

MONASTEREVIN LOCAL AREA PLAN 2015-2021

Draft Local Area Plan

Dréachtphlean Forbartha



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Part A

Introduction and Context



***Aim:** To build on the strengths of Monasterevin and to provide a focused approach to planning for future development in a coherent sustainable, spatial fashion. This Plan aims to achieve a more consolidated town centre through reuse, restoration and regeneration and the creation of a vibrant urban form that facilitates a sustainable economic base and creates sustainable and integrated communities while balancing future development with the conservation and enhancement of the unique natural and built environment of the town.*

1.0 Introduction

The Monasterevin Local Area Plan 2015-2021 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements and provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. It sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town in the context of the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017 and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022. It is also informed by Ministerial Guidelines published pursuant to Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, together with EU requirements regarding Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment.

This Plan is set out in a written statement with accompanying maps. It comprises;

Part A: Introduction and Context

Outlines the social, economic and planning context for the town, setting the framework for the policies and objectives of the plan.

Part B: Policies and Objectives

Sets out specific policies and objectives for the plan relating to housing, economic development, retail, tourism, urban design, etc.

Part C: Land Use Zoning

The land use zoning section sets out the land use zoning objectives and zoning matrix, which will inform development management over the period of the plan. The written statement shall take precedence over the maps should any discrepancy arise between them. In the full interpretation of all objectives for Monasterevin, it is essential that both the County Development Plan (CDP) and the Local Area Plan (LAP) are read in tandem. Where conflicting objectives arise between the CDP and the LAP, the objectives of the CDP shall take precedence. It should be noted that the general development management standards applicable to the plan are contained in the County Development Plan.

1.1 Local Area Plans Status and Process

Sections 18 - 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, provide that a Local Area Plan (LAP) may be prepared in respect of any area which a Planning Authority considers suitable, in particular for areas which require economic, physical and social renewal and for areas likely to be the subject of large-scale development within the lifetime of the plan.

A local area plan shall be made in respect of an area which:

- Is designated as a town in the most recent census of population, other than a town designated as a suburb or environs in that census;
- Has a population in excess of 5,000; and
- Is situated within the functional area of a planning authority which is a county council.

The 2011 Census of Population indicated that Monasterevin had a total population of 3,710 persons. The status of the town as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town in the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) justifies the need

for a Local Area Plan. The statutory time frame for the LAP as set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, commences upon the date of public display of the Draft Local Area Plan. Table 1 outlines the timeframe of the preparation of this LAP. The plan shall have effect four weeks from the date of adoption by the members of Kildare County Council and shall cease to have effect at the expiration of 6 years from that date unless this period is extended by resolution in accordance with section 12 (d) to (f) of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010.



Table 1 Timeframe for the preparation of the Monasterevin LAP

Procedure involved in the preparation of a Local Area Plan	Relevant Dates
(a) Public Display of Draft Local Area Plan and the Environmental Reports (where applicable). (≥ 6 weeks)	24 th February 2015 – 10 th April 2015
(b) Preparation of Chief Executive’s Report on submissions / observations received during the public display period of the Draft Plan. (≤ 12 weeks from date notice is placed in press - see (a) above)	11 th April 2015 – 18 th May 2015
(c) Consideration of the Chief Executive’s Report by the Members of the Authority. (6 weeks after the furnishing of the Chief Executive’s Report to the Members)	19 th May 2015 – 29 th June 2015
Where, following the consideration of the Chief Executive’s Report, it appears to the Members of the Authority that the proposal (being a proposal to make the local area plan) should be varied or modified, and the proposed variation or modification would, if made, be a material alteration of the proposal concerned, the following process is enacted.	
(d) Publication of the notice of the proposed variation or modification ¹ (≤ 3 weeks)	30 th June 2015 – 20 th July 2015
(e) Public display of variation or modification. (≥ 4 weeks)	21 st July 2015 – 17 th August 2015
(f) Preparation of Chief Executive’s Report on submissions / observations received (≤ 8 weeks from date of publication of notice - see (d) above)	18 th August 2015 – 14 th September 2015
(g) Consideration of the Chief Executive’s Report by the Members of the Authority. The Local Area Plan is either made or amended 6 weeks after the furnishing of the Chief Executive’s Report to the Members of the Authority.	15 th September 2015 – 26 th October 2015

¹ Note: At this stage the Planning Authority shall determine if a SEA/AA is or are required to be carried out in respect of one or more of the material alterations. Not later than two weeks after determination the Chief Executive shall specify the period necessary to undertake the assessment(s). Notice of the material alteration and where appropriate determination shall be published and an assessment shall be conducted within a period specified by the Chief Executive.



1.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The SEA Directive (2001/42/EC), was transposed into Irish Law through the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (SI No 435 of 2004) as amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 200 of 2011) and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (SI No 436 of 2004) as amended by the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 201 of 2011).

