

Review of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 and Preparation of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031



Strategic Issues & Options Paper

May 2023



Monaghan County Council



Monaghan County Council is reviewing the current County Development Plan and starting to prepare a new Plan. This Plan making process will take two years and will result in the publication of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031.



What is the Monaghan County Development Plan?

The Monaghan County Development Plan is the main public statement of planning policies for County Monaghan. It sets out the land use, infrastructure, amenity and development objectives and policies of the County's planning authority for a six year period. The Development Plan consists of a written statement of policies and objectives, and a series of maps. The Plan underpins the economic and social progress of the County as a whole and thus is one of the most important functions of Monaghan County Council.

A development plan consists of a set of broad aims, reinforced by various objectives and policies. Objectives are actions or projects which fall under different headings within the Development Plan that the Council intends to accomplish over the life time of the new Monaghan County Development Plan, for example, to reduce the loss of habitats, improve biodiversity, upgrade existing infrastructure. Policies are what the Council's agreed position is on a particular issue for example, to safeguard the protection of the environment, to encourage economic development, and to provide certain services.

The new Development Plan will cover the period 2025-2031.

How is the Plan prepared?

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) places a statutory duty on a planning authority to commence a review of its development plan no later than four years after it was made and to make a new Development Plan every six years. The Monaghan County Development Plan covers the entire County including the towns of Monaghan, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones and Ballybay.

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) specifies that a development plan must include objectives on a number of topics, and must be consistent with Government Guidelines and Regional policies, such as the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Northern & Western Regional area (RSES).

The Monaghan County Development Plan is made by the elected members of Monaghan County Council in partnership with, and having regard to, the advice of the council executive and taking account of submissions from the public, prescribed bodies (e.g. the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Planning Regulator, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Uisce Éireann) and other interested parties, including voluntary and other state bodies.

Environmental Assessment and Monitoring

Environmental assessment of a development plan is a crucial element of the plan making process. This comprises the assessment of the potential environmental impacts of the implementation of objectives and policies contained within the plan, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects. When preparing a development plan the planning authority is required to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and an Appropriate Assessment (AA) simultaneously.

Strategic Environmental Assessment - What is it?

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a requirement under European Law, transposed into Irish Law, which measures the effects of proposals in the development plan on the environment and, if they are significant, indicates what mitigation measures should be applied to the plan and how environmental issues and challenges can be monitored. It aims to provide a high level of protection to the environment and to promote sustainable development by contributing to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of the development plan. The planning authority is required under this legislation to prepare an environmental report on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the new development plan. An environmental report relating to the SEA will be made publicly available and comments invited on it at the same time as the draft development plan. Accordingly, views on the key environmental issues affecting County Monaghan over the plan period and beyond are being sought.



Appropriate Assessment - What is it?

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) is an assessment based on best scientific knowledge of the potential impacts of the development plan on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site which are habitat sites of European importance i.e. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to prevent negative effects on these Natura 2000 sites. The planning authority is required under this legislation to carry out screening exercises during the preparation of the new plan to determine the potential for impact upon the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites. AA Screening Reports, and any other subsequent documents relating to the AA will be made publicly available.



What are the significant environmental pressures in County Monaghan?

How do we balance development with the protection of the environment?

What objectives and policies are needed within the development plan to protect and enhance the environment?

Settlement Strategy

The development plan must ensure sufficient provision is made for residential development, and certain services and other facilities to support the expanding population of the County. The National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) are key informers in shaping settlement policy in the region and the County. The NPF has a priority of compact growth to achieve effective density and consolidation of settlements, and contains an objective to deliver at least 30% of all new homes outside of the cities within the existing built-up footprints of settlements. The RSES has identified Monaghan Town as a “Key” town and thus policies in the development plan must reflect its status as the main population centre in the County.

What is a Core Strategy?

The purpose of a core strategy is to guide where new residential development should take place both in settlements and the open countryside.

