Monaghan County Council
Comhairle Chontae Mhuineachá



Monaghan Socio-Economic Statement March 2023



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1 Introduction



Monaghan LECP Socio-Economic Statement 2022

The new Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for County Monaghan is currently being developed. The new LECP will guide the sustainable, economic and community development of the County over the next 6 years (2023-2029). It will cover a wide spectrum of initiatives and actions in areas such as inclusion, wellbeing, education, employment, innovation, and sustainability. The new LECP will be a shared plan, built upon the perspectives of a range of key stakeholders, including the Monaghan Public Participation Network (PPN), local business leaders and the wider community from across the County.

The plan will be aligned with key policies at local, regional, and national level. This will include the Monaghan County Development Plan, Monaghan Climate Change Adaption Strategy, and Monaghan's Digital Strategy as well as the Northern and Western Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (NWRA RSES), the National Planning Framework (NPF) (2018), and the National Climate Action Plan 2023. Furthermore, the UN Sustainable Development Goals will also anchor and guide the development of the plan from the outset, acknowledging the current climate and biodiversity emergency and the need to ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for all the community.

Comprehensive and inclusive stakeholder engagement and public consultation will be key to ensuring the success of the new LECP. As part of the wider consultation process, online surveys (both for the local community and the private sector), workshops and semi-structured stakeholder interviews will be conducted over the next number of weeks. Monaghan County Council would like to hear from the public, community groups, local business leaders and other key agencies and stakeholders on their views and ideas for the forthcoming plan.

It is Monaghan County Council's belief that a plan that reflects the voice of all the community and people of Monaghan will ensure the best possible outcome for the development of the County.

Purpose of this document – a starting point for discussion

The purpose of this document is to act as a starting point for discussion and to generate ideas as part of the consultation process for the new LECP. It sets out a provisional strategic direction for the new plan through draft high-level goals and potential issues that could be addressed under each goal. As outlined further below, these draft goals have been developed through an initial review of relevant policy and analysis of the socio-economic profile of Monaghan to identify key strengths, constraints, opportunities and threats.

However, it is important to note that this document is for consultation purposes only and does not reflect the final contents of the forthcoming LECP. Following analysis of feedback received during the consultation process, the high-level goals will be revised and findings used to develop the objectives, actions and outcomes for the final LECP.

As such, the stakeholder and public consultation is key to the development of the LECP and will provide vital insight into the perspective and ambition of the people of Monaghan. Monaghan County Council would like to hear your views on the draft high-level goals in Chapter 6 as well as ideas for actions that could be included in the new plan. **Feedback, ideas, or recommendations for the new LECP, can be submitted in writing before 4.00pm, Friday, 14th April 2023, via email to lcdc@monaghancoco.ie or via post to Community Development – LECP, Monaghan County Council The Glen, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan H18 YT50.**



2 | Considerations & Process

Considerations & Process

Considerations of cross cutting priorities

Updated guidelines issued in 2021 by the Department of Rural and Community Development outline a number of cross cutting priorities to be considered in the development of the new LECPs. These are:

Sustainability including climate change	**Equality**	**Poverty**	**Rurality**	**Age**	**Disability**

Furthermore, in alignment with the above, the LECPs are also required to embody the Public Sector Duty to prevent discrimination, promote equality and protect human rights. As such, these areas will be taken into account and reflected in the development of the goals, objectives, outcomes and actions.

LECP Process

The 6 stage process for the development of the LECPs as per the new LECP Guidelines is outlined below. The publishing of this document represents the start of **Stage 2 the Public Consultation**.

Stage 1: Preparation	Socio-economic Analysis	Socio-economic Statement and High-Level Goals based on Socio-economic Analysis	Preparation by Advisory Group. Sign off by SPC and LCDC
Stage 2: Public Consultation	Public Consultation on High-Level Goals	Revision of Statement based on consultation	Preparation by Advisory Group. Sign off by SPC and LCDC
Stage 3: Develop Objectives and Outcomes	Develop detailed objectives and outcomes	Preparation by Advisory Group. Sign off by SPC and LCDC	Final Draft to MDs and RAs for input
Stage 4: Finalise Plan	SPC and LCDC to adopt a final draft reflecting MD and RA input	Local Authority (LA) to approve final draft	Submission to Minister and Published by LA
Stage 5: Implementation	Implementation Plans	Consideration of available Resources	Ongoing flexible implementation
Stage 6: Monitoring and Evaluation	Key Performance Indicators to address proposed outcomes	Ongoing data collection including case studies	Implementation report

Note on LECP Process acronyms: Strategic Policy Committee (SPC); Local Community Development Committee (LCDC); Municipal District (MD); Regional Assembly (RA).



3 | Policy Context Overview

Policy Context – Summary of Selected Policies

The new LECP will be aligned with relevant and existing policies that influence the development of County Monaghan. This section provides a summary of selected key policies at local, regional and national level. Furthermore, given the current climate and biodiversity crisis, the UN Sustainable Development Goals are elaborated on in slightly greater detail acknowledging the important and crosscutting contribution that they will have in the development of Monaghan's new LECP. The existing policies and strategies will assist in part in setting the strategic direction of the new LECP and contribute to the development of key elements including the high-level goals, outcomes, objectives and actions. The LECP will also be consistent with the County Development Plan, the Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy, and the delivery of programmes at a local level such as the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP). It will also look to build upon the previous LECP 2016-2021 and the lessons learned in its implementation.

From the review of relevant policies and strategies some of the key themes identified include:

Community

- Creating resilient and viable communities and pursuing a town centre first policy to help address dereliction and vacancy in Monaghan's towns and villages.
- Enhancing inclusion, community wellbeing and health for all those that live in the County.
- Making Monaghan a more sustainable County through protecting the environment and implementing climate action initiatives.
- Supporting and encouraging participation in Monaghan's arts, culture and creative sectors.
- Ensuring access to appropriate services and adequate supply of housing across the County.

Economic

- Driving the balanced economic development of the County including through the provision of appropriate infrastructure.
- Supporting existing businesses, attracting investment and enhancing cross-border trade.
- Pursing growth in key areas such as the agri-food sector, opportunities related to the green economy and tourism.
- Ensuring the development of a skilled workforce that aligns with the needs of the private sector and increases employability across the County.
- Embracing the use of technology not only in the private sector but across the entire community to drive economic and community development.

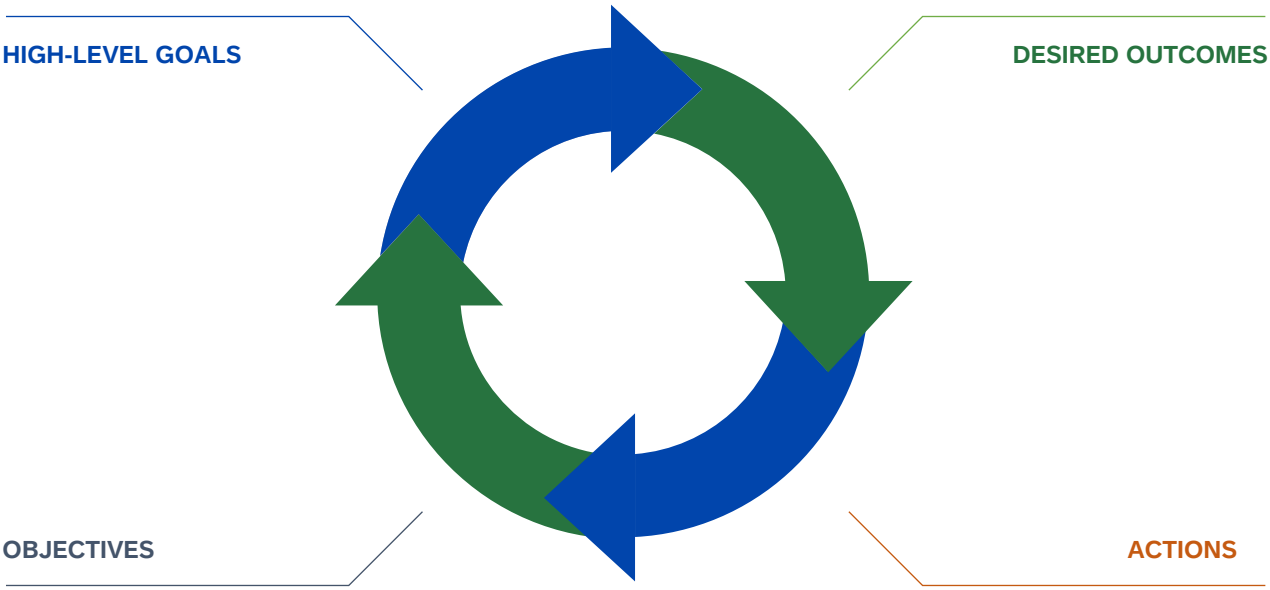


Figure 1: Key Elements of the LECP

International Policy

2030 Agenda – United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go together with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve the natural environment and biodiversity.

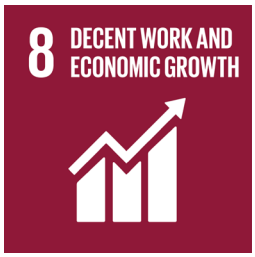


Of the 17 SDGs outlined in the 2030 Agenda, several share a strong alignment with the purpose and objectives of the Monaghan Local Economic and Community Plan...

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Creating cities, towns, villages and communities which are safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable are key objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals. These objectives are closely aligned with those found throughout Irish spatial planning policy. Ensuring access to high-quality services, creating positive economic, social and environmental links are key to achieving this SDG, which will be echoed throughout Monaghan's new LECP.





SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

In line with SDG 11, promoting sustained, inclusive economic growth and fulfilling employment for all is strongly aligned with the objectives of the SDG's. Creating a diverse economy, achieving full, productive and sustainable employment and decent work is a central foundation of both previous, current and future iterations of planning policy for County Monaghan.