Mandatory SEA of a local area plan is required where the population or target population of the town is over 5,000 persons, or where the area covered by the plan is greater than 50 square kilometres, or where the local area plan is being prepared for a town and its wider environs. In accordance with Article 13 A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, a Screening Assessment was prepared for the

Monasterevin Local Area Plan and sent to the Environmental Authorities. Following receipt of correspondence from the Environmental Authorities, a determination was made that a Strategic Environmental Assessment will not be required in this case.

1.3 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

The purpose of Appropriate Assessment (AA) of land use plans is to ensure that protection of the integrity of European sites is a part of the planning process at a regional and local level. The requirement for AA of plans or projects is outlined in Article 6(3) and (4) of the European Communities (1992) Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (“Habitats Directive”). Local Area Plans are screened for any potential impact on areas designated as Natura 2000 sites. In any case where, following screening, it is found that the plan may have an impact, a full ‘appropriate assessment’ must be carried out.

The Draft Monasterevin Local Area Plan 2015- 2021 was screened for AA. On the basis of the findings of this Screening for Appropriate Assessment, and by applying the precautionary principle, it is concluded that the draft Plan is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site and will not have significant impacts on the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required. A Finding of No Significant Effects Matrix has been completed and is presented in Section 4 of this the habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment Screening Statement

All proposed development within the Monasterevin LAP boundary will be screened for AA of its potential impacts on the Natura 2000 Network, in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. In all such cases the developer shall consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DoAHG).

1.4 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

Under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended guidelines entitled “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities” were published by the DoEHLG (November 2009). These guidelines require planning authorities to introduce flood risk assessment as an integral and leading element of the plan making process. The Draft Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) carried out for Monasterevin is an assessment of flood risk in the town to inform strategic land-use decisions with the purpose of ensuring that flood risk management is fully integrated into the Local Area Plan. The preparation of this plan was subject to a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). Arising from the results of the SFRA, a change in the zoning objectives of some sites is proposed.

The SFRA has recommended that development proposals for the areas identified as being at risk of flooding (outlined on Map 3 in Section 6.11.5 Flood Risk Management) be subject to a site specific flood risk assessment. Some of these areas have been the subject of more detailed investigation and this information is available in the Draft Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report (Appendix I).



2.0 Historic Development and Urban Context of Monasterevin

Monasterevin derives its name from St. Evin's Monastery, on the site of the present Moore Abbey. Moore Abbey was built by the Moore family, Earls of Drogheda in the 17th Century. This family were also responsible for laying out the town in a typical 18th Century grid format. The West End and Drogheda Street date from this era. The construction of the Grand Canal in 1786 and later the railway led to industrial development in the town, most notably Cassidy's Distillery on the Dublin Road. The closure of the distillery in the 1920's and later of the railway resulted in the slow decline of the town throughout most of the 20th Century.

The town's street pattern reflects its historical development and the natural constraints imposed by the River Barrow and manmade constraints of the Grand Canal to the west, the railway line to the North and the M7 Motorway and Moore Abbey Demesne to the south.

Consequently most development in recent years has occurred to the east of the town. Today Monasterevin is a local centre providing a range of services and amenities to the population of the town.

This plan is cognisant of the local urban context and environmental landscape and topography in which the town is located.