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 introduced the requirement for the production of a core strategy to inform projections for the provision of development land for uses such as housing. The core strategy must demonstrate that the development objectives in the development plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the NPF and the RSES in terms of population growth.

The results of Census 2022 will be used to influence the production of the core strategy.

Core Strategy Options

A number of pre-draft alternative core strategy options are set out below aimed at generating debate and discussion. The core strategy will evolve over the course of drafting the development plan and this consultation process seeks to identify and highlight what emerging policy issues will inform a draft core strategy.

Option 1: Ad Hoc Rural Development and Settlement Expansion

Presumption in favour of rural housing throughout the County and settlements expanding beyond existing built up footprint (mainly greenfield development).

Option 2: Managed Rural Development and Settlement Expansion

Presumption against rural housing in pressure areas only (justification required) with settlements expanding beyond existing built up footprint (mainly greenfield development).

Option 3: Managed Rural Development and Settlement Consolidation

Presumption against rural housing in pressure areas only (justification required) with settlement growth contained within existing built up footprint (mainly brownfield development).

Option 4: Controlled Rural Development and Settlement Expansion

Presumption against rural housing throughout the County (justification required) with settlements expanding beyond existing built up footprint (mainly greenfield development).

Option 5: Controlled Rural Development and Settlement Consolidation

Presumption against rural housing throughout the County (justification required) with settlement growth contained within existing settlement built up footprint (mainly brownfield development).

**County Monaghan Population
increased by 3,446 to 64,832
between 2016 and 2022**

5.6%



Does the current rural housing policy and objectives need to change?

Should there be greater emphasis on the development of our towns and villages?

How do we balance the need to create and sustain viable towns and villages with the desire for rural housing?

Should there be a stronger focus on bringing vacant and derelict properties in towns and villages into residential use?

How do we best achieve compact urban form in settlements?

Housing Strategy

A new Housing Strategy for the 2025-2031 period will be prepared in tandem with the review of the Monaghan County Development Plan and integrated into the Development Plan. The overall aim of the Housing Strategy is to provide for existing and future housing needs of the area covered by the development plan and to set out how this will be achieved. The Development Plan has a clear role to play in ensuring sufficient land is available to meet the broad spectrum of housing needs of the area.

Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland is the government's housing policy to 2030. It is a multi-annual, multi-billion euro plan which will improve Ireland's housing system and deliver more homes of all types for people with different housing needs. It has a built-in annual review mechanism to respond to progress made in implementing the plan, to challenges in implementation, and to changes in the external environment. The Development Plan Housing Strategy will have regard the measures and objectives of Housing for All.



Figure 1:
Four Pathways
to Housing for All

Housing Need & Demand Assessment—What is It?

The National Planning Framework requires that a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) be undertaken in each local authority area in order to ensure long-term strategic housing needs are met. The purpose of the HNDA is to:-

- Assist local authorities to develop long-term strategic views of housing need across all tenures;
- Provide a robust evidence base to support decisions about new housing supply, wider investment and housing related services that inform an overall national housing profile;
- Inform policies about the proportion of social and affordable housing required;
- Provide evidence to inform policies related to the provision of specialist housing and housing related services.

The HNDA comprises a standardised methodology that can quantify the current and projected housing needs of a particular local authority area including in relation to requirements for different tenures. A HNDA for the County is currently being prepared and will be the central evidence base used to inform the Housing Strategy and housing policies of the Development Plan.

County Monaghan Housing Stock increased by 1,237 to 26,548 between 2016 and 2022

4.9%

County Monaghan Vacant Dwellings decreased by 11 to 2,873 between 2016 and 2022

0.4%



- Where should new housing be located?**
- What type of housing should be provided to cater for different needs?**
- Is there enough social housing and is it in the right places?**
- How can housing affordability issues be overcome?**
- What are the barriers to the delivery of housing in towns and villages?**
- What facilities are required to support housing in both rural and urban locations?**

