

10

Community Infrastructure & Creative Places



Chapter 10 Community Infrastructure and Creative Places

***Aim:** To provide for and facilitate the development of healthy, sustainable, socially inclusive communities integrated with the timely delivery of a wide range of community, social, educational, recreational, and cultural facilities that are accessible and promote social inclusion, ensuring County Kildare develops as a location with an enhanced quality of life for its citizens and visitors alike.*

10.1 Background

Social infrastructure, community facilities and community development are vital to the creation of sustainable communities and supporting a healthy lifestyle. Access to sports, play and recreational facilities are crucial to our health and wellbeing. Essential services such as healthcare, childcare, education, culture, and the arts all have a significant role to play in our quality of life. These services and facilities should ideally be located within each town/village to provide easy access and optimise the opportunity for people to walk or cycle to them.

Community/social infrastructure for the purposes of this chapter includes community centres/halls, libraries, cultural facilities, spaces for supporting the arts, places of worship, burial grounds, schools, childcare facilities, youth centres, family resource centres, healthcare facilities, playgrounds, sports, other recreational facilities and other infrastructure required to enable statutory and voluntary sector organisations to undertake their work. Public open space/parks which are also important aspects of community infrastructure are considered in Chapter 13 of this Plan, '*Landscape, Recreation and Amenity*'.

The Council will seek to provide, where possible/feasible and within its remit, community infrastructure that meets the social and recreational requirements of each town/village in County Kildare. The Council will also work closely with relevant stakeholders to facilitate and support the provision of such community infrastructure in town/village centres and in residential and employment areas to optimise access, function, and use. Shared use and co-location of facilities is encouraged to align service provision, use land more efficiently and facilitate opportunities for further inclusion and community participation.

A key priority in the delivery of such infrastructure and upgrading/expansion of existing infrastructure will be to ensure the social inclusion of areas of disadvantage and communities of interest such as Travellers and Roma amongst others and that they are designed to incorporate universal accessibility to cater for all ages and abilities.

10.2 National and Regional Policy Context

Development Plan policies and objectives must be consistent with national and regional planning policy as set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). Various objectives within these documents are particularly relevant to the area of social inclusion and the provision of community facilities and services such as:

- Access to quality childcare, youth, education, and health services.
- Planning for a more diverse and socially inclusive society that targets equality of opportunity and a better quality of life for all citizens, through improved integration and greater accessibility in the delivery of sustainable communities and the provision of associated services.
- Seek and support the planned provision of easily accessible social, community, cultural and recreational facilities and ensure that all communities have access to a range of facilities that meet the needs of the communities they serve.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) notes that '*planning affords an opportunity to facilitate and deliver a more socially inclusive society through better integration and greater accessibility at all stages of the life cycle*'. It therefore requires this Plan to include policies and objectives to obtain universal accessibility that address existing barriers to access and provide for community facilities that can be utilised by all members of the community regardless of age, health or other factors that may impede accessibility.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) recognises that social infrastructure plays an important role in developing strong and inclusive communities and includes the following guiding principles in relation to such infrastructure:

- Support the 10-minute concept whereby a range of community facilities and services are accessible within short walking and cycling timeframes from homes or are accessible by high-quality public transport to these services in larger settlements.
- Facilitate a sufficient supply of good quality sports and recreation facilities, including networks for walking, cycling and other activities and shall maximise the multiple uses of such facilities by encouraging the co-ordination of services between sports providers, schools, colleges, and other community facilities.

In addition to the above, the Plan will also support the ambition, goals, and commitments outlined in the "*Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025*" and any subsequent update of this document.

Reference has also been made in the preparation of this Plan to various national strategies and guidelines 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).
- '*Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities*', DEHLG (2009).

10.3 Local Context

Several 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 in the following documents/strategies:

- *'Kildare Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021'* (or any subsequent plan¹)
- *'The Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2023.'*
- *'Kildare Age Friendly Strategy 2019-2021'* (or any subsequent/updated version)
- *'The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024'*
- *'Kildare Integration Strategy 2021-2026'*
- *'Short Grass Stories: An Arts Strategy for Kildare 2018-2022'*
- *'Kildare - Culture and Creativity Strategy 2018-2022'*
- Kildare Library Service Interim Development Plan 2020-2022 titled *'Recover, Refocus, Re-energise'*
- *'Kildare Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2017-2021'* (or any subsequent replacement)
- Kildare Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2019-2021 (or any subsequent replacement)
- County Kildare Traveller & Roma Strategy 2019-2023

10.4 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:

- 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.
- Promoting the retention and enhancement of existing community services.
- Requiring the provision of services and facilities in tandem with and during the early phases of new housing developments (e.g, shops, businesses, schools, childcare, recreational/sports areas, and community centres)
- Requiring the provision of neighbourhood centres and community facilities within walking distance of and concurrent with new residential development and promoting 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.
- Facilitating the provision of access and facilities for people with disabilities and the integration of ethnic-minority groups in the county.
- Promoting the development of, and access to, public transport and safe pedestrian and cycle routes.
- Ensuring that relevant development proposals incorporate access to facilities for people with disabilities such as level access to buildings, dished kerbs, changing places, appropriate parking spaces and accessible toilet facilities.
- Promote participation, develop the capacity of marginalised communities and foster community leadership in areas of disadvantage and among communities of interest experiencing inequalities.

¹ LECP review underway.

10.5 Kildare LCDC & Kildare LECP 2016-2021

The Kildare Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) was established following the Local Government Reform Act in 2014 and brings together the elected members and officials of Kildare County Council, representatives from other agencies, community representatives and representatives from civil society to secure the participation of all stakeholders and contribute to building a joined-up approach to the development of local and community development in Kildare.

