencement of development. 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, for residential schemes on zoned lands in Village Plans (refer to Chapter 17) which are greater than 10 units, for residential schemes on unzoned lands which are greater than 10 units or where deemed necessary by the planning authority. The suitability and scale of proposed developments will be assessed against the level of social infrastructure in towns/villages/settlements. The Planning Authority will seek to ensure that unsustainable levels of population growth does not take place in the absence of adequate levels of social infrastructure.

- C 3: To carry out a review of the SIA process to assist in the implementation of policy C2 above.
- C 4: To encourage 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 5: To assess the suitable provision of nursing homes, crèches and other commercially run community facilities and amenities at appropriate locations, during the review of Local Area Plans and Village Plans.

### 11.14.2 Social Inclusion and Community Development

It is the policy of the Council:

- SC 1: To promote equality of access to services and facilities and assist in the removal of barriers to full participation in society.
- SC 2: To support and encourage the establishment of consultative structures, particularly those associated with the County Development Board, which enhance and enable communities to engage in policy making.
- SC 3: To 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 4: To 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.

### 11.14.3 Groups with Specific Design/ Planning Needs

#### Young People and Children

It is the policy of the Council:

- YPC 1: To 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 for more policies on recreation and amenity).

#### People with Disabilities

- PD 1: To 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: To 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.
- PD 3: To ensure that all footpaths and public areas are accessible and safe for people with disabilities and/or reduced mobility etc.
- PD 4: To 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.

#### Older People

- OP 1: To 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: To 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: To 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) Located within an environment that is suitable for their stated purpose, integrating within the wider community while providing a safe environment for residents.
  - (iv) 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 (February 2009) or the relevant standards for any subsequent national guidelines. Relevant standards are contained within Chapter 19 Development Management Standards.

#### 11.14.4 Local Development/Community Groups

It is the policy of the Council:

- LDG 1: To continue to co-operate with statutory bodies, in particular the County Development Board, and other agencies including the voluntary sector, residents, business and environment 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





#### 11.14.5 Arts and Culture in the Community

It is the policy of the Council:

- AC 1: To develop and improve the physical infrastructure of cultural facilities countywide.
- AC 2: To 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.
- AC 3: To continue the physical enhancement programme of arts spaces in libraries, including visual arts and a gallery performance and workshop facilities.
- AC 4: To support the existing Heritage Centres by the promotion of further heritage services within the county.
- AC 5: To develop Kildare town as a tourism centre within the county and seek the development of a museum in Kildare town. This museum may be a branch of the National Museum of Ireland and should be centrally located.
- AC 6: To support the provision of a performing arts space in North Kildare.

#### 11.14.6 Library Services

It is the policy of the Council:

- LB 1: To provide and improve access to library services and provide an integrated approach to the delivery of library, arts, archives and local studies services.
- LB 2: To provide and improve access for the disabled in both proposed and existing library accommodation.

#### 11.14.7 School Facilities

It is the policy of the Council:

- ED 1: To co-operate with the Department of Education and Skills, the Vocational Educational Committee for County Kildare and School Management Boards in the identification of appropriate sites for school facilities.
- ED 2: To promote, in conjunction with the relevant authorities, the provision of improved third level facilities within the county.

### 11.14.8 Childcare and Pre-School Facilities

It is the policy of the Council:

CPF 1: To ensure the provision of childcare facilities in accordance with the *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoEHLG) 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.

CPF 2: To facilitate and encourage the provision of childcare facilities, including community crèche facilities, of an appropriate type and scale, at appropriate locations throughout the county.

CPF 3: To assess, in conjunction with the Kildare County Childcare Committee, the continuing needs around childcare and related facilities and review progress on provision during the mid term review of this Plan.

### 11.14.9 Health Services

It is the policy of the Council:

HS 1: To 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 2: To facilitate the integration of appropriate healthcare facilities within new and existing communities.

HS 3: To 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 4: To support the provision of after-care facilities for vulnerable groups (such as the elderly, people undergoing addiction treatment, disabilities, etc) within appropriately located and designed Primary Health Centres in order to improve social inclusion across the county.

### 11.14.10 Burial Grounds

It is the policy of the Council:

BG 1: To 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: To provide or assist in the provision of burial grounds and extensions to existing burial grounds at appropriate locations throughout the county.

## 11.15 Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

SCO 1: To facilitate the provision of new education and other community facilities, and appropriate extensions to such facilities, within existing towns and villages through the reservation / zoning of land for such uses.

SCO 2: To facilitate the provision of childcare facilities at appropriate locations and to identify appropriate sites for such uses, where deemed appropriate, under the local area plan process.

SCO 3: To 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.



SCO 4: To 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.

SCO 5: To 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.

SCO 6: To improve the provision for children's play across the county. The provision of such facilities 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.

SCO 7: To develop a partnership approach in funding and developing play opportunities throughout the County and in accordance with any forthcoming Council's Play Policy.

SCO 8: To 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.

SCO 9: To 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.

SCO 10: To provide or assist in the provision of burial grounds and extension to existing burial grounds, by reservation of land at suitable locations and provision of local authority burial grounds, where feasible.

SCO 11: To explore the feasibility of the provision of a regional-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

SCO 12: To investigate the feasibility of developing lands adjacent to Bodenstown cemetery to facilitate an extension to the existing graveyard.