Projected Housing Output (New Build) 2022 - 2030									
Tenure	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Social homes	9,000	9,100	9,300	10,000	10,200	10,200	10,200	10,200	10,200
Affordable & Cost Rental homes	4,100	5,500	6,400	6,400	6,100	6,300	6,400	6,300	6,300
Private Rental and Private Ownership homes	11,500	14,400	17,750	18,200	19,800	20,400	21,500	23,000	24,000
Total Homes	24,600	29,000	33,450	34,600	36,100	36,900	38,100	39,500	40,500

Climate Change, Environment and Heritage

Climate change is recognised as the significant challenge of our time, and will do so into the future. Responding to this challenge requires a dual approach of both mitigation (tackling the cause) and adaptation measures (reducing the impacts and building adaptive capacity and resilience). The National Planning framework confirms that the planning process provides an established means through which to implement and integrate climate change objectives, including adaptation, at local level and the transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society. Addressing the challenges of climate change will require continued policy development at both national and local levels.

The protection of the environment is a key priority at international, national and local level. County Monaghan has a variety of landscapes and habitats which contribute to the County's high quality environment. The interaction of human activity with biodiversity through an array of sources such as farming or development of land must be carefully managed. The Development Plan must try to strike this balance.

Water is a key component of the natural environment. As well as being an essential resource. Protecting and restoring water quality across the County will be important priorities for the development plan. The development plan will seek to ensure that new development should not individually or cumulatively give rise to new flood risks.

County Monaghan hosts a wealth of historical and archaeological remains. As archaeological remains are a finite, non-renewable resource which are vulnerable to partial or total destruction, there is an onus on Monaghan County Council to preserve and protect the archaeological heritage of County Monaghan.

Our built and architectural heritage is an important resource that must be passed on to future generations. Protection will be afforded through the Record of Protected Structures and various Architectural Conservation Areas designated and proposed in towns and villages across the County. Well designed buildings are those which enhance their setting, be it an urban or rural context, and which continue to be enjoyable and efficient to use through the decades. The Development Plan should continue to encourage the provision of appropriate built form both in urban and rural locations.

**County Monaghan Hedgerow
average annual loss 2010-2021**

1%

**County Monaghan Species
rich hedgerow loss 2010-2021**

14%



What should we be doing within the County to address climate change?

What policies and objectives are required to reduce the carbon footprint of the County?

How do we address / prevent increasing loss of biodiversity and habitats?

How can our natural, cultural, and archaeological heritage be best protected ?

How can we facilitate development in the County whilst preserving and protecting our natural heritage?

Does our unique drumlin landscape require better protection?

What do you consider are the main issues relating to architectural heritage and the built environment?

Should there be more favourable policies and objectives on renewable energy development?

How do we ensure that ground and surface water quality is protected and improved?

How can good quality water be protected and secured whilst ensuring the sustainable development of our County?

Are there sufficient policies and objectives to address / prevent flooding?



more to
Monaghan

Why Monaghan?



A skilled labour pool of 500,000 within the wider Northeast border region



Adjacent to the Dublin-Belfast M1 Economic Corridor



Cost of commercial office space is 66% lower than in Dublin



Renting or buying a home is over 60% cheaper than in Dublin

21.3% of the County's population is self-employed, 4.4% above national average

Economic Activity

Monaghan has a particularly entrepreneurial spirit, with a significant percentage of the population being self employed and has one of the highest rates of new business start ups in Ireland. The County's strategic position equidistant between Dublin and Belfast is an ideal location for enterprise development and investment.

Agriculture is the predominant land use in the County and it continues to contribute significantly to the economy of the County, accounting for 12.5% of total employment in Monaghan, compared with a national average of 5%. Monaghan is one of Ireland's leading centres for the production of premium food, being home to some of the largest food producers in Ireland, with 90% of its production exported.

County Monaghan has a significant engineering sector and has been at the forefront of the industry for decades, with several indigenous and foreign engineering globally successful firms operating in the County.

Retail plays a key role in the economy, and a proper balance in retail provision throughout the County is important to serve the inhabitants, visitors and businesses of County Monaghan. Therefore, retaining the vitality and viability of town centres is particularly important.