The 2014 Act also requires local authorities to prepare an integrated Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), which identifies objectives and actions for strengthening economic and community development in the county. The Kildare LECP 2016-2021 was adopted in December 2015 and ensures that relevant community and economic elements will be implemented in an integrated way. The LECP is currently being reviewed and updated. While the LECP provides the framework for this development, the County Development Plan provides the spatial strategy for the realisation of these objectives and actions.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P1	Support and promote the timely delivery of the goals, objectives and actions set out in the Kildare Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 (or any subsequent replacement).
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Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O1	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 (or any subsequent replacement).
SC O2	Make provision, through appropriate land use zoning in the CDP settlement plans and Local Area Plans to deliver community infrastructure, supports and services in a planned and co-ordinated manner within the county, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.
SC O3	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 Local Area Plans and planning schemes.
SC O4	Support and encourage youth and community engagement in local decision making through a range of methods and channels, and through networks including among others, the Kildare Public Participation Network.
SC O5	Promote volunteerism by supporting the work of the Kildare Volunteer Centre as well as other voluntary groups and networks.

10.6 Community Services and Facilities

The provision of adequate and suitably located community, leisure and cultural facilities are critical infrastructure to support our towns and villages. These services significantly enhance the quality of life of the citizens of Kildare and enhances the attractiveness of Kildare as a place to visit. While Kildare has a wide range of community services and facilities, the county's young and growing population is placing considerable pressure on these services in many areas. The Council will seek to ensure that an appropriate range of facilities are provided in all communities taking account of the population profile and growth targets identified in the Core Strategy.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P2	Require the delivery of a range of universally accessible, integrated, and well-connected social, community, cultural, and recreational facilities, close to the communities they serve through the designation and safeguarding of specific land uses at appropriate strategic and optimised locations in settlement plans and mandatory Local Area Plans in County Kildare.
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Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O6	Protect and enhance existing social infrastructure/community facilities and increase the provision as required in accessible and sustainable locations including the development of new and expansion of existing facilities and services.
SC O7	Support and encourage the clustering of community facilities such as community centres, with a priority towards community and youth facilities, sports and leisure facilities, schools, childcare facilities, facilities for older persons, and open spaces to create multi-purpose community hubs.
SC O8	Ensure that communities across the county have access to multifunctional and intergenerational community centres that provide a focal point for community activities.
SC O9	Ensure that all communities are supported by a range of sporting facilities that are fit for purpose, accessible and adaptable and that recreational and sports amenity space is provided that supports the work of Kildare Sports Partnership in promoting participation in sports and physical activity for all.
SC O10	Support the work of Kildare Sports Partnership and their Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (and any subsequent replacement) to promote participation in sports and physical activity.
SC O11	Support and encourage the co-location and sharing of educational, community and sporting facilities for non-school purposes, to maximise the sustainable use of such infrastructure.

SC O12	Proactively seek suitable sites within the Key Towns of Naas and Maynooth for the provision of Municipal Sporting Facilities where shared amenities are provided for sports clubs and the general public.
SC O13	Facilitate the provision of appropriately scaled children's play facilities and teen space facilities at suitable locations within existing and new residential development.
SC O14	Investigate the feasibility of making available suitable unused council owned brownfield sites and buildings for sport, the arts and community groups on a temporary or long-term lease basis, where possible.
SC O15	Require that community facilities are provided in new communities on a phased basis in tandem with the provision of new housing or other large-scale developments. In cases where there is a deficiency of a certain type of infrastructure as part of the development proposal, the frontloading of such infrastructure will be required as part of the first phase of development and must be fully operational prior to the occupation of any residential unit on the subject site. Such deficiencies should be identified in the Social Infrastructure Audit prepared to accompany the planning application. Where the Planning Authority is not satisfied with the information supplied as part of the Social Infrastructure Audit or where inadequate measures are proposed to address any identified shortfalls in social infrastructure as part of a proposed development scheme, a planning application for new housing developments or large-scale developments may not be favourably considered.
SC O16	Require residential schemes of 20 units or greater to submit a Social Infrastructure Audit which shall determine how the capacity of the assessed infrastructure will be affected by the proposed increase in population. Where a deficit is identified, the developer will be required to make provisions/submit proposals to address such deficits.
SC O17	(a) Require social infrastructure audits submitted in accordance with SC O15 of this Plan to include a map of educational, community, childcare, healthcare, sporting, and open space/play facilities within a 10-15 minute (800-1200 metre radius) walk of the proposed development. The audit should identify public / non-fee paying and private/fee paying facilities. Such audits may consider, where appropriate, services which are accessed by car. Capacities must be confirmed with supporting documentation submitted from service providers in order to verify the assessment as set out in the audit. (b) Include an assessment of the availability of or the provision of a new neighbourhood centre.
SC O18	Encourage and facilitate, where appropriate, the introduction of accessible amenities in parks and other suitable locations, which may include outdoor gyms and adult exercise equipment.
SC O19	Support, facilitate and acquire, where possible, playing facilities for sporting organisations across the county including the County Kildare Ladies GAA and Camogie Association for their continued development.
SC O20	Engage with relevant sporting agencies/organisations/entities to identify lands for the provision of a national and/or regional sports facility/venue at appropriate locations in County Kildare.

Actions

It is an action of the Council to:

SC A1	Examine the feasibility of providing a regional sports centre for all which may include provision for Air Domes in the county during the life of the Plan that will particularly encourage female participation in sport as well as including facilities for minority sport and people with disabilities.
SC A2	Prepare Social Infrastructure Audits as part of the suite of mandatory Local Area Plans to identify gaps/deficiencies in community facilities and services including the mapping of existing community, educational, sporting, childcare, and healthcare facilities and to zone sufficient lands to accommodate identified requirements.
SC A3	Undertake to prepare an audit of community, religious and disused school buildings in villages and rural settlements throughout the county in order to determine their suitability to accommodate community uses where they are not already being used for such purposes. Where it is determined that there is an identified need for the provision of community uses in these areas, the Council will liaise with the relevant landowners in order to revitalise these structures for suitable community uses.
SC A4	Where lands currently zoned 'Open Space & Amenity' are being re-zoned, an equitable replacement will be so zoned.
SC A5	Progress plans for the provision of a new fully accessible regional swimming pool in North Kildare in conjunction with other relevant bodies.
SC A6	Carry out an audit of leisure facilities across the County, within the lifetime of the Plan, including in Kildare County Council owned/operated facilities to provide standards on the basic level of social infrastructure provision based on population thresholds and reasonable travel times to services and put in place provisions for additional facilities where deficiencies are identified.