SDG 13: Climate Action

The urgency and scale of climate action is ever-increasing. The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent public health restrictions has revitalised our sense of value in the natural environment and has provided a prime opportunity for us to take urgent action to combat climate change – through our actions, our governments, our institutions and our policies.



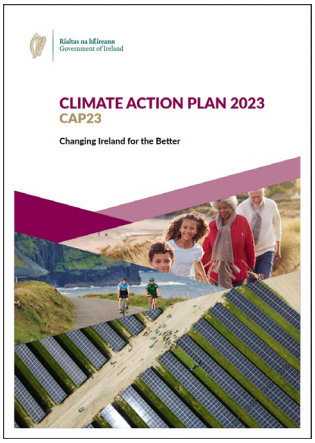
National Policy

National Development Plan 2021 – 2030

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030 sets out the investment priorities that underpin the implementation of the National Planning Framework as part of Project Ireland 2040. Through a total investment of €165 billion, this level of capital spending aims to ensure ongoing cross-sectoral regional development and public investment. A large proportion of this investment is directed at major national infrastructure projects relating to sustainable mobility, international and regional connectivity, transitions to a low carbon and climate-resilient economy, compact growth, enhanced amenity and heritage among others.

Climate Action Plan 2023

The Climate Action Plan sets out the ambition of halving Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions by the end of the decade and therefore, putting Ireland on course to becoming carbon neutral by 2050. The Climate Action Plan provides a framework for Ireland to follow and engage with which align with the EU and global efforts to reduce the effects of climate change. In doing so, this would harness the economic, environmental, political, and social opportunities that arise from moving quickly to a low-carbon society. The climate action plan outlines ambitious goals and if achieved would transform the way Irish people, work, travel, heat their homes, source energy, and use land. Most notably, the Climate Action Plan highlights that Ireland's renewable resources are largely untapped and if utilised efficiently and effectively it could provide greater energy security, stable prices, more jobs, and balanced regional development.

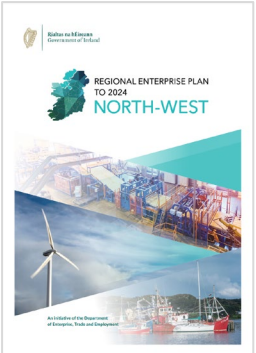


Regional Policy



Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy (RSES) for the NWRA

The RSES for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) provides an overarching framework for the creation and enhancement of attractive places with the necessary supporting infrastructures to stimulate enterprise investment and to realise economic potential. The RSES primarily aims to support the delivery of the programme for change set out in Project Ireland 2040 - the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan 2021-2030 (NDP). As the regional tier of the national planning process, it will ensure coordination between the City and County Development Plans (CCDP) and Local Economic and Community Plans (LECP) of the nine local authorities in the Region in achieving the objectives of Project Ireland 2040.



North-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024

The Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 for the North-West is a strategic regional document which outlines the challenges and opportunities influencing the development of enterprise in the North-West region. Building on the actions achieved through previous Regional Enterprise Plans, the plan focuses on existing and emerging strengths in areas unique to the North-West towards achieving new objectives and actions for the region out to 2024.

The Plan contains six strategic objective areas, relating to areas such as indigenous business development, promoting positive growth of the ocean economy, concentration of high-value jobs in the region, mainstreaming climate action and capitalising on the region's strategic locations and strategic partnerships.

Local Policy

Monaghan County Development Plan 2019 – 2025

The Monaghan County Development Plan 2019 - 2025 sets out the proposed objectives for the sustainable development of Monaghan over the 6-year period. It builds upon the 2013-2019 County Development Plan, taking into account lessons learned from its implementation.

The current County Development Plan looks to leverage Monaghan's strengths and support the creation of jobs and the development of urban and rural places with high quality physical and social infrastructure. The County Development plan sets out 8 strategic objectives covering a number of different areas including planning and zoning of land, economic and community development, infrastructure, and the built and natural environment.

The County Development Plan and LECP are designed to be complementary policies which are required to align on the overarching strategy for the community and economic development of the County.



Monaghan LECP 2016 – 2021

This document is the previous iteration of the Local Economic and Community Plan for County Monaghan to promote and support the economic and community development of the County. The plan put people and the community at its centre with a vision to improve the quality of life and wellbeing across the County

The plan had 6 High-level Goals which covered areas such as brand and image promotion, skills and training, economic growth, health and wellbeing, the environment and civic and voluntary participation. It has been reviewed for learnings for the new LECP as well as the identifications of areas that can be built upon in the new plan.



Monaghan Digital Strategy 2021 - 2025

The Digital Strategy for Monaghan 2021 - 2025 aims to chart the digital transformation of Monaghan through embracing technology across the entire County. The strategy looks to enable the community and private sector to harness the benefits of this digital transformation. The objectives, goals and actions contained within the Monaghan Digital Strategy are framed around 5 Strategic Digital Priorities. These are: 1. The Digital Citizen, 2. Digital Community, 3. Digital Commerce 4. Digital Connectivity, and 5. Digital Council.

The new LECP will look to align with and where applicable build upon key elements of this strategy to support Monaghan's continuing digital transformation.





4 | Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis

Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis

Introduction

The analysis outlined below is based on the Draft Monaghan County Council Socio Economic Statement combined with analysis of 2016 Census data with 2022 Census data used where available. More up-to-date information has also been incorporated from other departmental and agency releases as well as other sources such as the SEAI, Pobal, and the GeoDirectory. This provides an initial snapshot overview of a selection of key areas including demographics (population), housing, the economy, social and community, and the environment.

For the most part this analysis compared County statistics to those of the region and the state, where available analysis on an Electoral Division level was performed for more granular insights (An Electoral Division generally comprises of multiple townlands, urban or rural).

The findings from this analysis and the policy review has been used as a starting point to identify strengths, constraints, opportunities and threats for the County. This has provided the project with a solid foundation from which to start the Consultation and progress towards the development of the detailed High-Level Goals, Objectives, Outcomes and Actions.



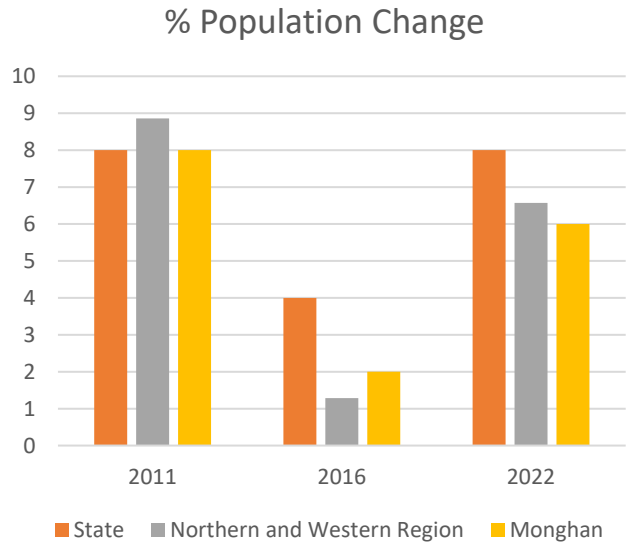
Figure 2: Socio-Economic Analysis

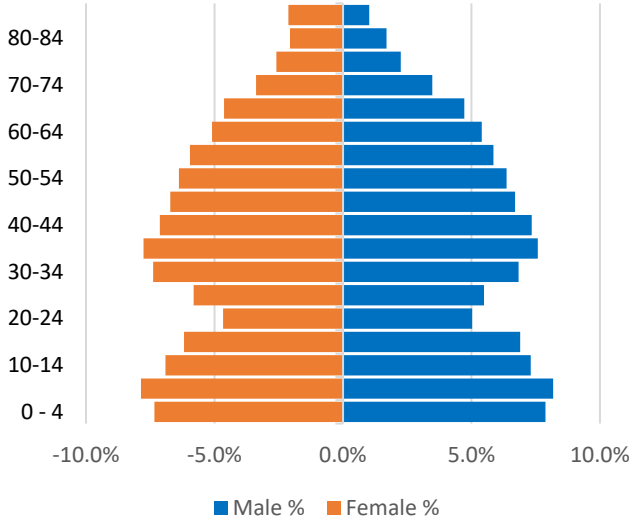
Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis