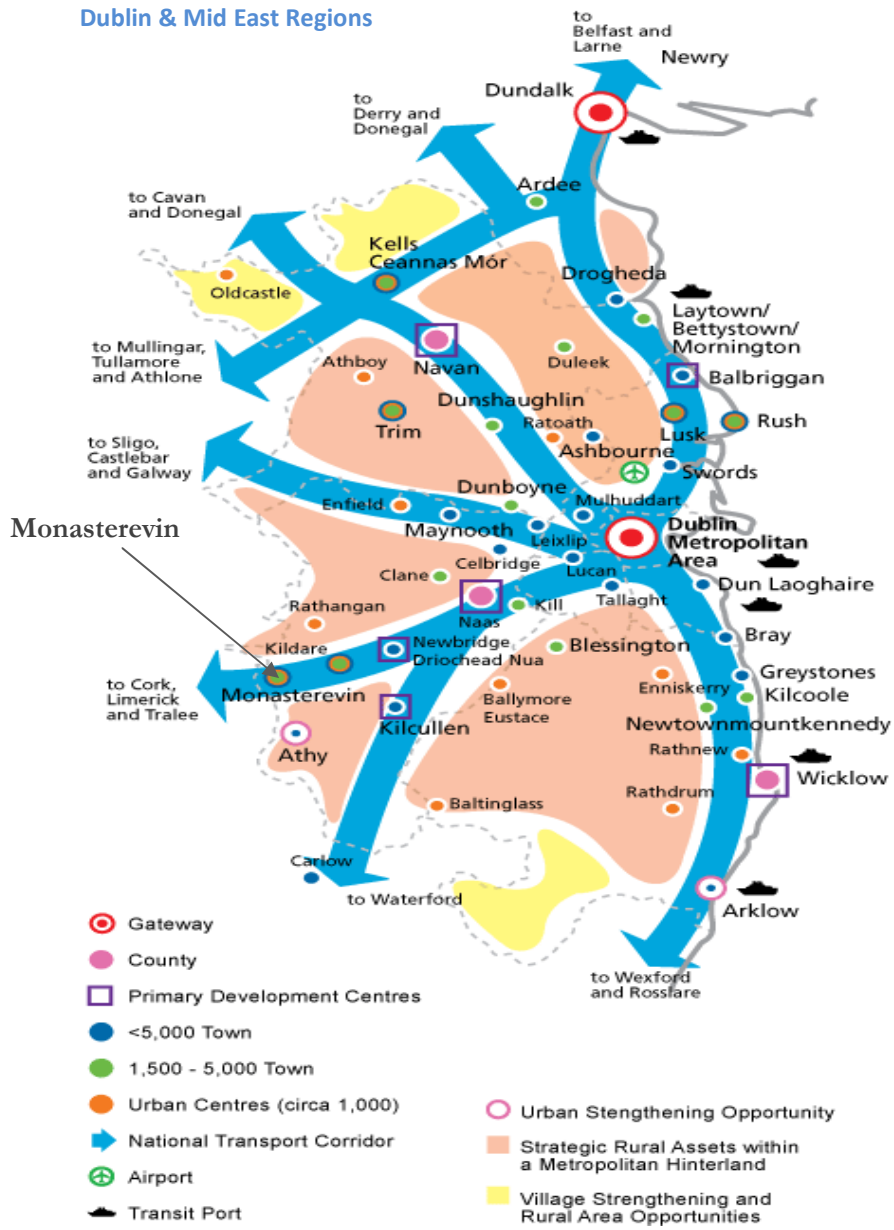
2.1 Monasterevin in a National Context

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) was published in December 2002 and outlines a 20-year planning framework for Ireland designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic, physical development and population growth between centres.

Under the NSS Monasterevin is categorised as a town with a population of between 1,500 and 5,000 people. In the context of the NSS, towns of this scale are generally located on or near transportation corridors radiating from Dublin and are relatively close to the larger urban areas. Towns such as Monasterevin cater for local growth in residential, employment and service functions through enhancing the built environment, water services, public transport links and capacity for development. Accommodating such additional functions must however be balanced with protecting the character and quality of the natural and built environment of Monasterevin.