10.7 Social Inclusion, Spatial Justice and Community Development

Social exclusion describes the separation from the benefits of inclusion in the mainstream of society in terms of an adequate income, participation in decision making, access to life chances and social and cultural recognition. Council actions to bring about social inclusion cut across many of the Council's functions and are addressed in a number of policies listed in Section 10.3 above.

Most deprivation in Kildare is clustered in the east and south of the county with the most disadvantaged areas around Athy. The Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2023 aims to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long-term unemployment through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. This is the second SICAP programme and runs to December 2023. The current programme has been informed by the LECP and responds to social inclusion issues highlighted in the county.

The Public Participation Network (PPN) set up in Kildare 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 and seek representation from the local community/voluntary, social inclusion and environmental sectors.

The NPF states that towns and villages will have enhanced amenities and heritage (public spaces, parks, streets and recreational infrastructure) and this will be attractive, offer a good quality of life and add some character to the towns and villages (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2018). It also mentions how to improve spatial justice. Examples include good-sized footpaths, cycle lanes (increase health and exercise), recreational areas and wheelchair accessible areas. Another example mentioned in the NFP is the importance of facilities such as childcare and education. If these are insufficient, it increases the risk of poverty, lack of skills and social exclusion, which leads to a poor quality of life (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2018). This can affect both the physical and mental well-being of an individual.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P3	Promote social inclusion and spatial justice through equality of access to services and facilities and to assist in the removal of barriers to full participation in society.
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Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O21	Work with all target groups, such as young people (including among other networks, Comhairle na nÓg), older people, people with disabilities, migrants, ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma communities, to advance, encourage and support their full participation in society.
SC O22	Ensure that all arts and cultural facilities in the ownership and management of the Council are accessible to the wider community and to promote these facilities as focal points for the community.
SC O23	Support and encourage communities in the restoration and rehabilitation of community halls/centres, thereby facilitating a greater level of social and community inclusion.
SC O24	Ensure, where feasible, that facilities and services are located close to identified areas of deprivation, public transport links, and on walking/cycling routes in order to encourage use and participation.

10.8 Groups with Specific Design/Planning Needs

There are several 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 all these groups.

10.8.1 Children and Young People

Kildare has the highest rate of young people aged 0 to 24 years in the State with 36.6% of the total population. According to the 2016 Census, the population aged 0 to 24 years residing in Kildare was 81,517.

Over 28% of Kildare's population is aged 0 to 18 years which is the third highest rate of all local authorities in Ireland. Kildare's child and youth dependent cohort is the sixth highest in the State, meaning those of working age have a relatively greater burden in supporting the young population.

Given the size and significance of Kildare's existing population cohorts in the 0-4, 5-12 and 13-17 age ranges, it is evident that the profile of the county's population has not yet peaked, and that there is likely to be an increased demand for children's and young people's services over the next decade. For instance, the number of secondary school population (13-17 years) residing in Kildare has increased by 17.5% in the five years prior to the 2016 census.

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. Given the projected population growth for the region to 2031 it is clear the provision of youth facilities is 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 for 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 and address key priorities such as provision of youth facilities/activities and childcare infrastructure outlined in the '*Kildare Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2021*' (or any subsequent replacement) that respond to children and young people's needs in the County.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P4	Ensure the needs of children and young people, including those with disabilities and additional needs, in the provision of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities are provided for in the community in which they live.
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Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O25	Increase the quantity and improve the quality of children's play facilities across the county particularly in areas where a lack of provision has been identified (e.g., play areas should be within a 10-minute walk of new and existing residential areas), subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.
SC O26	Identify deficiencies of play space for children and teenagers as part of the local area plan process to ensure provision is made in future developments to cater for the projected population.
SC O27	Integrate, where possible and practical, the design of youth space facilities as part of all newly planned and proposed extensions to community facilities in the county.
SC O28	Support the provision of multi-purpose sports (to include minority sports, and arts / drama activities) halls, outdoor playing pitches, all-weather playing pitches, tennis courts, basketball courts, swimming pools, and associated facilities in appropriate locations and to particularly encourage flexibility in the design of sports facilities in order to accommodate a range of sporting activities, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.
SC O29	Make available/lease, vacant or unused council owned buildings/land to community groups, youth groups and clubs.
SC O30	Ensure facilities are provided close to/within residential areas, public transport links, and cycling/walking routes allowing them to be more accessible for all members of the community.

Actions

It is an action of the Council to:

SC A7	Facilitate local community groups/sporting organisations in the development of sport and recreational facilities through land use zoning within the local area plan process as appropriate.
SC A8	Continue to develop open spaces throughout the county which encourage a range of recreational and amenity activities that will cater for both active and passive recreation, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.

10.8.2 People with Disabilities

According to the 2016 census, there are 27,768 people in Kildare with a disability, the sixth highest in the state. This was an increase of 13% from the 2011 census.

Of those with a disability, the most common were 'chronic illness' (17.1%), substantial physical limitation (13.1%), difficulty in going outside home (9.4%) and difficulty in participating in activities (12.1%). The least common reported disability was 'blindness/impaired vision' (2.9%).