Demographics

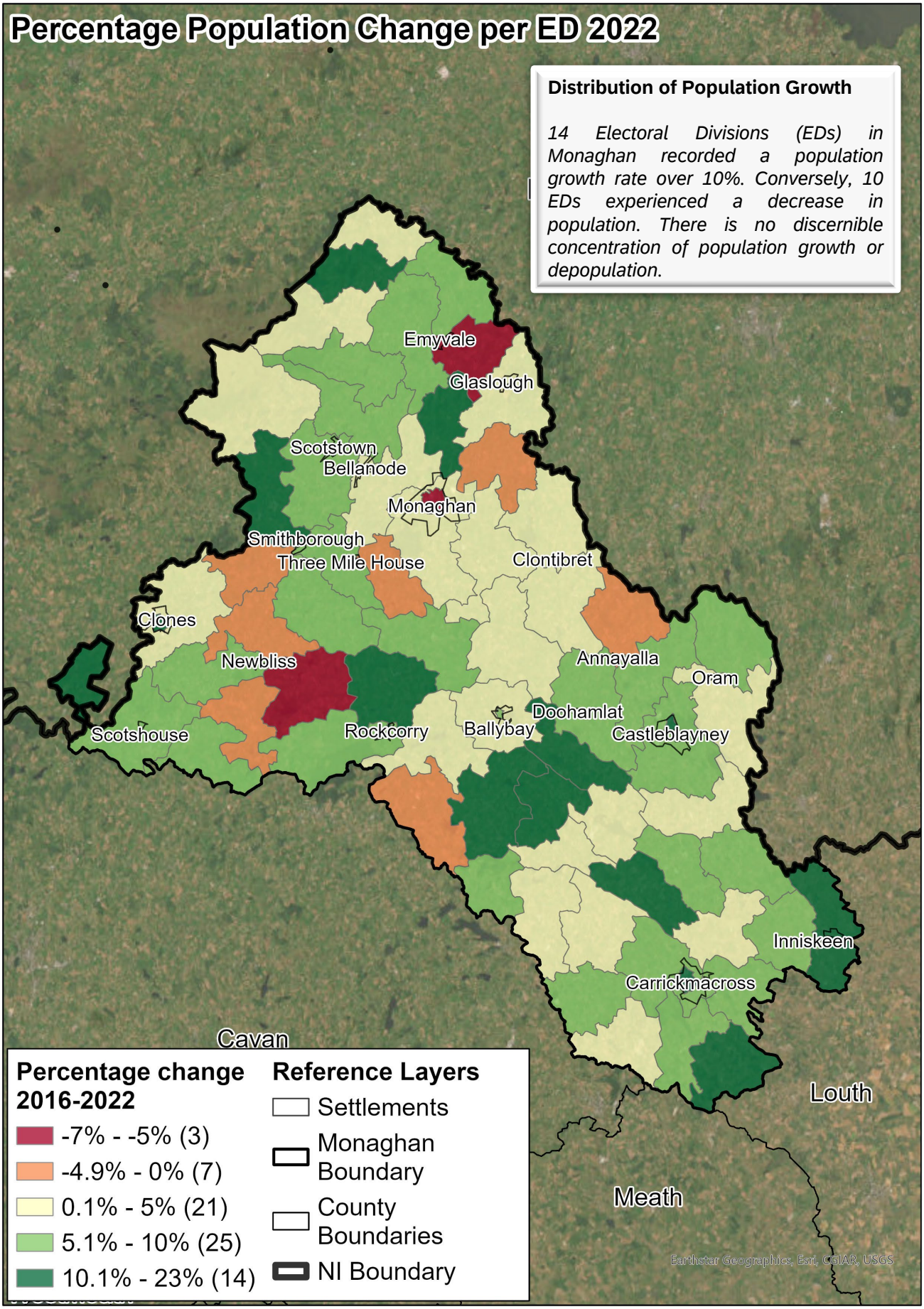
The preliminary Census results show that Monaghan's **population increased by 3,446 people to 64,832 in 2022.** Taking the average annual population growth between 2002 and 2022 County Monaghan is projected to have a population of **76,698 inhabitants by the year 2050**.

- The population figure recorded by County Monaghan in 2022 represents a fourth consecutive increase in the population since 2002.
- **The average age of a person living in Monaghan in 2016 was 37 years of age**, which was lower than the regional figure (38 years of age) and the same as the national figure (37 years of age).
- In 2016 50.3% of Monaghan's population was male and this increased statistically in 2022 to 50.4% of the population.
- The population of **Monaghan represents 1.3% of the population for Ireland and 7.2% of the population for the Northern and Western Region.**
- Monaghan had the second lowest population figure in the Northern and Western Region and the fourth smallest population within the state of Ireland.
- **Monaghan's population growth rate for this period was 3,446 or 5.6%**. This is is lower than both the average population growth per county for the region **Northern and Western (6.4%) and the state (7.7%).**
- Monaghan recorded the lowest figures for estimated net migration, with the county's rate of estimated net migration of 4 per 1,000 being lower than the average per county for the Northern and Western Region (6.6 per 1,000) and the state (7.2 per 1,000).
- The town in Monaghan with the **highest population growth was Clones, with its population growing by 22.8%.** The area with the lowest growth was Aghabog with a decrease in population of -6.7%.
- **The largest age cohort was the 0 – 9 age cohort**, which accounted for 15.6% of the total population. This is higher than the regional (14.4%) and the national (14.4%) figures.
- Between 2011 and 2016 **the largest growth recorded by an age cohort was the 60 - 69 group with a**
- **growth rate of 13.4%**. The age cohort with **lowest growth rate between 2011 and 2016 was the 20 - 29 group that decreased by 19.1%.**
- **The smallest age cohort with the lowest was the 80+ cohort** which accounted for 3.4% of the total population. This is lower than the regional figure (3.7%) but higher than the national figure (3.1%).





Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis

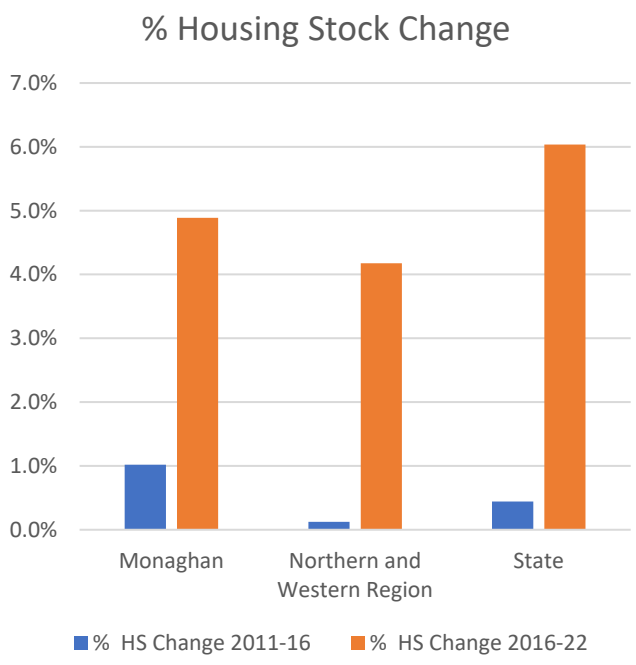


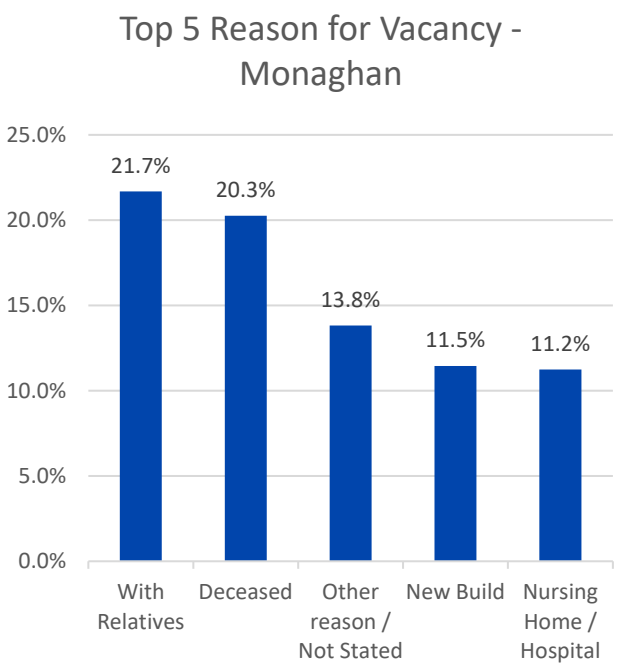
Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis

Housing

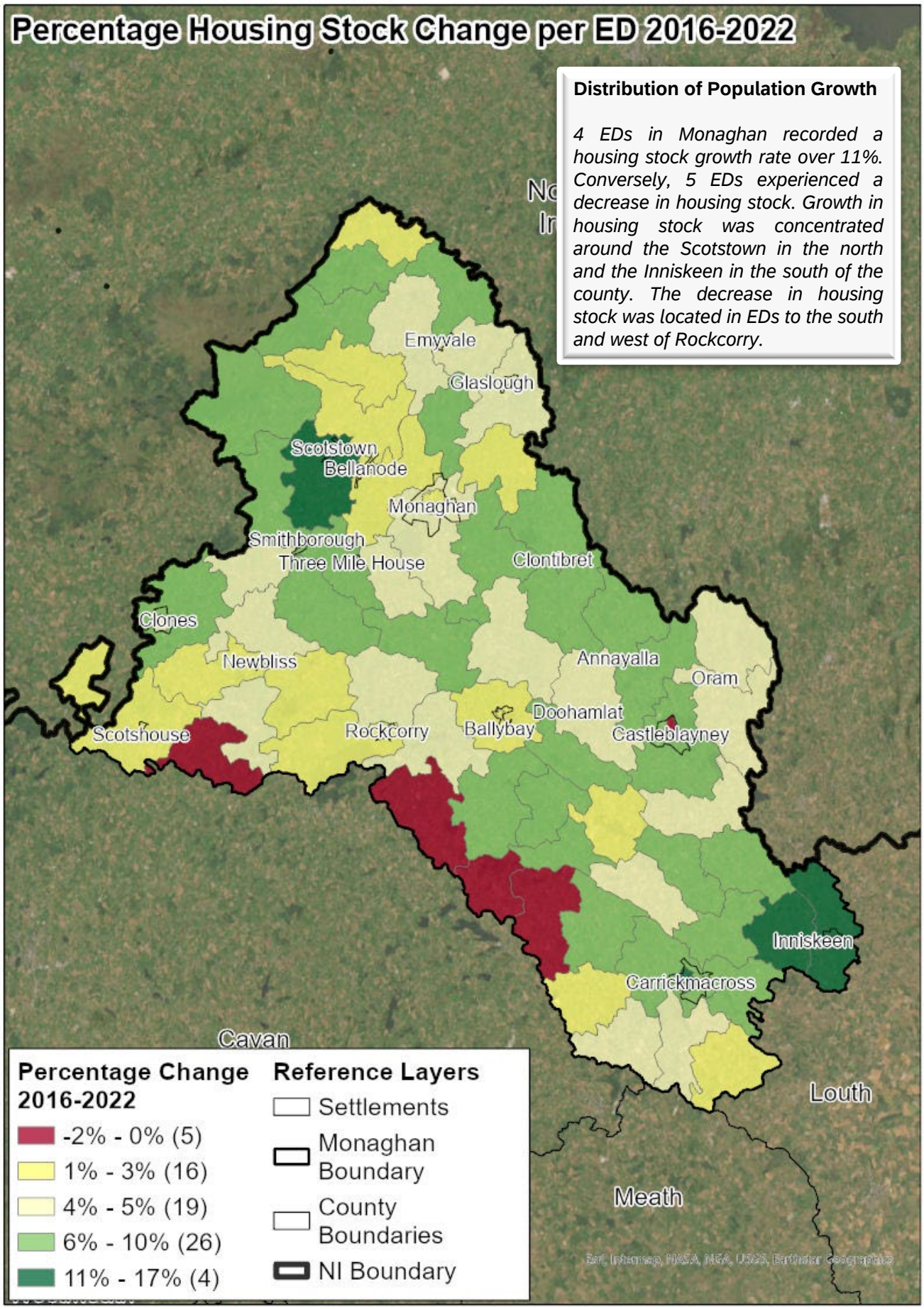
The **rate of housing stock increase in County Monaghan was at a similar rate (5.9%)** to that of the **population growth (6.4%).** This steady growth rate, though lower than the region and state figure, this should help mitigate against future misalignment in housing demand. Latent additional housing capacity if needed is available through the reintroduction of **vacant properties (11.2%)** into the available housing stock.