Figure 1: Monasterevin and the National Spatial Strategy

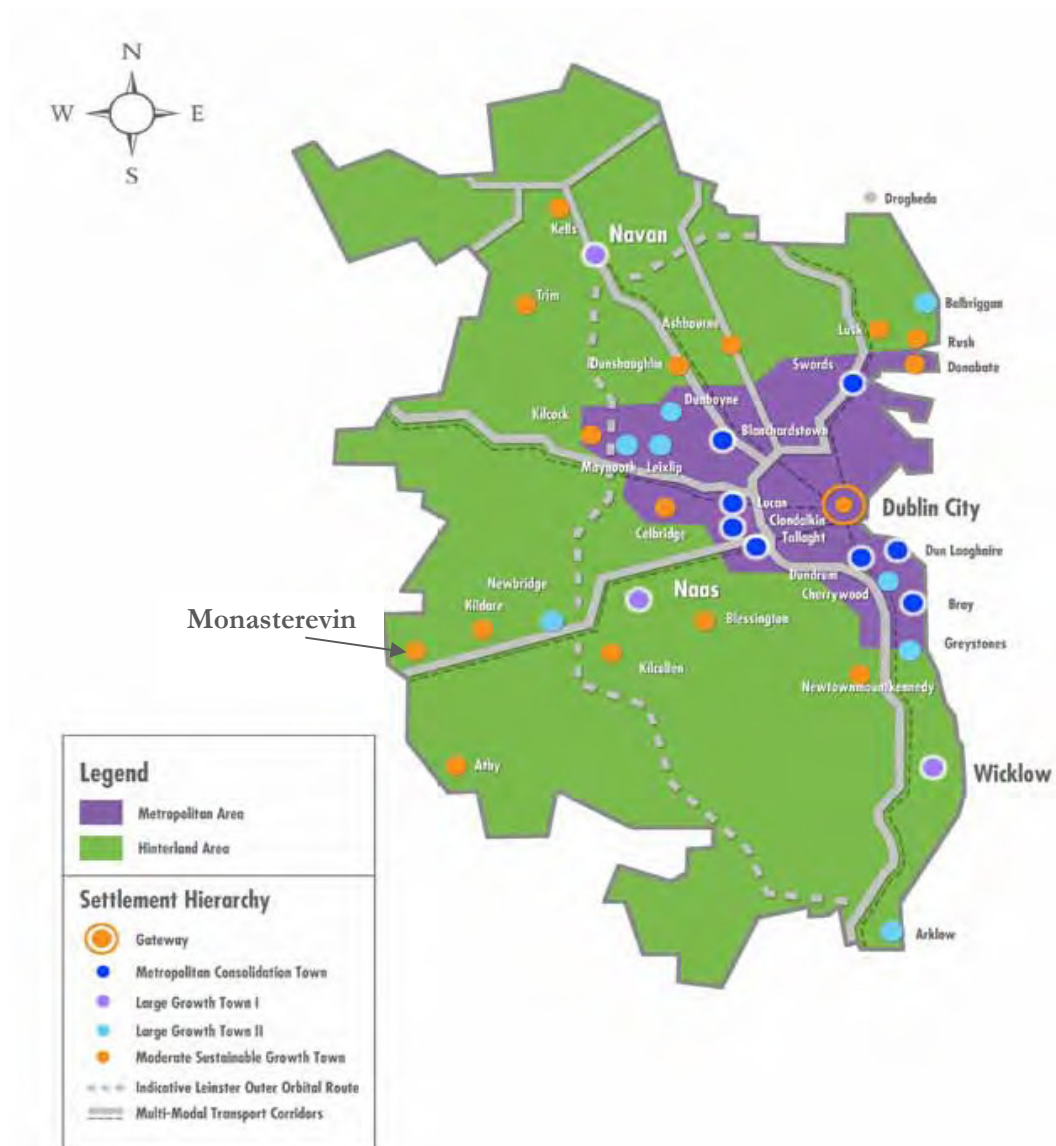


2.2 Monasterevin in a Regional Context

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 set out the planned direction for growth within the Greater Dublin Area up to 2022 by giving regional effect to national planning policy under the National Spatial Strategy (NSS). The RPGs indicate two planning policy zones (Metropolitan and Hinterland Areas) and designate large growth towns and moderate growth towns within the GDA. North East Kildare is designated as the Metropolitan Area, while the remainder of the county is located in the Hinterland Area.

The RPGs and the CDP have designated Monasterevin as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town situated in the Hinterland Area. Monasterevin's role as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town is to develop in a self sufficient manner reducing commuting levels and ensuring sustainable levels of housing growth, providing a full range of local services adequate to meet local needs at district level and for surrounding rural areas

Figure 2: Monasterevin and the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022



2.3 Monasterevin in a County Context

The Kildare County Development Plan (CDP) 2011-2017 sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Kildare over the period 2011-2017 and beyond to the horizon year of 2022. It has been informed by the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 (RPGs) which aims to direct the future growth of the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). The RPGs provide the overall strategic context for the development plans of each local authority in the GDA including population and housing targets and the framework for future investment in environmental services, transportation and other infrastructure.

The CDP designates Monasterevin, along with Kildare, Kilcullen and Athy as Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns in the Hinterland area.

The provision of a strong social infrastructure in tandem with growth in population, particularly in relation to schools and leisure facilities is required. These towns will also seek to encourage economic opportunities through the provision of high quality transport connections, good social infrastructure provision and a strong local labour market.

In terms of retail, the Draft Retail Strategy for County Kildare 2010 is set within the context of the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008-2016. Monasterevin is identified as a Hinterland Level 3 Sub County Town Centre along with Sallins and Kilcullen. The CDP indicates that the retail potential of Monasterevin is closely linked with its role within the county's designated Primary and Secondary Dynamic Clusters and its proximity to the higher order centres of Naas, Newbridge and Kildare towns respectively. It's proximity to such centres has detracted from its potential to develop into a more self sustaining Tier 2 Level 3 Town Centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. The retail function of Monasterevin has failed to keep pace with the growth of the local population and its immediate catchment area



3.0 Town Function and Role

Over the past 20 years Monasterevin has experienced a significant increase in population, largely attributed to the availability of more affordable housing units during the property boom and infrastructural improvements including, the reopening of the railway station in 2001 and the opening of the M7 Motorway in 2004.

Monasterevin largely functions as a commuter town with 64% of the population leaving the town daily for employment purposes.

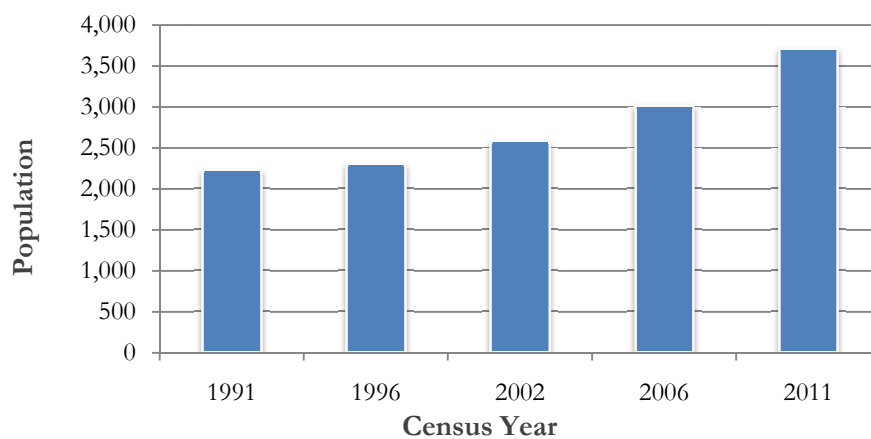
3.1 Population

The population of Monasterevin has risen steadily since the 1970s. The fastest rate of population change took place between 2002 and 2011 reflecting the growth in residential development in the town at that time. The population of Monasterevin is recorded in the CSO 2011 Census of Population as 3,710 persons, an increase of 23% on the 3,017 persons recorded in the 2006 Census of Population. The population of Monasterevin represents 1.7% of the County Kildare population of 210,312 persons.