People with disabilities and the mobility impaired face particular physical barriers to access and movement. A key priority for the council is to remove barriers to

involvement in community and employment activities. In addition to improving accessibility to existing facilities and services, 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.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P5	Ensure all buildings, public and open spaces and recreational and amenity areas are accessible for people with disabilities, having regard to the Building Regulations, the objectives of 'Building for Everyone' (National Disability Authority), 'Access for the Disabled' (nos. 1 to 3) (National Rehabilitation Board), and the Irish Wheelchair Association Best Practice Guidelines: Designing Accessible Environments.
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Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O31	Ensure that parking spaces provided for people with disabilities are appropriately indicated and located in a manner which has regard to dismounting and the safety of drivers and passengers. In addition, all parking spaces for the disabled shall be suitably marked both on the ground and by clearly visible vertical signs.
SC O32	Ensure the needs of people with visual difficulties is integrated into the design of pedestrian facilities, by assessing the options available and choosing the most appropriate design.
SC O33	Promote the provision of 'changing places' in public buildings, community facilities, key tourist sites and shopping centres in the county and promote the use of a universal key-lock system for ease of access to wheelchair accessible toilets.
SC O34	<p>Ensure that, where possible, all footpaths are.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Sufficiently wide and suitable for wheelchair use, (ii) Free from barriers, (iii) Well lit, (iv) Appropriately surfaced, and (v) Include kerb drops at all appropriate locations. <p>As part of any redevelopment works, the accessibility of circulation routes must be considered and items (i) to (v) above must be addressed where possible and appropriate.</p> <p>Crossing points shall also be provided at suitable locations to allow for the uninterrupted movement of disabled users through the county's towns and villages.</p>

Actions

It is an action of the Council to:

SC A9	Ensure that all footpaths and public areas are accessible and safe for people with disabilities and/or reduced mobility by continuing a programme of footpath development and improvements.
SC A10	Conduct an accessibility audit throughout the county to include access to public buildings, parks, amenity areas, playgrounds, heritage/tourist sites and graveyards in conjunction with the Kildare County Council Parks and Access Officer.
SC A11	Develop and maintain a directory of universally accessible recreational areas, sports and play facilities, community facilities and tourist attractions, throughout the county and develop additional facilities, where there is an identified need, in conjunction with the Kildare County Council Access Officer and to publish the accessibility directory online, through the medium of an interactive map, subject to resourcing and data protection (GDPR) requirements.

10.8.3 Older People

The '65 and over' age cohort has rapidly increased in Kildare and now represents 9.9% of the total population living in the county according to the 2016 census. This is the 2nd lowest rate in the State. However, this cohort has increased by 32% from the 2011 census and was one of the highest increases in the State and will result in an increased demand on older person's services.

There are very clear spatial differences with the rate of older people in rural Kildare at 13.1% compared to 8.7% in urban Kildare. However, it should also be noted that of those in the '65 and over' age cohort, 14,050 live in urban areas while 7,964 are living in rural areas of the county.

10.8.3.1 Age Friendly Kildare

In future proofing County Kildare to cater for an increased older population we can help make it a County that allows people to age in their community whilst also creating stronger more sustainable settlements. Such an aspiration requires an integrated approach and targeted investment at many levels from social infrastructure, to mobility and housing. In this regard, Kildare County Council is leading the way and there are many examples where measures are actively being implemented to make Kildare an age friendly County.

Supported housing and longer-term residential care facilities for older people should be fully integrated into the local community. These facilities should be within walking distance of the town centre, key services, public transportation, car parking and public spaces set within a universally designed and age friendly public realm. For example, the Kildare Age Friendly Programme Manager has worked with various stakeholders to identify how new and existing infrastructure/buildings can be made age friendly by implementing the new policies and guiding documents from Age Friendly Ireland. This among other projects, has resulted in co-operation between the Council, the HSE and the developer to make Kildare (in Athy) home to the first Age Friendly Primary Care

Centre (PCC) in the country. The work will feed into guidelines being prepared to inform all other future PCCs nationally.

This Plan recognises that McAuley Place in Naas has become a national exemplar model of housing for older people and will support further opportunities across Kildare to expand this supported housing market and model.

Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P6	Facilitate the provision of continuing care facilities for older persons, such as own homes (designed to meet the needs of older persons), sheltered housing, day-care facilities, nursing homes, step down care centres, and specialised care units (e.g. dementia specific units) at appropriate locations throughout the county.
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Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O35	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.
SC O36	Provide for nursing homes in urban and appropriately located rural settings in the county and to site residential care facilities for older persons close to community and social facilities (e.g., shops, health services etc.) ensuring older persons can remain part of and contribute to existing communities, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.
SC O37	Require a mobility strategy to accompany applications for nursing homes and residential care facilities detailing connections to amenities, parks, open spaces and local town/village/neighbourhood centres for access to services and facilities.
SC O38	Require nursing home proposals to include appropriately sized open space, gardens and recreational areas that are accessible to residents.
SC O39	Facilitate the aims and objectives outlined in the Kildare Age Friendly Strategy 2019-2021 (or any subsequent/updated version).
SC O40	Adopt the ethos of McAuley Place, Naas as a recognised model of excellence for Positive Aging and best practice in Ireland in planning and delivering services to older people and aim to emulate this model within each of the five municipal districts in Kildare, at appropriate and sustainable locations.
SC O41	Assess the suitability and demand for older persons care facilities as part of the review of Local Area Plans and to facilitate the use of appropriate sites and the refurbishment of existing buildings within towns and villages for such uses.

10.8.4 Traveller Community

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 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 and endeavour to provide accommodation for Travellers.

The annual count of Traveller families in Kildare has increased incrementally from 225 households (813 individuals) in 2015 to 302 households (1,026 individuals) in 2018. The Traveller population is a young population with increasing numbers of new and growing families. Census 2016 notes that most Travellers live in urban areas with the highest rates being located in the towns of Newbridge and Athy.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P7	Ensure Traveller accommodation is in proximity to key services including education, community, health, childcare, recreation, and public transport facilities.
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Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O42	Support the role of community organisations, groups, and programmes in the delivery of facilities and services to members of the Travelling Community.
SC O43	Support the actions and objectives outlined in the County Kildare Traveller and Roma inclusion Strategy 2019-2023.

10.8.5 Ethnic Minority Groups

Census 2016 noted that just under 10.6% or 23,297 of the population residing in Kildare are non-Irish nationals. The majority (c.87%) live in the main urban centres. Polish nationals make up the largest proportion of non-nationals in Kildare, representing 30% of all non-nationals or 3.3% of the total population.