- The **housing stock in Monaghan stood at 26,548 dwellings, an increase of 1,492 (5.9%) dwellings** from the 2016 figure. This is below the regional (1,870 dwellings) and national county average (3,901 dwellings).
- The housing stock figures for Monaghan accounts **for 1.2% of the total housing stock in Ireland**.
- Both the region at 4.2% and County Monaghan at 4.9% are lagging behind the national growth rate in housing stock (6.0%) for the period between 2016 and 2022
- In 2022, **Monaghan's housing stock vacancy rate stood at 11.2% which is lower than the regional (13%) but higher than the national (9%) average.**
- The two main reasons reported for vacancy within Monaghan accounted for more than 40% of the vacancies. These categories are **"With Relatives" (21.7%) and "Deceased" (20.3%).**
- Monaghan has the lowest number of vacant dwellings in the Northern and Western Region. The Electoral Division with the highest vacancy rate was Ballybay at 39% and the Electoral Division with the lowest vacancy rate was Drumhillagh at 5%.
- **The average age of housing stock in Monaghan was 1977.** Which is older than both the regional (1981) and national (1978) age of housing stock.
- The single largest time period of house construction in Monaghan was "2001 – 2010" at 27% which is lower than the percentage for the region (29.9%) but higher than the percentage for the state (25.4%).
- **Residential property prices within Monaghan increased by 16% in 2022.**





Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis



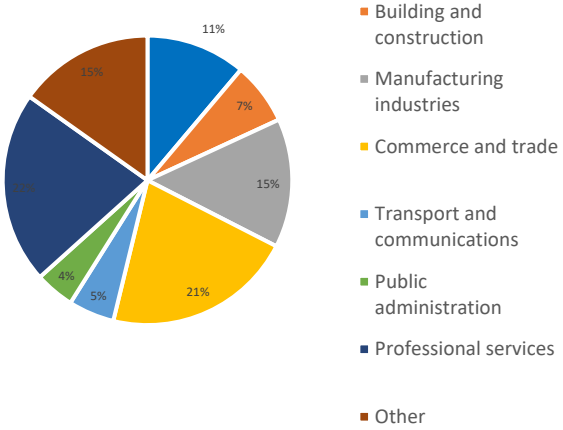
Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis

Economic

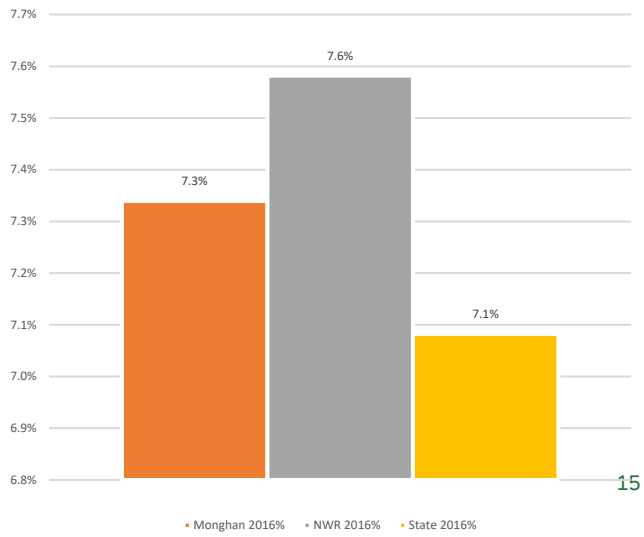
Under the County Development Plan (2019-25), Monaghan Town is identified as the primary economic growth town in the County with Carrickmacross and Castleblayney as secondary economic centres. Capacity exists in these three locations to provide new employment opportunities that are accessible from across the County, the wider surrounding region and within easy reach of the Dublin - Belfast Corridor. Over the five-year period from 2014 to 2019 the economy of the Border Region grew by and average of 5.1% a year. This growth rate was higher than the growth rate for the Northern and Western Region (3.7%) but significantly less than the national growth rate (15.4%). (Based on the Gross Value Added (GVA) person at basic prices)

- There is a notable presence in the sectors of agri-food and engineering with world leading companies located in the County.
- There were **8 IDA supported companies** in the county 2021. Furthermore, there were **79 Enterprise Ireland** supported companies which employed **6,255 people in 2022**.
- **In 2016 the unemployment rate in Monaghan stood at 7.3%,** which was higher than the national figure of 7.1% but lower than the figure for the Northern and Western Region at 7.6%.
- Due to this increase in employment**, Monaghan's employment rate stood at 53.9% for 2016. This figure was higher than both the employment rates for the region (51.1%) and the state (53.4%).**
- In 2020 Gross Income per Person in Monaghan was €26,248 per annum, which was almost 10% lower than the national average per county (€29,085). The regional average per county for the Northern and Western Region was €26,912.
- Although the number of persons employed in the "Agriculture, forestry and fishing" sector decreased by 1.1% between 2011 and 2016, this sector still employed more than a tenth of the workforce in Monaghan in 2016.
- In 2020 the total number of farms in Monaghan stood at 4,478. **"Specialised beef production" is the major farming activity in Monaghan**, with this type of agricultural holding accounting for more than two thirds of agricultural holdings.
- **The commercial vacancy rate at Q4 of 2022 for Monaghan stood at 13.7%, which represented an increase of 0.1% and was lower than the regional (16.5%) and the national (14.5%) average per county**.

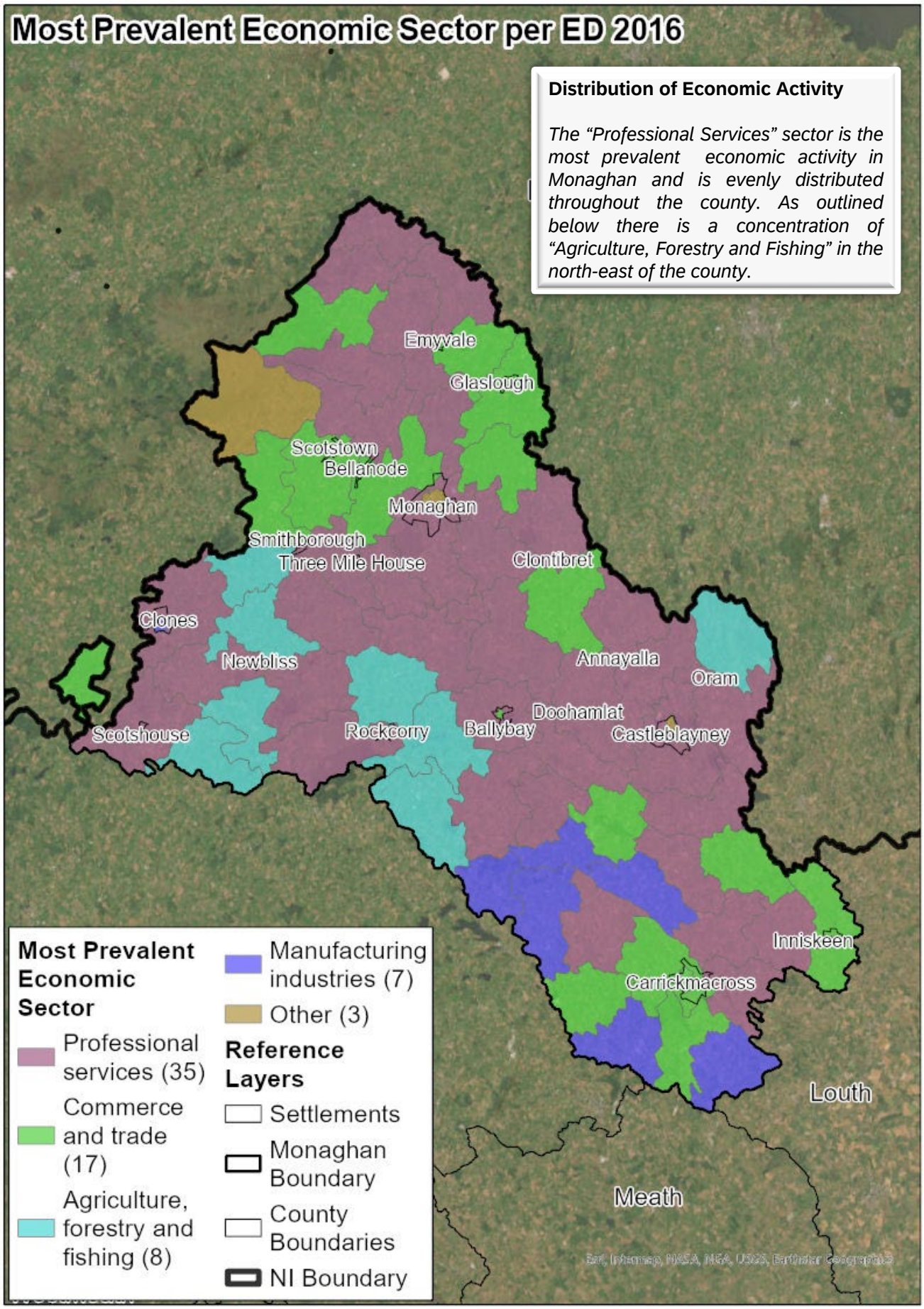
Occupation by Industry (2016)



Unemployment Rates 2016



Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis



Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis

Social and Community

The creation of strong inclusive communities is essential to the promotion of County Monaghan as an attractive place to live and work. The County Development Plan for Monaghan (2019 to 2025) aims to improve existing facilities (libraries, leisure, recreation, arts and amenity facilities) and make provision for new facilities in order to enhance access to education, recreation, healthcare and cultural infrastructure. This infrastructure is essential to social cohesion and provides for a sense of community.