Tourism is an emerging sector in County Monaghan providing both economic and social advantages to the area. County Monaghan has an abundance of tourist attractions that should be seen as fundamental assets and should be utilised fully in its future development. The Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031 should support tourism and predict the nature of future demands in the County in a sustainable manner.

One of the objectives of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031 will be to encourage and sustain a diversity of employment opportunities and identify and promote opportunities for both inward investment and indigenous enterprise in towns and villages throughout the County.

It is also important that sufficient land is reserved for commercial and industrial development. Policies and objectives contained within the County Development Plan should facilitate commercial and industrial development, and enable them to adopt to changing practices.

A new Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for the County is in the process of being developed and the Development Plan will have regard to the measures and objectives of the adopted LECP.

What key drivers, strengths or competitive advantages can be harnessed to increase employment growth in the County?

How can land use planning best facilitate sustainable economic development?

In which ways should the development plan underpin and support new work practices and patterns?

Is there sufficient land zoned in the towns and villages for economic development?

How should retail development progress in the future?

Should indigenous town centre retail activities be protected?

How can small-scale enterprise, including rural and agriculture based enterprise, be encouraged and supported through land use planning?

How can the development plan ensure the sustainable expansion of the tourism offering of County Monaghan?

Infrastructure and Services

The Development Plan will seek to develop, improve, protect, and enhance, the range and accessibility of infrastructural services in a manner that promotes sustainable development in the County.

A multi-modal transport network which serves the entire County plays a crucial role in contributing to Monaghan business and industrial competitiveness, and connectivity to other parts of the country and worldwide.

Future development within the County will be contingent on the provision of adequate water supplies and sewage treatment plants. The quantity and quality of water supply and the capacity of treatment plants have a major influence on settlement patterns, economic development, and environmental standards.

Flood risk is a concern which has increased in recent years as a result of both climate change and increased development. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the County will provide an assessment of all types of flood risk within the county and will assist in making informed strategic land-use planning decisions and formulate flood risk policies. The development plan will seek to ensure that new development should not individually or cumulatively give rise to new flood risks through the requirement of site specific flood risk assessments.

At present there is one main central waste management facility in the County with ancillary recycling facilities in the main towns. The reduction, recycling and appropriate disposal of waste will continue to be encouraged.

The supply of energy throughout the County is an important factor in the provision and location of development. Monaghan County Council will continue to work alongside key energy providers in the provision of electricity and gas, where feasible. Provision will be made within the development plan for wind energy and other renewable energy sources.

There are varying levels of broadband services available throughout the County with multiple service providers competing for the larger populated urban areas. The continued roll out of services will bring broadband to all parts of the County during the period of the plan.

What are the main infrastructural constraints to economic development in Monaghan?

How can we encourage more sustainable modes of transport and improve sustainable mobility?

How can the use of public transport, cycling and walking be encouraged?

How can good quality water be protected and secured whilst ensuring the sustainable development of our County?

How can we ensure that sufficient water and drainage facilities are available to accommodate the growth in housing, industry, employment, etc, to 2031?

How can the prevention and alleviation of flooding be incorporated within development?

Are there adequate recycling facilities available to serve County Monaghan?

What more can be done to improve broadband services?

Where should we facilitate mobile communication structures while ensuring a modern mobile telecommunication network throughout the County?

What policies should we have for waste and recycling?

How can we encourage and facilitate active travel / better public transport?



Community Services / Facilities

Social, Community and Cultural development plays a vital role in contributing to the quality of life for all. Monaghan County Council aims where possible, to respond to individual communities and their needs. Such facilities include schools, crèches, other child/youth and educational and recreational facilities, local and community services or other facilities. The County Development Plan also plays a key role in ensuring there are positive objectives and policies relating to play, recreation and sport to complement the assistance and funding provided in the development of playgrounds and other facilities.