As the figures would suggest Kildare is becoming an increasingly diverse county. Certain areas have a more ethnic or culturally diverse population than others and service provision / 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 Kildare (12.8%) compared to Rural Kildare (4.8%).

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P8	Consider ethnicity and cultural diversity in planning for the needs of communities and to support the provision of services and community facilities that reflect the varying needs of ethnic minority groups to facilitate ease of integration into local communities.
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Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O44	Support the actions and objectives set out in the Kildare Integration Strategy 2021-2026 and the National Migration Integration Strategy 2017-2020 (or any subsequent updated strategies).
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10.9 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 provision of funding where available and appropriate.

A five-year strategy to support the community and voluntary sector in Ireland was prepared by the Department of Rural and Community Development and launched in 2019 titled '*Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities*'. The Council is supportive of the goals and objectives outlined in this strategy.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P9	Work with statutory bodies, such as the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and other agencies including voluntary 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.
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Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O45	Assist community and voluntary groups in developing and enhancing facilities to meet the needs of the entire community and to promote the recruitment and retention of volunteers within community organisations.
SC O46	Facilitate the development of new facilities in built up areas close to walking/cycling infrastructure and public transport links, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.
SC O47	Facilitate the expansion of existing facilities to cater for the needs of community groups and the growing population in Kildare, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.

SC O48	Encourage community groups to share facilities with other community groups, clubs and organisations to ensure the use of community facilities are maximised throughout the county.
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10.10 Arts and Culture in the Community

Existing arts and cultural infrastructure in Kildare include theatres, cinemas, music venues, performance spaces, museums, libraries, halls, community centres and outdoor event spaces. Arts and Culture is a vibrant element of social life in the county with Census 2016 noting that 1.9% of the population aged 15 years and over were studying or working in the Arts sector (2,616 persons) while many others will be involved in voluntary capacities and / or participate in activities as a past time.

The need for additional facilities / spaces to cater for the growing population is acknowledged and the Council supports the strategic priorities outlined in the following strategies:

- “*Short Grass Stories: An Arts Strategy for Kildare; 2018-2022*”
- “*Kildare - Culture and Creativity Strategy; 2018-2022*”.

The Arts Strategy has given priority to four art forms for development comprising Dance, Music, Literature and Film.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P10	Develop and improve the physical infrastructure of arts and cultural facilities throughout the county particularly in areas where there is a deficiency in such provision, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.
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Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O49	Ensure that all arts and cultural facilities in the ownership and management of the Council are accessible to the wider community and promote the role of these facilities as focal points for the community.
SC O50	Continue to enhance art and creative spaces in libraries, including visual arts and gallery performance and workshop facilities.
SC O51	Support the existing Heritage Centres by the promotion of further heritage services within the county and ensure they are accessible to all members of the community.
SC O52	Promote the provision of public art, including temporary art and sculpture, through such mechanisms as the government supported ‘ <i>Per Cent for Art</i> ’ scheme.
SC O53	Facilitate the creation and display of art works at appropriate public locations within streetscapes.

SC O54	Facilitate community groups to use vacant or unused council premises for exhibitions, performances and other uses related to community arts, where appropriate.
SC O55	Promote and support Kildare as a film friendly destination by identifying potential sites for filming and film studios.
SC O56	Support and promote additional cultural, Irish language and arts spaces or centres throughout Kildare and support temporary or 'pop-up' opportunities as they arise.
SC O57	Include Arts and Cultural facilities (museums, art centres, galleries, and libraries) in Social Infrastructure Audits undertaken as part of the local area plan process and liaise with relevant stakeholders to identify deficiencies.
SC O58	Support the establishment of Youth Music hubs in appropriate locations within each Municipal District.
SC O59	Support and encourage community groups in their pursuit of Lónra Gaeilge (Irish Language Network) for their area.

Actions

It is an action of the Council to:

SC A12	Examine the feasibility of identifying a location for a performing arts space/theatre in North East Kildare taking account of the needs of existing groups operating in these areas.
SC A13	Support the development of the Shackleton Museum, including the Shackleton exhibition and incorporating the potential of the Dominican Lands and Library and Community Arts Centre, as a unique cluster of Arts, Culture and Heritage in the south of the county.
SC A14	Support the extension of Kildare town heritage centre and develop a museum or a cluster of museums in Kildare Town featuring the heritage and attractions of the town including natural heritage, history, the equine industry, the Defence Forces and St Brigid, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.
SC A15	Continue to support the Riverbank Arts Centre, as the flagship centre for the arts in Kildare, including the capital redevelopment of the theatre.
SC A16	Continue to support and encourage the development and growth of Youth and Community Theatre in the county.
SC A17	Examine the feasibility of providing an Arts and Crafts Co-Operative on Council owned lands/within Council owned buildings during the lifetime of the Plan.
SC A18	Investigate the feasibility of providing a museum attraction in North Kildare.

10.11 Library Services

Library services, arts services, 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 are 7 full time libraries with one in Leixlip, Naas, Newbridge, Kildare, Celbridge, Maynooth and Athy and they act as a network to support 8 part time libraries (Ballitore, Castledermot, Clane, Clocha Rince, Kilcock, Kilcullen, Monasterevin, Rathangan) and a mobile library service which provides a valuable and important service to rural areas and smaller communities of the county. There is also a Local Studies Department, Genealogy Service and Archival Service.

Kildare’s public libraries are being re-imagined as facilities for community, arts, and cultural activities. The Public Library Strategy 2018-2022 prepared by the Department of Rural and Community Development titled “*Our Public Libraries 2022*” is underpinned by four strategic objectives which include promoting the library service as a key community resource and continuing investment in library buildings, technology, and facilities.