- **40.6% of Monaghan's population aged 15 and over have completed some form of tertiary education** This is below both the region at 44.8% and the state 48.1%.

- The most prevalent category for tertiary qualifications obtained in Monaghan are within the fields of "Social Sciences" (9.6%), "Engineering" (9.2%), and "Health and Welfare" (7.9%). Interestingly, 55.1% of persons aged 15 and over did not state a field of study for qualification obtained.

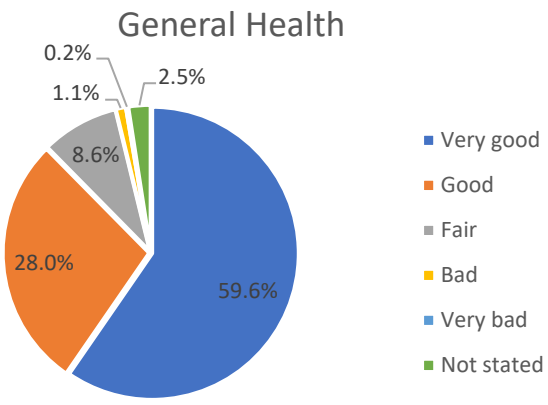
- **87.6% of people in Monaghan classified their health as either "Good" or "Very Good".** This percentage of healthy person was lower than the 2011 (88.3%) but higher than the percentage of healthy persons for the region (86.6%) and the State (87%).

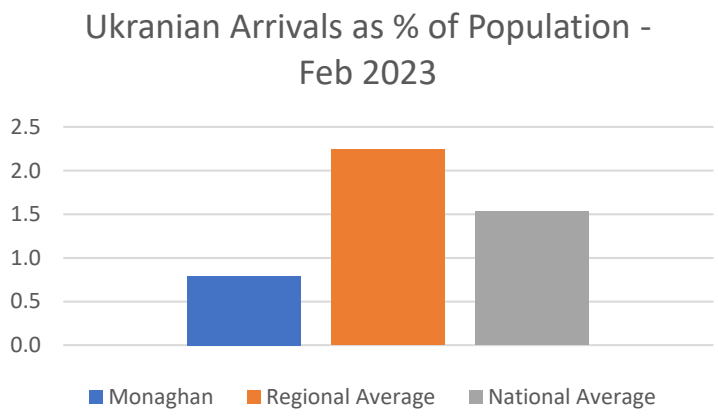
- **Due to the war in Ukraine, as of November 2022, just short of 60,000 Ukrainians arrived in Ireland**, of them 15,161 arrived in the Northern and Western region and of them **500 arrived in Monaghan**. This represents 0.8% of Monaghan's population. This may increase pressure on the provision of key services in the county and work should be done to ensure that the necessary capacity is available.

- Based on 2016, Pobal Deprivation Index (a measure of the overall social and economic factors influencing the state of poverty or affluence of an area) **Monaghan had a deprivation index score of -3.23, which classifies the county as whole as being "Marginally below Average".** The deprivation score decreased from -3.97 to -3.23 between 2011-2016

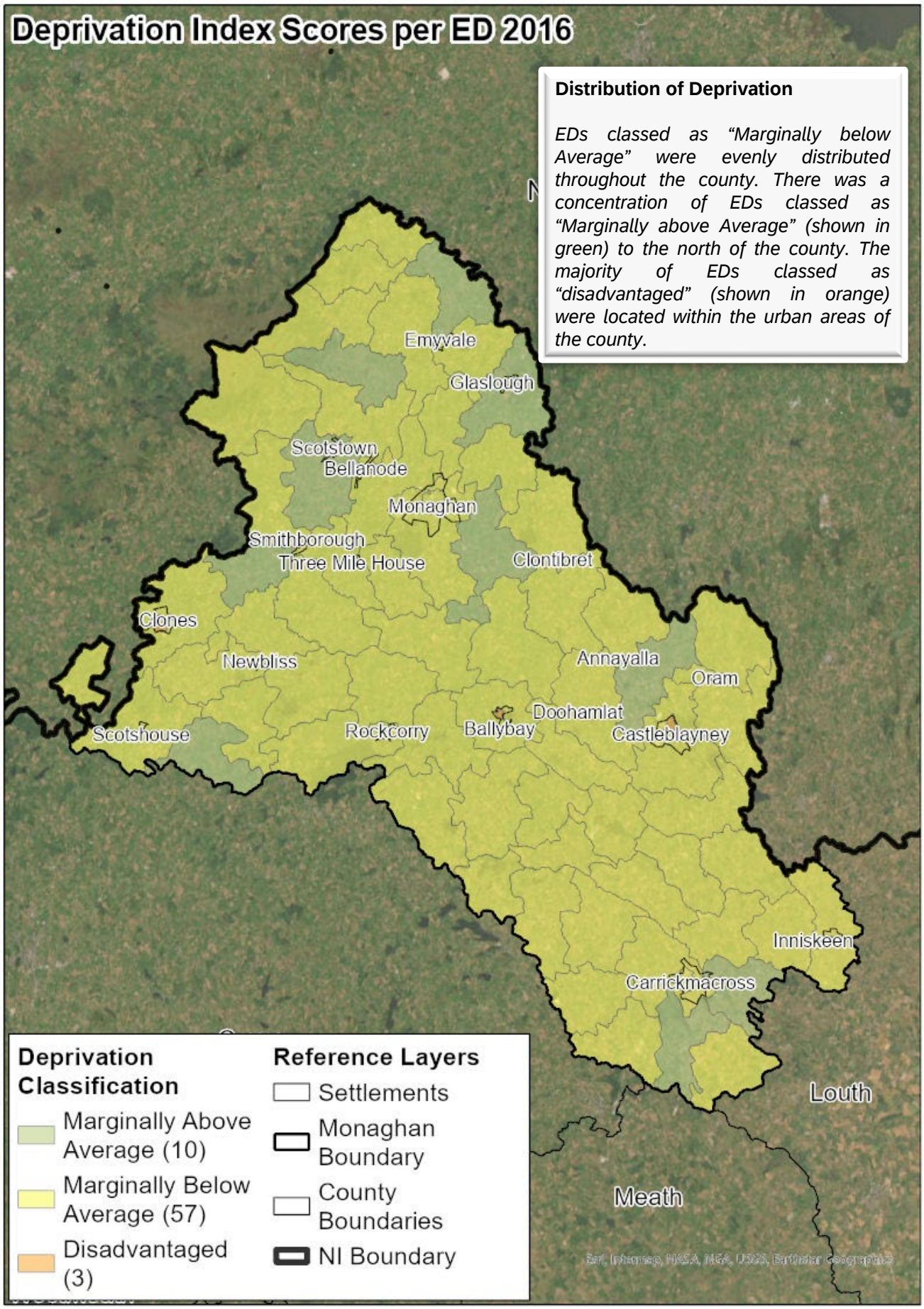
- Compared to the other counties in the Northern and Western Region, Monaghan had the 5th highest deprivation index score. Nationally, Monaghan the had the 17th highest deprivation index score.

- **Based on 2016 population figures per Electoral Division for Monaghan; 11.3% lived in Electoral Divisions classed as "Marginally Above Average", 85.4% lived in EDs classed as "Marginally Below Average", and 3.4% lived in Electoral Division s classed as "Disadvantaged".**





Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis



Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis

Environment
The environment is a valuable resource however it is increasingly vulnerable due various factors including growth in population, economic development and farming. The transition away from a carbon-based economy is a core national and regional policy objective. Monaghan County Council aims to deliver high standards of protection for water and air, promote sustainable waste management through education and regulation to mitigate the impacts of Climate Change.

- In 2022 Monaghan had one Natural Heritage Area (Eshbrack Bog), 43 Proposed Natural Heritage Areas, one Special Area of Conservation (Kilroosky Lough Cluster) and Special Protection Area (Slieve Beagh) each covering 1128.5 Ha, 2125.1 Ha, 56.4 Ha and 3446.5 Ha, respectively.