Table 2 Monasterevin population and rate of change 1991-2011

Census	Population	% Change	% National Change
1991	2,224	-	-
1996	2,302	3.5%	3%
2002	2,583	12.2%	8%
2006	3,017	17%	8%
2011	3,710	23%	8%

Figure 3: Monasterevin Population Growth 1991-2011





3.2 Household Size

A total of 1,374 households were recorded in the 2011 census in Monasterevin. The town's average household size of 2.7 persons almost matches the national average of 2.73 persons. A breakdown of the family unit size shows Monasterevin is predominantly made up of one and three person households.

Approximately 34% of households within Monasterevin comprise couples with children, followed by single person households at 22.6% and households comprising a couple without children at 20.7%. The figures for Monasterevin are largely similar to the figures recorded at a county level, of which 23.7% comprise single person households, 18.9% comprise couples without children and 33.8% comprise couples with children.

Table 3: Households by composition – Monasterevin and State

Composition	No. of households	Monasterevin %	State %
One person	311	22	24
Couples without children	284	21	19
Couples with children	465	34	35
Lone parent family	201	15	11
Other	113	8	11
Total	1,374	100	100

(Source: 2011 Census)

3.3 Age Profile

Monasterevin traditionally has a young population. The 2006 census indicated that almost 22% of the population is aged between 0-14. Approximately 34% of the town's population was aged between 25 and 44 years. Table 4 reveals that this trend has changed slightly, which is evident in the 2011 census results.

In 2011 Monasterevin had a population of 3,710 persons. Approximately 24% of the population is aged between 0-14 and 34% between the ages of 25 and 44 years.

As the population ages, it is expected that there will be further demand for school places within the Monasterevin area, most notably for second level provision.

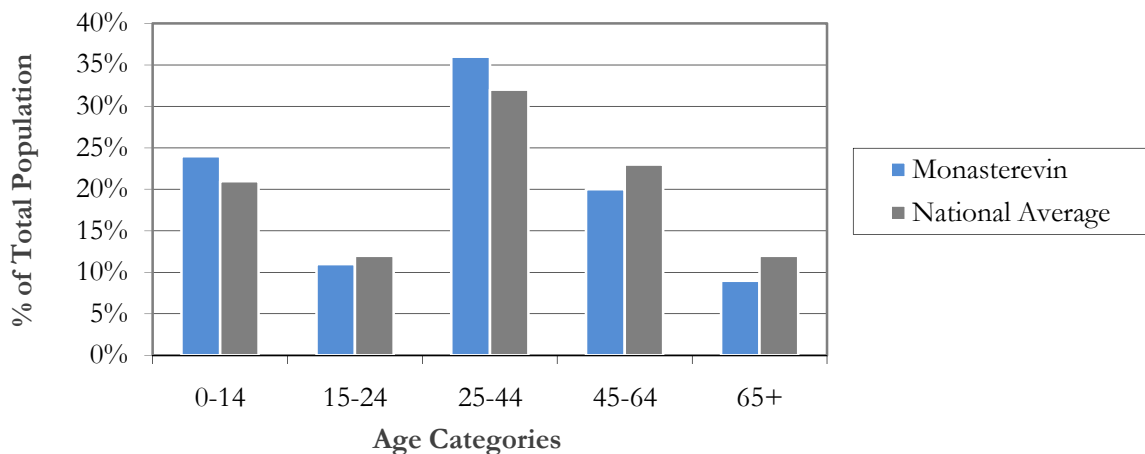
The largest percentage of population fits into the 25-44 age bracket. This comprises a significant portion of the workforce resident in Monasterevin. This would imply that the local economy needs to provide local employment opportunities to facilitate greater economic sustainability.

Table 4: Age Profile of Monasterevin 2006-2011

Age bracket	2006 Population	% of Total Population 2006	2011 Population	% of Total Population 2011	National Average 2011 %
0-14	659	22%	876	24%	21%
15-24	417	14%	421	11%	12%
25-44	1,034	34%	1,333	36%	32%
45-64	665	22%	759	20%	23%
65+	242	8%	321	9%	12%
Total	3,017	100%	3,710	100%	100%

(Source: Census 2006 and 2011)

Figure 4: Age Profile of Monasterevin and State 2011



3.4 Residential Unit Profile

Residential dwellings in Monasterevin are largely concentrated around the town centre, to the east, north east and south east of the town. In recent years there has been residential development close to the railway line to the north of the town. Residential units vary from detached dwellings on the outskirts of the town, ribbon development along the approach roads with a high number of housing estates and some apartment developments of varying designs and densities within the town boundary.

In line with the town’s position in the County Settlement Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines, the residential unit allocation for Monasterevin up to 2017 (over the lifetime of the CDP) is 475 units (Refer to Table 5).

The residential unit figure has been projected forward to include the period 2018-2021 (the likely plan period), at the rate of 1.7% of the overall growth for County Kildare during the period 2016-2022. This results in a unit target of 687 by 2021 (See Table 5).