Reflecting the objectives outlined in the Public Library Strategy is the Kildare Library Service Interim Development Plan 2020-2022 titled “*Recover, Refocus, Re-energise*” which charts the future direction of Kildare’s library service through a variety of actions that take account of the changing technological, economic, and social profile of the county.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P11	Support the delivery of library facilities in Kildare and develop/upgrade existing library buildings where required as demand increases subject to the availability of resources and finance.
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Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O60	Encourage the use of library facilities for other community, arts, and cultural activities.
SC O61	Promote the clustering of other community facilities around existing library buildings.
SC O62	Provide and improve access to library services for all users in proposed and existing library accommodation and provide an integrated approach to the delivery of library, arts, genealogy, archives, and local studies services.
SC O63	Support the aims/actions set out in the Kildare Library Service Interim Development Plan 2020 - 2022 (or any subsequent updated version) to deliver additional services and facilities.
SC O64	Support and facilitate the expansion of library facilities throughout the county, as necessary and appropriate.
SC O65	Support and encourage Library services to engage with complementary commercial outlets.
SC O66	Support the development and delivery of new library services for Celbridge where appropriate and to consider the feasibility of co-locating these services with other appropriate community-based services.

10.12 Educational Facilities

Strong educational attainment is an essential platform to develop and maintain thriving communities and to support continued economic development. The rapid population growth experienced in Kildare has impacted on service delivery, with the county experiencing high pupil/teacher ratios in recent years with many classes above the recommended ratio. In 2019, it was reported that one in five students in Kildare primary schools were in classrooms with teacher pupil ratios of more than 1:30, while more than 40 schools had class sizes larger than the national average².

However, it is understood this is now decreasing with primary teacher numbers rising nationally. This is reflected in North Kildare where the average class size for schools based on mainstream pupils in mainstream classes for 2020/21 was 25.4³.

It is important to note that responsibility for delivery of education facilities and services lies with the Department of Education. However, the Council continues to work closely with the DoE through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Education and Skills and the County and City Managers' Association (CCMA) in relation to the acquisition of sites to proactively identify and acquire sites for new primary and post-primary schools and to support the Department's Schools Building Programme.

Since the adoption of the previous County Development Plan in March 2017, four large-scale school projects were completed in Kildare (3 primary schools and 1 secondary school) while a further 29 projects are presently in the pipeline at various stages from site acquisition, design stage, to works having commenced on-site.

10.12.1 Primary Schools and Post Primary Schools

There are 102 mainstream primary schools (7 of which are DEIS⁴ schools) in Kildare registered with the Department of Education for the 2020/21 school year with a total of 29,498 students enrolled in the various schools. The majority (82%) of these schools are identified as Catholic while others are represented as Church of Ireland (5%) and Multi-Denominational (10%).

Census 2016 noted the population aged 5-12 (primary school going age) residing in the county was 29,453 which is broadly in line with current enrolment figures. It is notable that the population in this age cohort increased by almost 10% from 2011 to 2016.

The Department of Education identified 30 post primary schools (7 of which are DEIS schools) in Kildare for the 2020/21 school year with a total of 20,216 enrolled throughout the various schools. 13 schools are identified as Multi Denominational, 12 Catholic and 5 Inter Denominational. It is also notable that most post primary schools in Kildare are mixed schools (23 in total) while there are 4 boys and 3 girls' schools.

² Leinster Leader (July 2019)

³ Government statement 23rd September 2021 and may include secondary schools.

⁴ Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), Action Plan for Educational Inclusion, Department of Education and Skills May 2005.

Of the 30 schools in the county one is noted as a boarding facility while 2 are fee paying schools.

Census 2016 noted the population aged 13-18 (post primary school going age) residing in the county was 19,188 which again is broadly in line with the number enrolled for the 2020/21 academic year bearing in mind students may attend from bordering counties and others who may be over 18.

In addition to the mainstream schools there are also four special schools with 270 students enrolled for the 2020/21 academic year which are located in Celbridge, Newbridge, Kill and The Curragh.

The figures above indicate that primary and post primary schools within Kildare are accommodating the current population however, it is evident from social infrastructure assessments undertaken to date as part of local area plan processes that some towns are struggling to accommodate the additional population with many schools operating near, at or over capacity.

10.12.2 Third Level and Further Education Facilities

Kildare is fortunate in that it is one of only five counties in the State to have a university. Maynooth University presently has 14,000 students which has increased by 20% from 11,200 in 2015. 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.

In addition to the courses and facilities available at Maynooth University, there are also several further education and training facilities located throughout Kildare. The Kildare Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB) has a variety of courses available throughout both counties. Within Kildare, courses are available through facilities in Athy, The Curragh, Celbridge, Newbridge, Naas, Kildare, Maynooth, Prosperous, and Rathangan. Courses are available from hobby and elementary levels to Degree Level and Professional Qualification Level and are provided for in ETB’s Schools and Adult Education Centres.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P12	Continue to work with the Department of Education and other education authorities to promote and support the provision of primary, post-primary, and further education facilities in the County to reflect the diverse educational needs of communities.
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Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O67	Support the Department of Education's School Building Programme by actively identifying sites for primary and post primary schools at suitable locations, based on forecast need, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.
SC O68	Ensure designated sites/new schools are located and designed to promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Permeability links and infrastructure should be provided within school sites at design stage to promote sustainable travel. Permeability to adjacent residential areas must be facilitated wherever possible.
SC O69	Support the aims of the ' <i>Safe Routes to School Design Guide</i> ' by ensuring school development proposals incorporate the principles outlined in the guide and contain sustainable travel plans with appropriate and implementable measures.
SC O70	Require social infrastructure audits to be submitted with development proposals to outline up to date capacity and enrolment figures of schools within the catchment (10-20 minute walk/cycle) of the proposed development noting that Second Level Schools serve a wider catchment and as such, the assessment of these should include schools within a 5km radius or otherwise agreed by the Planning Authority. The data should be verified in writing by individual schools.
SC O71	Continue to identify school capacities through Social Infrastructure Audits undertaken as part of the local area plan process.
SC O72	Encourage the dual use of amenity facilities associated with educational facilities (whether outdoor or indoor) by clubs/groups/organisations, where the use of such facilities is agreed in writing in advance with the property owner/school authority/patron of the subject school in each instance.
SC O73	Promote the clustering of education related services and facilities proximate to existing/planned community, recreation, sporting, and childcare facilities that are linked to cycle/pedestrian infrastructure.
SC O74	Continue to facilitate the re-development and expansion of existing schools including ancillary amenity areas based on identified needs as part of the Government's School Building Programme, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.
SC O75	Promote and encourage links between Maynooth University and other education and training facilities in the county.
SC O76	Explore the potential for a dedicated technical college within the county.