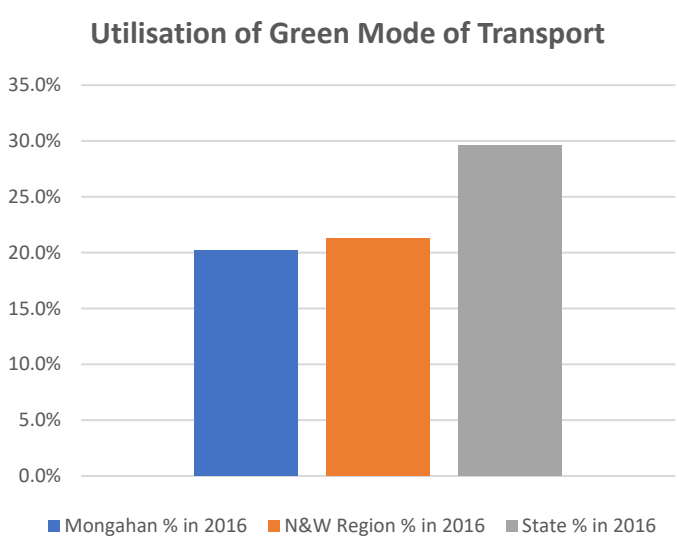
- **Agriculture is the economic sector with largest carbon footprint in Ireland**, with the sector accounting for **almost 40% of total carbon emissions in 2021** (EPA, 2021). Monaghan has a large agricultural sector with expertise in the "Specialist beef production" sector.

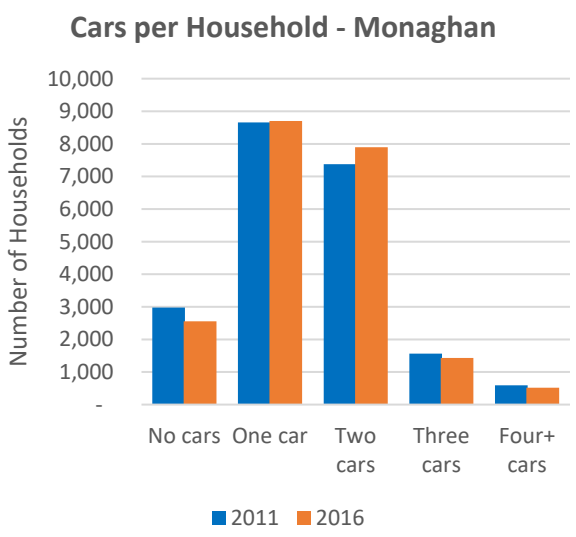
- Data from the SEAI highlights that the average Building Energy Rating (BER) of a residential building in Monaghan is a C1 classification. This was the second lowest median BER for the Northern and Western Region. The general spatial trend in the data shows that high BER ratings are located in and around settlements and lower BER ratings situated in rural areas.

- Fossil fuels accounted for more than 90% of the source of central heating in Monaghan in 2016 with "Oil" being the most dominant category accounting for more than three quarters (77.9%) on its own. This high rate of burning fossil fuels for central heating was also the case for the region (88%) and the state (84.9%).

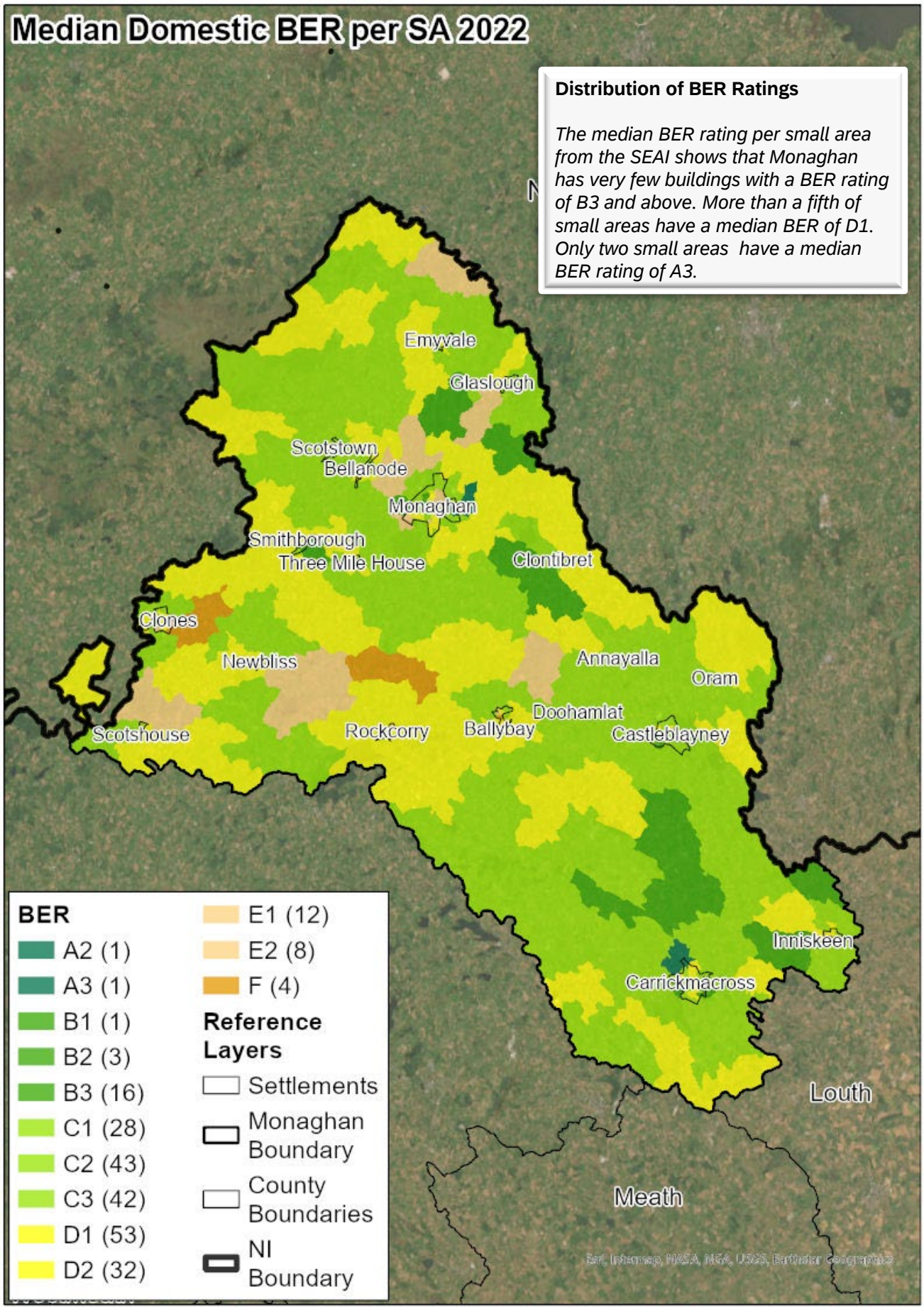
- As of 2022 **Monaghan has 3 wind farms, which represented 2.6% of the regional total and 1% of the national total of wind farms**. These three wind farms had a total installed capacity of 26.2 MW, which was well below the regional (192 MW) and national (172MW) average per county.

- **90% of households in Monaghan own one or more vehicles**. Car dependence was also a feature for the Northern and Western Region (87.2%) and the state (84.8%) but at lower rates than Monaghan.
- **40% of commuters in Monaghan reported having a commute of less than 15 minutes.**
- In 2016 **20% commuters in Monaghan made use of green modes of transport to travel to work**, which was below the region (21.3%) but lagging significantly behind the state (29.6%), this could be due to the lack of public transport alternatives in the county.
- During 2022 a total of 59 new Electric Vehicles (EVs) were registered in Monaghan, a 156.6% increase on the 23 EVs sold during the course of 2021. As of 2023 the Monaghan has **12 public EV charging stations, 3 in Monaghan Town, 1 in Clones, 1 Castleblayney, and 2 in Carrickmacross.**





Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis





5 Initial SCOT Analysis

Initial SCOT Analysis

Taking into account the findings from the research completed to date, an initial analysis of Monaghan's Strengths, Constraints, Opportunities and Threats (SCOT) has been developed. The SCOT can be defined as follows:

- **Strengths** – can be understood as the **advantages** of County Monaghan in the **present day**.
- **Constraints** – can be understood as the **challenges** facing the County at present.
- **Opportunities** – can be understood as the **future strengths** of a place or County. They represent the potential advantages available to the County and its communities.
- **Threats** – can be understood as the **future constraints** of a place or County. They represent the potential challenges facing the County and its communities.

Key points from this initial SCOT analysis are outlined below.

Strengths

- The Monaghan community and its people.
- Strategic location on the border with good access to main routes north and south, with the east of the County inside the commuter belt for Dublin.
- Entrepreneurial culture with a number of successful indigenous businesses and 6,255 people employed in Enterprise Ireland supported companies.
- Notable agri-food and engineering presence in the County.
- Consistent population growth recorded since 2002.
- Commercial vacancy at County level is below the state average.
- Housing affordability and quality of life.
- Natural environment, history, culture and arts.
- Attractions such as the Ulster-Canal Greenway, Castle Leslie, Concra Wood, Rossmore Forest Park, Lough Muckno.

Constraints

- Accessibility with low levels of public transport.
- Commercial vacancy in certain urban centres continues to pose a challenge.
- Relatively low level of FDI with 8 IDA companies supported in the County in 2021.
- Environmental and health impact from high-level of car usage.
- Growing elderly population and reduction in key working age cohorts.
- Access to broadband continues to be an issue in some areas particularly in rural locations.
- Low population growth in comparison to state average.
- Isolation and mental health issues.
- Lack of health provision (e.g. no Accident and Emergency and low ambulance cover).

Opportunities

- Attract further FDI and continue to encourage the development of innovative home grown companies.
- Remote and hybrid working which could attract people to live in the County.
- Increased public transport including to rural areas.
- Further capitalise on the County's strategic location in order to attract investment and commuters.
- Enhance further education provision in the Monaghan Institute
- Increase sustainability throughout the County.
- Capitalise on the County's tourism potential including in relation to the Ulster Canal Greenway and the forthcoming marina in Clones.
- Support the development of clusters in key sectors such as agri-food, engineering and explore new opportunities in the green economy
- Repurpose vacant and derelict sites for community and commercial purposes.