While Monaghan County Council has no direct role to play in the provision of educational facilities, it works closely with the Department of Education, Cavan & Monaghan Education and Training Board and other educational agencies. The main role of the Development Plan in relation to education will be to provide the appropriate framework through appropriate objectives and policies for Civic/Community/Educational use and the zoning sufficient lands for these purposes in the County.

Social exclusion occurs when people are marginalised from society due to issues such as unemployment, poverty and discrimination. Social inclusion therefore consists of seeking a fairer and inclusive society. In terms of planning, this can be achieved through the construction of social and affordable housing, accessible buildings for those less able, the creation of employment, educational and recreational opportunities, health services as well as public transport facilities. Monaghan County Council aspires to deliver social housing that will provide high quality accessibility and independent living standards for occupants, thereby providing for a high quality of life whilst also building social integration for future residents. Monaghan County Council also continues to assist members of the Traveller Community in terms of integration through the provision of housing and serviced halting sites.

A new Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for the County is in the process of being developed and the Development Plan will have regard to the measures and objectives of the adopted LECP.



Are there adequate services / facilities serving your community?

What community facilities should be provided with new developments at local and neighbourhood level?

Are there any facilities, amenities or type of development that the County is missing and which you believe are important?

Are there enough parks and amenity areas?

How can existing educational, sport and recreational facilities be protected and improved?

What can the new County Development Plan do to promote social inclusion?

What other facilities / services would you like provided in your community?

How should these facilities/services be delivered and by whom?

Are there sufficient education and training opportunities in the County?

Is there a need to improve public and rural transport services?

Should there be more greenways and safe walking routes provided?



Stages of Development Plan Review

Stage 1a - Publication of Issues Paper (8 weeks consultation period)	May - Jul 2023
Stage 1b - Preparation of Chief Executive's Report on Issues Paper Submissions received	Jul - Aug 2023
Stage 1c - Consideration by Elected Members of Chief Executive's Report and Submissions	Sep - Nov 2023
Stage 2a - Preparation of Draft Plan	Nov 2023- Apr 2024
Stage 2b - Publication of Draft Plan (10 weeks consultation period)	Apr - Jun 2024
Stage 2c - Preparation of Chief Executive's Report on Submissions received in respect of Draft Plan	Jul - Sep 2024
Stage 2d - Consideration by Elected Members of Draft Plan, Chief Executive's Report and Submissions	Sep - Nov 2024
Stage 2e - Making of Development Plan by Elected Members (if no Material Alterations made)	Dec 2024
Stage 3a - Publication of Material Alterations (if made) by Elected Members to Draft Plan (4 weeks consultation period)	Jan - Feb 2025
Stage 3b - Preparation of Chief Executive's Report on Submissions received in respect of Material Alterations	Feb 2025
Stage 3c - Consideration by Elected Members of Chief Executive's Report and Submissions	Feb - Mar 2025
Stage 3d - Making of Development Plan by Elected Members with or without Material Alterations	Mar 2025

Public Consultation

Public displays and wide ranging consultation will take place throughout the two year process and regular updates on what is happening will be available at www.monaghan.ie/planning/ and on the County Council Facebook and Twitter pages.

The purpose of the Strategic Issues & Options Paper is to initiate public debate on what broad planning and development matters should be included in the new development plan. The paper sets out what are considered to be the main development issues facing County Monaghan between now and 2031, but is not an exhaustive summary.

Public Consultation Meetings

Members of the Planning Section will be available to discuss the matters outlined in this Strategic Issues & Options Paper at public consultation meetings scheduled to be held in the five towns during the consultation period. Details of venues, dates and times will be announced in the coming weeks.

You can also arrange to discuss any issues by telephone or by appointment by contacting the Forward Planning Team directly on 047 30532 prior to submitting your comments.

How can I make my comments?

By written submission to Forward Planning Team, Monaghan County Council, 1 Dublin St, Monaghan

By E mail to devplan@monaghancoco.ie

Online at www.monaghan.ie/planning/

The closing date for submissions in respect of this Strategic Issues & Options Paper is 5pm on Friday 7th July 2023