10.13 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.

Kildare has a rapidly growing population with the highest rate of young people in the State. According to the 2016 Census, the population aged 0-4 residing in Kildare was 17,314 representing 7.8% of the total population higher than the State average of 7%. Settlements with the highest rates associated with this age cohort were Straffan, Kilcock, Kilmeague, Rathangan and Monasterevin.

Given the extent of housing development throughout the county in recent years it is essential that the childcare infrastructure, services and supports required, 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.

While the COVID-19 pandemic forced many facilities to close their doors for a period it also facilitated many people to work remotely which may have reduced the strain on some existing childcare facilities. Prior to the pandemic it was evident through some social infrastructure audits undertaken as part of the local area plan process that many were operating very near or at full capacity. It was also evident that many were having to close due to unsuitable premises, rising rental prices and the unavailability of suitable alternative premises.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P13	Support and facilitate the provision of good quality and accessible childcare facilities at suitable locations within the County in consultation with the Kildare County Childcare Committee, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.
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Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O77	Have regard to the criteria specified in the Childcare Facilities for Planning Authorities, DEHLG (2001), Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2020) and any updated policy guidance, regarding the provision of childcare and early years education facilities.
SC O78	Require the provision of childcare facilities close to existing built-up areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business Parks and major employment centres - Neighbourhood and district retail centres - Large scale retail developments - The vicinity of schools and major educational facilities - Adjacent to community centres and facilities - Adjacent to public transport nodes - Convenient to new and existing residential developments
SC O79	Ensure childcare provision is delivered in new communities prior to or in tandem with phase 1 of any residential or commercial development and is fully operational prior to the occupation of any residential units within the subject site.

SC O80	Support the provision of childcare facilities within or co-located with community buildings, such as community centres and schools.
SC O81	Support the provision of outdoor based childcare services in the county as an alternative, and in addition to providing purpose-built services in appropriate locations with toilet and shelter facilities for mealtimes, rest, etc., subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.
SC O82	Encourage community childcare facilities through social enterprise initiatives at appropriate locations throughout Kildare.
SC O83	Ensure development proposals for childcare facilities incorporate Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Settings.
SC O84	Require childcare facilities to incorporate a flexible design approach whereby their use could be adapted for other community purposes as the profile of the area changes. Evening uses should also be considered (e.g., a youth facility or activities for older persons).
SC O85	Require proposals that include childcare facilities to liaise with key stakeholders including the Kildare County Childcare Committee and to submit written correspondence from such stakeholders with their comments regarding the development proposal.
SC O86	Require development proposals for more than 20 residential units or over 2,000sqm in the case of commercial developments (including office/industrial developments) to prepare and submit a social infrastructure audit detailing the level of childcare infrastructure in the catchment which shall outline available capacity and types of service provided in each facility which must be verified in writing by the relevant service providers.
SC O87	Require the provision of appropriately located and purpose-built early learning and childcare facilities to meet the pro rata childcare needs of housing development during the plan period. Childcare facilities will be required, by a condition of planning permission, to be developed within the first phase of any new residential development, except where an exceptional circumstance can be provided and agreed with the Planning Authority.

Action

It is an action of the Council to:

SC A19	Continue to identify childcare deficiencies in social infrastructure audits as part of Local Area Plan processes, ensuring lands are zoned in appropriate locations to facilitate childcare services through the application of a location specific objective in Local Area Plans, where appropriate.
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10.14 Health Services

Healthcare provision encompasses a range of services from small scale GP surgeries to primary care centres and hospitals. Others include pharmacies, mental health services, disability services and nursing homes.

Access to health services is very challenging in Kildare with variations in terms of the level of GP services across the county. While the provision of GP services identified

in social infrastructure audits undertaken to date as part of the local area plan process appear relatively healthy (in terms of number of GP/Health services per capita population), the reality can be quite different with many practices confirming during the audits that they were operating at full capacity and could not take on new patients.

Within the county there is one general hospital in Naas which plays an important role in serving the catchment area of Kildare and West Wicklow. In addition, there are 70 GP facilities, 7 Primary Care Centres, 10 health centres and 22 nursing homes identified throughout Kildare on the HSE database.

Central to Government and Health Service Executive (HSE) policy is a shift away from traditional hospital-based care, towards more community-based care, with an emphasis on meeting people’s needs at local level by primary care teams. The Primary Care Team typically consists of general practice, public health nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech and language therapy, supporting populations of around 7,000-10,000 people as identified by the HSE and the Department of Health.

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

The provision of health care services in County Kildare is ultimately the responsibility of the Health Service Executive (HSE) along with other private and voluntary agencies. The primary role of the Council in healthcare provision is to ensure that there are adequate lands available in development plans and local area plans to provide for new facilities and the expansion of existing facilities. Proposals relating to healthcare facilities should reflect the County’s Settlement Hierarchy and be accessible and integrated into communities.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P14	Support the Health Service Executive (HSE) and other statutory and voluntary agencies in the provision of appropriate healthcare facilities, including the system of hospital care and the provision of community based primary care facilities appropriate to the size and scale of each settlement.
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Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O88	Facilitate the integration of appropriate healthcare facilities within new and existing communities.
SC O89	Support the provision of primary care centres and GP practices within existing settlements particularly where they are close to public transport links and safe walking and cycling infrastructure.