Threats

- Long-term consequences of Brexit and the effects of current inflation on businesses and the community (cost of living crisis).
- Increasing risk of recession and global economic downturn
- Vacancy and dereliction in urban areas could lead to economic decline if not addressed.
- Dependency on border trade which is affected by currency and policy fluctuations.
- Decreases in key working age cohorts could affect workforce availability and impact economic competitiveness
- Issues with broadband and 5G coverage if not addressed could detract from opportunities related to remote workers and general investment.
- Uneven development across the County could lead to increased inequalities.
- Failure to address deprivation and health issues could lead to further decline in community wellbeing.
- Climate change and the biodiversity crisis will negatively impact the County.



6 | Draft High-Level Goals

Draft High-Level Goals

The insights gained from the analysis completed in the development of this document, including the initial policy review, socio-economic snapshot and SCOT, has been used to identify a number of areas that could be considered as potential priorities for the new LECP. This includes clear strengths that can be built upon, and constraints and other issues that could potentially be addressed in the new LECP.

From the analysis and identified findings 6 draft High-Level Goals have been developed. These goals are outlined in the Figure to the right and expanded on the pages that follow.

The draft High-Level Goals have been developed in line with the "Local Economic and Community Plans Guidelines 2021". The guidelines provide a recommended approach to the development of the new LECP with the High-Level Goals, Objectives and Outcomes to cover three main elements. These are as follows: economic elements, cross-cutting economic and community elements, and community elements.

In relation to the outlined draft High-Level Goals:

- Goals 1 and 2 predominantly relate to community elements
- Goals 3 and 4 are cross-cutting Goals which directly and indirectly contribute to economic and community development
- Goals 5 and 6 relate directly to areas that contribute to the economic development of the County.

It is envisaged that these that due to the integrated nature of the LECP there will be overlap and alignment between the High-Level Goals, Objectives, Outcomes and Actions .

As previously highlighted, these draft High-Level are only a starting point for discussion, are not final and will be developed further following analysis of feedback received during the consultation.

As such, the Council encourage you to share your opinions, views and feedback on these goals.

Do these goals reflect your vision for the future economic and community development of the County?

GOAL 1:
Promote diversity, equity and respect to enhance inclusion and wellbeing in communities across the County

GOAL 2:
Transition to a more sustainable County based around climate action, clean energy and environmental responsibility

GOAL 3:
Increase access to training and educational resources to promote opportunities for personal and professional development.

GOAL 4:
Champion and enhance the County's arts, culture and sports

GOAL 5:
Grow and diversify the economy and create high value sustainable employment.

GOAL 6:
Unlock the County's tourism potential to support economic growth and sustainable development

Figure 3: Draft High-Level Goals

Goal 1 Promote diversity, equity and respect to enhance inclusion and wellbeing in communities across the County

Monaghan County Council is committed to fostering a culture of inclusivity and wellbeing in its communities by promoting diversity, equity and respect. We will work with local stakeholders to create a welcoming and supportive environment within which all residents feel valued and appreciated.

Building upon the key theme of "Tolerance" from Monaghan's Social Inclusion Week 2022, we will seek to reduce social exclusion through enhanced capacity building, awareness initiatives and networking opportunities. It is envisaged that this approach will further promote social integration and ensure the celebration of cultural diversity in the county.

We recognise the intrinsic link between social integration and wellbeing and will seek to further promote these key components of community resilience. This goal will strive to support disadvantaged and marginalised communities and provide a voice to everyone in the County, irrespective of background. This could include:

- Further supporting communities of all backgrounds and traditions to enhance their capacity to work together in pursuit of shared goals (i.e., active citizenship).
- Ensuring positive outcomes for local communities through effective policy/initiative alignment (e.g., the Healthy Monaghan Plan, Age Friendly Community Initiative, Yellow Flag Programme, SICAP, Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025).
- Collaborating with relevant partners (e.g., Monaghan Public Participation Network, Monaghan Integrated Development CLG and local SICAP implementers).
- Empowering individuals to mobilise and tackle inequality in their communities.
- Supporting innovative projects to increase awareness of the importance of cultural diversity (e.g., Traveller pride events, Ukrainian culture festivals, Disability inclusion training workshops).
- Enhancing awareness of the positive work being carried out by Monaghan's dynamic voluntary sector.

Key Questions...

- What are the perceived barriers to social inclusion and how can we overcome them?
- How can we encourage greater participation in Monaghan's voluntary sector?
- What can be done to further promote mental and physical wellbeing in Monaghan?
- Are there untapped opportunities at the local, regional or national level that could contribute to more equitable communities the county?

SDG Alignment



Goal 2 Transition to a more sustainable County based around climate action, clean energy and environmental responsibility

The environment is a valuable resource however it is increasingly vulnerable due various factors including population growth, economic development and farming practices. The transition away from a carbon-based economy is a core national and regional policy objective.

Monaghan County Council aims to deliver high standards of protection for water and air, promote sustainable waste management through education and regulation which can mitigate the impacts of Climate Change. The protection of the environmental quality of County Monaghan is key to maintaining the County as attractive place to live, work and visit.

This goal will look to build on good work already underway through the strategic objectives in the County Monaghan Development Plan. This could include:

- Supporting the development of the sustainable transport alternatives specifical developed for rural communities.
- Encouraging the use of renewable energy sources including through exploring the development of micro generation, community wind, and larger scale renewable energy projects where appropriate.
- Facilitating the growth of the green economy within the county and green SME's and micro businesses.
- Fostering community support and engagement with climate action programs through locally based climate initiatives.
- Engaging with the farming community to investigate what agricultural practices or programs can be encouraged to mitigate for farming emissions ?
- Promoting the education and skills training necessary for sustainable living.

Key Questions...

- What green initiatives can be promoted to encourage the uptake of more active and sustainable modes of transport?
- What agricultural practices or initiatives can be encouraged to mitigate for farming emissions ?

SDG Alignment



Goal 3 Increase access to training and educational resources to promote opportunities for personal and professional development

The personal and professional development of the people of Monaghan has been, and will continue to be, a key contributing factor in the positive development of the County. This goal will look to continue to support the people of Monaghan in attaining the education and skills required to assist in increasing employability, wellbeing and general life satisfaction. In doing so it will seek to encourage and promote strategic initiatives that assist in the development of the County's people and foster a diverse talent pool through a range of education and training opportunities. This approach will provide opportunities for individuals to refine existing skills and develop new skills in both their professional and personal lives.

This could include:

- Increasing the employability of our people and ensuring that available skills meet and align with the requirements of current and future employers including in relation to key sectors such as agriculture and engineering.
- Working with relevant stakeholders to ensure inclusive access to training and education supports that address specific skills gaps including for marginalised groups.
- Supporting the provision of quality services and training that can contribute to wellbeing in relation to personal development such as stress management, nutrition and exercise.
- Encourage "Community Champions" to share knowledge, train and support the wider community.
- Provide new opportunities for upskilling to futureproof the skillsets of the wider community in the areas of industry 4.0, smart manufacturing and the transition to a more sustainable and digital County.
- Facilitating effective knowledge transfer opportunities between stakeholders in various industries and individuals at different stages of career development.

Key Questions...

- What types of training and education supports in Monaghan would you like to see?
- What specific industries/ sectors do you think would benefit from training and/or upskilling opportunities?
- What could assist in helping people access training and education supports?

SDG Alignment



Goal 4 Champion and enhance the County's arts, culture and sports

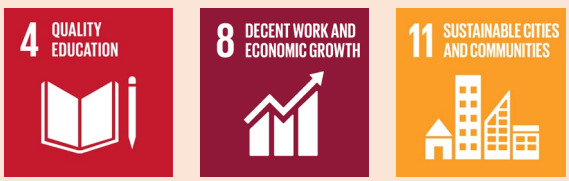
Monaghan has a rich heritage of arts, culture and sports which is deeply engrained in the identity of the County. Assets include the likes of the Carrickmacross Lace Gallery, the Patrick Kavanagh Centre and Monaghan County Museum. In relation to built heritage there is numerous examples in the County such as St Peter's Tin Church and Magheross Church. The arts and creative sector also play a key role in the County with notable strengths in music, visual arts and drama. Similarly, sport also plays an important part in community life, in particular the GAA and St Tiernanch's Park, as well as more unique sports such as bog snorkelling. The various elements of arts, culture and sport enhance Monaghan as a County and contribute to inclusion, community well being, sense of place, regeneration and economic development. As such, it is important that the arts, culture and sports are supported and strengthened in the forthcoming LECP. This could include:

- Raising awareness of and coordination between the various community and voluntary groups working in arts, culture, and sports in the County.
- Supporting community and voluntary groups through capacity building and training.
- Supporting initiatives related to the Irish language and traditional Irish music across Monaghan.
- Identifying barriers and encouraging participation in heritage and creative initiatives including through the implementation of the Creative Ireland programme.
- Identifying space for arts and cultural groups, potentially through the repurposing of vacant property which in turn can contribute to the regeneration and economic development of Monaghan's towns and villages.
- Continuing to support successful arts and cultural festivals in the County such as the Harvest Time Blues Festival and Clones Film Festival and explore opportunities for enhancement.
- Increase awareness of funding opportunities and supports across the areas of heritage and the creative sectors including in relation to the conservation of built heritage.

Key Questions...

- What types of supports and services are needed to enhance sport, culture, and the arts in the County?
- What barriers do you think prevent individuals from engaging and how can we encourage participation in these areas in the County?