Table 5 Housing Unit Allocation for Monasterevin 2006 - 2021

Settlement Type	Town	2006 Pop Census	2011 Pop Census	2017 Pop Target	2017 Housing Units Target	2021 Housing Units Target	% of Allocated Growth for Monasterevin 2006 - 2019
Moderate Sustainable Growth Town	Monasterevin	3,017	3,710	4,056	475	687 (475+212)	1.7%

3.5 New Housing Unit Target

A total of 324 residential units have been constructed in Monasterevin since 2006. Subtracting these completed units from 687 (2006-2021 unit allocation) results in a revised housing unit allocation of 363 units for the period up to 2021. Allowing for an additional 50% over zoning, the LAP target increases to 544 units. Regard must also be given to the 207 committed units with valid planning permission. Taking these permissions away from the LAP target leaves a target of 337 units for the plan period (see Table 6 below).

Excluding zoned residential land with existing planning permission, the quantum of land required to meet the additional unit target of 337 units will be dependent on the location and density of development. The location and nature of different land use zonings will allow for varied residential densities. For instance zoning on a central brownfield site will allow for higher density development (e.g. 30 per ha) while densities on edge of town sites would be lower (e.g. 25 units per ha).

Table 6 Housing Unit Requirements for Monasterevin 2015 -2021

Monasterevin Housing Unit Requirements		
Timeframe	Unit Target	Calculation Details
2006 - 2017	475	= 1.7 % of the overall county unit target 2006-2017 (being 27,982 units)
2018 - 2021	212	= 1.7 % of the annual county target for the period of 2016-2022 (being 1.7% of 3,122 units = 53 * 4 years)
2006 - 2021	687	= The 2006-2017 unit target (475) + the 2017-2021 target (212)
2015 - 2021	363	= 687units (2006-2021 unit target) - 324 units (total units constructed from 2006-to date)
2015 - 2021	544	Additional 50% over provision (363/2=181) (181+363 = 544)
2015 - 2021	337	= 544 units (2012-2021 LAP target) – 207 units with valid Planning Permissions

3.6 Land requirements

Table 7 below sets out the quantum of lands required to meet the additional 337 unit target depending on the average densities used. This Plan retains significant areas of land previously zoned for residential purposes in the 2008 local area plan and all sites within valid planning permission for residential development.

Residential lands previously zoned that are not required to fulfil the target of 337 units have been re-zoned to more appropriate land uses in order to comply with the core strategy of the CDP 2011-2017. Therefore, in order to accommodate 337units, there is a requirement for a maximum of 13.5ha and a minimum of

7.5ha of land (if developed at the range of densities outlined below in Table 7) over and above the undeveloped lands which already have valid planning permission. This plan proposes to zone c.15.4ha of uncommitted lands as C: New Residential. This figure is in addition to 9.6ha of C: New Residential lands which are already committed.

It should be noted that the figure of 15.4ha of C: New Residential lands includes two sites measuring 3.8ha in total which have been rezoned from B: Existing/Permitted Residential (C4) to C: New Residential and also R: Commercial/Retail to C: New Residential (C5 and C7).

Table 7: Quantum of land required to meet the unit target 2015-2021

2015 -2021 Unit Target ²	@ 25 units per ha	@ 35 units per ha	@ 45 units per ha
337	c. 13.5ha	c. 10ha	c. 7.5ha



3.7 Economic Profile

The main sources of employment within the town is Moore Abbey, the schools, Glanbia and Supervalu. Outside of these facilities/enterprises there are few employment opportunities within the town

The 2002 census and the 2006 census indicated that just under half of the town’s population was at work (1,047 persons in 2002 and 1,407 persons in 2006). The latter figure had decreased slightly by the time of the 2011 Census with 1,387 at work. However it should be noted that during the same 2006-2011 period there was a substantial increase in the population of the town.

The daytime working population of the town was recorded at 769 in 2011. Of this figure, professional services is recorded as the largest source of employment at 415 persons, followed by 167 persons employed in commerce and trade.

The number of unemployed has more than doubled with 427 people out of work in 2011 compared with the low levels of unemployment, recorded at 73 persons in 2002 and 113 persons in 2006. Table 8 below illustrates the labour force breakdown for Monasterevin. It is noted that a large proportion of Monasterevin’s

population is of working age. It also has a number of geographic advantages such as its close proximity to larger towns such as Newbridge and Naas as well as excellent transport links to Dublin. It is evident from Table 9 that a large proportion of the workforce in Monasterevin is employed in high skilled jobs in the trade, commerce and the professional service sector.

3.8 Labour Force and Commuter Levels

The 2011 Census indicates that Monasterevin has a labour force 2,834 (person aged 15 and over) and of these 75.6% (1,387) were at work. The unemployment rate for this area was 24.4% compared with a national average rate of 19.0%. Unemployment is a serious problem in the Monasterevin area.

Of the 1,387 at work in Monasterevin, 886 worked outside the area in 2011. Approximately 64% of working residents leave the town daily for employment purposes. This level of outward movement from the town is significant and reflects Monasterevin’s ‘commuter town’ status. Key to addressing this leakage of the labour force is to encourage further investment within the town at appropriate locations.