SC O90	Facilitate the further development of Naas General Hospital as an important and major centre for healthcare in the county, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.
SC O91	Support the provision of after-care facilities for vulnerable groups (i.e., older persons, people with disabilities and those undergoing addiction treatment) within primary care centres to improve social inclusion across the county.
SC O92	Support the increased provision of sufficient and accessible mental health services at appropriate locations across the county.
SC O93	Ensure healthcare facilities are delivered prior to or developed on a phased basis in tandem with the delivery of new housing and new communities particularly where deficiencies are identified in an area.
SC O94	Require development proposals of greater than 20 residential units or commercial developments (including office/industrial developments) greater than 2,000sqm to submit a detailed audit of health services (including GP service hours) and facilities in the area as part of a social infrastructure audit.
SC O95	Support the goals and objectives outlined in ' <i>Healthy Ireland, Strategic Action Plan 2021 – 2025</i> ', ' <i>The National Physical Activity Plan</i> ' and the ' <i>Kildare Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2017-2021</i> '.

Action

It is an action of the Council to:

SC A20	Identify deficiencies in healthcare services/facilities within social infrastructure audits as part of the local area plan process.
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10.15 Fire Services

The Council provides a Fire Service to the citizens of Kildare. There are six Fire Stations located across the county at Naas, Maynooth, Newbridge, Leixlip, Athy and Monasterevin providing the operational 24-hour Fire and Emergency response service and a headquarters service providing support to the stations as well as Fire Safety and Emergency Planning Services. All Fire Stations operate on a retained basis, meaning there are no full time Fire Stations in Kildare. The Fire Service works with neighbouring Fire Services to ensure that the best available response is always provided in emergency situations.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P15	Maintain and 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.
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Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O96	Ensure the fire service in the county is maintained and improved to meet the needs of all citizens.
SC O97	Facilitate the accommodation of fire service facilities in locations that allow ease of access and safe functioning with respect to the road network.

10.16 Places of Worship/Burial Grounds

In many communities, churches, burial grounds, and other places of worship form a focal point for the local population and often provide not only a religious service, but also meeting places and other cultural services.

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 Volume 2 of this Plan will ensure that adequate land is reserved to accommodate such a use in accordance with the future needs of the county. Some burial grounds may need to be extended and / or new sites identified over the period of this Plan.

The Council recognises the valuable contribution that places of worship and multi-faith centres have in a community context and 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.

There is no crematorium in Kildare at present with facilities in Dublin serving the counties need. While crematorium facilities are better served on a regional basis it is likely given the population growth, lack of burial ground space and the burial preferences of people in Kildare that a demand for columbarium walls, rooms, or buildings will be required at or in the vicinity of burial grounds in the future.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P16	Support and facilitate the development of places of worship, multi-faith facilities, burial grounds, columbarium walls, and crematoria to cater for the needs of the county.
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Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O98	Protect historic graveyards, in co-operation with the National Monuments Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, including through the avoidance of extensions where such
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	extensions would have an inappropriate level of impact on sub-surface archaeological remains or on their setting or amenity and, in that regard, as an alternative to extensions to historic graveyards to endeavour to find alternative locations where additional land for burial is considered necessary.
SC O99	Zone lands for the accommodation of burial facilities adjoining existing facilities at suitable locations, where such lands are located within or adjacent to existing towns, villages and rural settlements, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.
SC O100	Facilitate the development of new or extended burial grounds, including green cemeteries, eco-burial grounds, and crematoria having consideration for the burial preferences of multi-faith and non-religious communities by reservation of land at suitable locations and provision of local authority burial grounds subject to appropriate safeguards having regard to environmental, noise, and traffic impacts.
SC O101	Facilitate the use of environmentally sound burial site options such as Columbarium Walls, in appropriate locations.
SC O102	Encourage community centres/facilities to provide use of their facilities for worship spaces as a temporary solution as communities become more established.
SC O103	Encourage and facilitate the development of places of worship in appropriate locations in urban centres and proximate to residential communities, public transport links and walking/cycling infrastructure.
SC O104	Continue to monitor and assess capacity of burial ground space at existing cemeteries in the county and ensure future demand in the area is provided for.
SC O105	Facilitate the extension of existing burial grounds on unzoned lands at suitable locations.

Actions

It is an action of the Council to:

SC A21	Explore the feasibility of the provision of a district-type burial ground, including crematoria (subject to a site-specific feasibility study), in the: (i) North-east of the county and (ii) Centre of the county
SC A22	Investigate the feasibility of developing lands adjacent to Bodenstown cemetery to facilitate an extension to the existing graveyard and to facilitate development of suitable facilities for visitors to Wolfe Tone's grave.
SC A23	Undertake an audit of all burial facilities within the county within the lifetime of the County Development Plan, in order to: (i) Determine the available remaining capacity of all burial facilities. (ii) Identify where extensions to existing burial facilities could be accommodated where facilities are at or close to capacity, having regard to any site restrictions. (iii) Actively pursue lands to accommodate additional burial facilities whether by way of extension or new sites, subject to

	appropriate environmental assessments and considerations, and to appropriately zone lands for the accommodation of burial facilities.
SC A24	Ensure that historic graveyards in the ownership or care of the local authority are managed and maintained in accordance with appropriate conservation standards and that local communities involved in the care and maintenance of historic graveyards receive appropriate advice in relation to management and maintenance.
SC A25	Provide Columbarium Wall facilities in Confey, Derrinturn, Donaghcumper, Newbridge, Rathangan, Monasterevin, and Athy.

10.17 Social, Community and Cultural Events

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic annual social, community and cultural events, such as outdoor concerts and annual festivals have taken place in various locations throughout the county. With the easing of restrictions and the return of such activities as people adapt to living with COVID-19 the Council will continue to support such events in accordance with planning regulations and health and safety requirements. The location for these events will consider the needs of residents in the area including noise levels, traffic management and car parking arrangements, security and liaison with Gardai, health and safety issues and litter prevention.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

SC P17	Support the provision of sustainable social, cultural and community facilities and events in each Municipal District as a mechanism to promote and support inclusive community development, healthy lifestyles, training, education, and recreational opportunities.
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Objective

It is an objective of the Council to:

SC O106	Support inclusive 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.
SC O107	Liaise with relevant stakeholders to develop and improve public realm spaces throughout Kildare that can facilitate cultural, social and community events. Part VIII proposals will be required to outline activation plans for significant public realm developments.