SDG Alignment



Goal 5 Grow and diversify the economy and create high value sustainable employment

This goal focuses on Monaghan's economic wellbeing and job creation. Monaghan has a number of highly successful home-grown companies that are a testament to the can-do spirt of its people and the entrepreneurial culture in the County. This includes world leading companies in sectors such as agri-food and engineering. The County is also strategically placed on the border benefitting from close proximity to key transport routes North and South. Over the next 6 years the County should look to build upon its successes, strengthen and further diversify its economy and drive job creation. This will include supporting existing businesses, competing for new investment and ensuring a business ecosystem that fosters innovation and growth. This could include:

- Working to further enhance the County as an attractive place to do business including in relation to broadband, housing, and appropriate workspace as well as the availability of a talented workforce.
- Supporting existing businesses to grow and innovative and ensuring that the benefits of economic development are felt across the County.
- Implementing and building upon Monaghan's Digital Strategy to further develop a competitive economy that embraces new technology.
- Further highlighting the success of Monaghan's indigenous companies, the career opportunities which exist and putting Monaghan on the map as a top destination to start a business.
- Working with relevant partners such as the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, and Local Enterprise Office to build upon areas of strength, attract new investment and develop further world-leading companies in the County.
- Implementing innovative initiatives to address commercial vacancy and dereliction where it exists to ensure that it does not lead to economic decline.
- Continuing to provide and raise awareness around key supports for the important agriculture and farming sector in the County that can enhance innovation and growth in the sector.
- Supporting other key sectors such as businesses working in the areas of retail, hospitality and tourism as well as social enterprises, acknowledging their important contribution to economy, the community and in ensuring vibrant towns and villages.

Key Questions...

- What can be done to further support existing businesses to ensure their success?
- How can Monaghan attract new investment to help diversify its economy?
- Are there any opportunities that Monaghan should look to capitalise on for growth?

SDG Alignment



Goal 6 Unlock the County's tourism potential to support economic growth and sustainable development

Monaghan has much to offer in relation to tourism with a variety of experiences, events and attractions for visitors to experience. Its rolling drumlin landscape is home to attractions and amenities such as Castle Leslie, Rally School Ireland, Rossmore Forest Park, Lough Muckno and Concra Wood. These offerings are supported by a calendar of events such as the Harvest Time Blues Festival and Monaghan Street Food Festival. Carrickmacross Lace and the Patrick Kavanagh Centre add further to the cultural attractions of the County. Yet despite this offering and the good work done to date, progress can still be made in relation to fulfilling the County's tourism potential. As such, this goal seeks to build on existing progress and capitalise on the County's rich tourism offering for the benefit of the entire county. Centre to this will be a sustainable approach that protects the County's assets for future generations. This could include:

- Supporting sustainable tourism initiatives to ensure optimal use of existing natural resources while effectively balancing the environmental impact of tourist activity.
- Enhancing coordination and cooperation between those operating in the tourism sector to ensure a joint-up approach in relation to the development and promotion of Monaghan as a tourism destination.
- Further developing and linking key attractions and ensuring the County benefits from the interest in sustainable and active tourism products (e.g. greenways and cycling).
- Working to obtain public access to attractions that may be on private land.
- Pursuing enhanced marketing and promotion of Monaghan's tourism offering including in relation to the Ireland's Ancient East destination brand.
- Explore opportunities for enhanced synergies to combine aspects of Monaghan's natural environment, heritage, culture and history.
- Developing a more targeted approach to attract visitors from a diverse range of countries and backgrounds.
- Collaborating with relevant stakeholders to enhance capacity, capability and skills within the tourism sector in the County

Key Questions...

- What opportunities could be explored to enhance Monaghan's reputation as a tourism destination?
- What could be done to attract a greater number of tourists to the county?

SDG Alignment





7 | Conclusion & Next Steps

Conclusion and Next Steps

This Socio-Economic Statement represents an important point in the preparation of County Monaghan's new LECP. It is envisaged that this document will serve as a prompt for wider discussion among key stakeholders, the community and private sector in relation to the development of the new LECP. This document sheds an initial light and ideas on key areas at a strategic level that will likely contribute to the development of the County over the next number of years.

Monaghan County Council encourages the community, local business leaders and all interested stakeholders to provide feedback, ideas and recommendations for the forthcoming LECP to ensure that it is reflective of the ambition and needs of the entire County. **Feedback, ideas, or recommendations for the new LECP, can be submitted in writing before 4.00pm, Friday, 14th April 2023, via email to lcdc@monaghancoco.ie or via post to Community Development – LECP, Monaghan County Council The Glen, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan H18 YT50.**

Furthermore, as part of the wider consultation process, online surveys (both for the local community and the private sector), workshops and semi-structured stakeholder interviews will be conducted over the next number of weeks. Participation in these elements from across the County is welcomed and encouraged to ensure an inclusive consultation process. Information about the surveys and upcoming events will be available on the Council's website at: https://monaghan.ie/

It is our belief that a plan that reflects the voice of the people of Monaghan will ensure the best possible outcome for the development of the County and therefore, it is vital that the public and business community engage with this process.

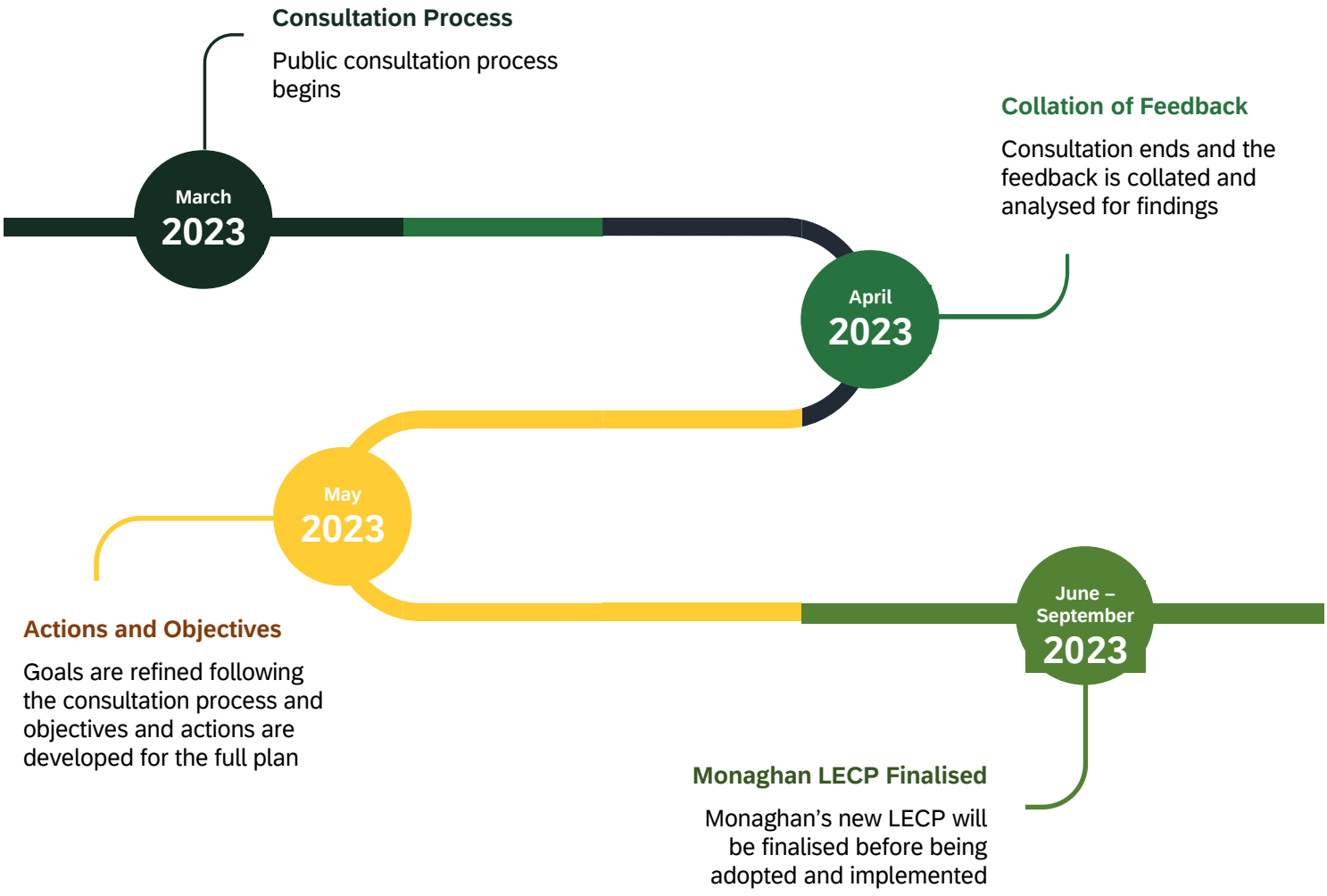


Figure 4: Monaghan LECP Indicative Timeline



8 Appendix

Policy Document List

List of indicative policy documents informing the LECPpreparation process:

Level	Policy Document
International	2030 Agenda - UN Sustainable Development Goals
National	Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework
	Project Ireland 2040: National Development Plan 2018 – 2027
	Rural Development Policy 2021 – 2025: Our Rural Future
	Climate Action Plan 2023
	Housing for All: A New Housing Plan for Ireland 2021
	Town Centre First: A Policy Approach for Irish Towns 2022
Regional	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the NWRA
	North-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024
Local	Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025
	Monaghan Age Friendly Strategy Action Plan Update 2022
	Monaghan Local Economic and Community Plan 2015 – 2021
	Monaghan Biodiversity and Heritage Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025
	Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Monaghan 2019 - 2024
	Monaghan Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024
	Monaghan County Council Tourism Strategy 2017-2022
	Monaghan Digital Strategy 2021 - 2025
	Monaghan Arts Plan 2016-2023
	Monaghan Library Development Plan 2018-2022
	Monaghan Museum Strategy 2014-2018