Table 8: Labour Force Breakdown

Location	Total Labour Force	At work	Looking for first regular job	Unemployed	Student	Looking after home/family	Retired	Unable to work	Other
Monasterevin	2,834	1,387	20	427	211	274	273	237	5
%	100%	49%	1%	15%	6%	7.5%	10%	8.3%	0.2%

(Source: Census 2011)

Table 9 Employment by type

Employment Type	2011 Figure	2011 %	National Ave %
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	39	3%	5%
Building and Construction	72	5%	5%
Manufacturing	179	13%	12%
Commerce and Trade	361	26%	25%
Transport and Communications	86	6%	8%
Public Administration	91	7%	6%
Professional Services	334	24%	24%
Other	225	16%	15%
TOTAL	1,387	100%	100%

(Source: Census 2011)

3.9 Town centre

Monasterevin town centre has a unique historic building fabric and street pattern forming the historic town centre area. It can be defined as the three distinct areas comprising:

- (i) Main Street, Moore Street and West End
- (ii) Market Square
- (iii) Dublin Street and parts of Drogheda Street.

The town’s street pattern reflects its historical development and the natural constraints imposed by the River Barrow and Grand Canal to the west, the railway line to the north, the former N7 and Moore Abbey Demesne to the south. Consequently, most expansion in recent years has been to the east of the town with the development of the Supervalu neighbourhood shopping centre and residential development.

Since the previous Monasterevin Local Area Plan in 2008, little progress has been made with regard to the re-development of redundant warehouses along Dublin Street. Furthermore there are underutilised backland sites capable of re-development particularly to the rear of the former Cassidy’s Distillery complex. The level of vacancies and dereliction within this unique

historic town centre area continues to detract from the quality of the town.

This plan seeks to address the high vacancy levels as well as encouraging the sensitive re-use, restoration and regeneration of areas and specific buildings. This is necessary, in order to support existing businesses and encourage new businesses into the town centre area. The County Development Plan notes that while the population of the town has increased, retail and non retail services floorspace has not kept pace with the needs of the town and its catchment area.

Consolidation and revitalisation of the existing town centre area is a key aim and the potential future expansion of the town centre area within the area of Moore Abbey lands zoned for Town Centre uses. The town centre strategy seeks to build on the strengths and constraints of the historic core and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre.

3.10 Transportation

Since the M7 by pass of the town was completed in 2004, traffic congestion in the town centre area has eased significantly. Pedestrian and cycling facilities appropriate to the historic character of the town centre need to be developed. In particular these are required to and from the railway station, residential areas and amenity areas to the town centre. Encouraging compact development to support these sustainable forms of transport insofar as possible is a necessity. The transportation strategy set out in this plan encourages the implementation of the principles set out in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) published in 2013³.

3.11 Environment and Recreation

Monasterevin has a wealth of natural amenities which serve to enrich the urban fabric of the town. The Grand Canal and the River Barrow provide an extensive amenity for walking, angling and boating. Both of these waterways provide the town with prime recreational and environmental assets.

The maintenance of the environmental quality of the river and the canal and the development of amenity facilities for walking, cycling, boating and fishing is vital. The playground adjacent to the River Barrow and Riverside Park are important amenities within the town as well as Monasterevin, Ballykelly and Rosglas GAA clubs, the soccer club and the canoe club among numerous other sporting groups and organisations. The provision of open space facilities at appropriate locations such as pitches, tennis courts and a running track is recognised as a key objective for the Local Area Plan.

3.12 Education

There are three primary schools and one secondary school within the town. Table 10 sets out the enrolment figures for each of these schools in 2014. The Department of Education and Skills is currently in the final stages of acquisition of a site within Moore Abbey for the provision of a new secondary school to cater for demands from Monasterevin and its hinterland area.

Table 10 Current student enrolments for 2014

Name of School	Level	Type	No. of enrolments
St Peter's National School	Primary	All boys	198
Monasterevin Convent	Primary	All girls (mixed infant classes)	332
St. John's National School	Primary	Mixed	39
St. Paul's Secondary School	Secondary	Mixed	301

³ Published by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in conjunction with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.



4.0 Key challenges facing the town

The Monasterevin Local Area Plan has a critical role to play in guiding and facilitating the future physical, social, economic and environmental development of the town. There are however, a number of key challenges which must be addressed:

- (i) Ensuring that the planning framework in the town is established so that Monasterevin can accommodate its housing unit target in order for the town to sustain itself within the county and the region.
- (ii) Facilitating a high quality of urban design and public realm improvement schemes to enhance the urban streets, spaces and amenities within the town and encouraging high quality architectural design in new development, making Monasterevin an attractive place to live, visit and do business.
- (iii) Encouraging the appropriate re-use, restoration and regeneration of vacant/derelict buildings and backland areas within the town centre.
- (iv) Promoting Monasterevin as a self sufficient town by encouraging existing businesses in the town while supporting significant new development with particular emphasis on the historic core of the town.
- (v) Ensuring the availability of local employment opportunities, community and commercial services, education, recreation and amenity facilities at appropriate locations for the existing and future population of Monasterevin.
- (vi) Minimising the impact of future development on the local environment by ensuring that future development embraces the green infrastructure strategy.
- (vii) Minimising negative impacts on key natural assets in the town i.e. the River Barrow and the Grand Canal.
- (viii) Promoting a sustainable transport system, a network of linkages and green ways and interconnectivity between modes through the implementation of the principles set out in Design Manual for Urban Roads and Street (2013).
- (ix) Protecting the built and natural heritage and biodiversity of the town for its intrinsic value and as a resource for the community and the tourist economy of the future.

5.0 Future Development Strategy

The strategy for the future development of Monasterevin is based upon the principles established in the previous LAP 2008 and the framework provided by the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017. The plan provides a blueprint for the development of Monasterevin town for the period 2015-2021 and sets out a vision for the area, specifying the type, amount and quality of development needed while seeking to protect and enhance the natural and built environment while promoting the attractions and amenities of the town.

5.1 Vision

Monasterevin will continue to grow at a moderate and sustainable level over the short to medium term. Further development will seek to support increased competitiveness and create opportunities for local economic development and employment opportunities. The development of the town will be supported by a range of residential, employment, recreational, community, retail, tourism and educational facilities appropriate for a town of its size.

The strategic direction for the future development of Monasterevin will focus on:

(i) Economic development

This LAP seeks to enhance Monasterevin's role within the settlement hierarchy as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town located in the Hinterland as designated in the RPGs.

This LAP seeks to address in particular high unemployment rates and high levels of commuting, through maximising opportunities for growth in local employment and start up investment. The plan seeks to realise employment opportunities for Monasterevin to harness its strategic location to deliver and

provide for a level of investment sufficient to cater for the needs of the town and the immediate hinterland.

The plan focuses on the need to develop Monasterevin as a tourism destination, not only for angling and boating enthusiasts but for the wider community. The development of walking and cycling routes will be encouraged.

(ii) Town centre consolidation and public realm improvement

It is critical that this Plan retains the primacy of the town centre as the commercial heart of Monasterevin while at the same time allowing future expansion to cater for the existing and future needs of the residents. There is a substantial quantum of undeveloped brownfield sites and vacant retail units within the town centre which should be promoted as opportunity sites and integrated with the existing built fabric. Furthermore the Plan will seek to regenerate the physical and visual appearance of the town centre as a place for people with new spaces and improved streets.

(iii) Regeneration of former Cassidy's Distillery complex along Dublin Street

The site of the former Cassidy's Distillery represents a significant opportunity for the regeneration of a strategic brownfield site in the town centre. The zoning in the plan provides for a wide range of uses including employment, arts, crafts, community, recreation and residential uses. In order to realise this vision, a design brief has been prepared to assist and encourage key stakeholders.

(iv) Zoning of Lands

The quantum of residentially zoned lands in the Monasterevin LAP 2008 exceeds the demands as provided for in the core strategy of the Kildare County Development Plan 2011 -2017. Land with a valid planning permission will remain

zoned in this plan while a small quantum of additional lands for residential purposes will be provided to cater for future housing needs. Lands which are not required for the housing target will be appropriately rezoned. A strong emphasis is placed on encouraging the sequential development of all zoned lands and encouraging the better use of underutilised lands with options and opportunities for brownfield regeneration and infill prioritised.

(v) Retail development

This LAP aims to facilitate the development of an increased retail offer and to address the high vacancy rates evident within the town centre. It is acknowledged that the retail floor space has not kept pace with the needs of Monasterevin and its catchment area.

The strategy for developing the town's retail profile is centred on the revitalisation of the town centre through the regeneration of vacant and under-utilised sites and structures. The improvement of the overall public realm and built environment of Dublin Street, Market Square, Main Street and Moore Street is also a priority in terms of increasing the town's retail profile.

(vi) Provision of recreation and amenity spaces

A key objective of the plan is to facilitate the delivery of an integrated walking and cycle network along the banks of the Grand Canal and River Barrow (The Barrow Blueway) as a recreational and tourism initiative led by Waterways Ireland.

(vii) Protection of the Natural and Built Environment

The plan also seeks to protect and enhance the unique architectural and natural heritage of the town including the River Barrow Special Area of Conservation (cSAC), the Grand Canal Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) and Moore Abbey

Demesne. The town has an attractive historic streetscape with a number of protected structures of local and regional importance. The retention of vernacular buildings along with the industrial architecture associated with the waterways will ensure the character of the town remains intact. Monasterevin can realise its potential as a heritage town and associated tourist destination by referencing its heritage associated with significant periods and figures of Irish history.

(viii) Community and education facilities

There is a need to facilitate and encourage the appropriate development and location of educational and community facilities to cater for the needs of residents in the town and the wider hinterland. A specific zoning objective E2 set out in Table 17 indicates the specific requirements for recreation, amenity, sports, community and education development which may occur within Moore Abbey Demesne.



