



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

County Louth LOCAL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY PLAN 2016 - 2022



Coiste um Fhorbairt Pobail Aittúil Lú
Louth Local Community Development
Committee



CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION	4
2.0	POLICY LINKS	5
3.0	SUMMARY OF THE PREPARATION OF THE LECP	6
4.0	LOUTH LECP INTEGRATED PRIORITIES: HOW THEY EVOLVED	6
5.0	LOUTH: SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE	10
	5.4 Summary	10
	5.4.1 Population profile	11
	5.4.2 Household formation and families	12
	5.4.3 Accommodation	13
	5.4.4 Employment	15
	5.4.5 Education	16
	5.4.6 Consumer Confidence and Consumer Price Index (CPI)	17
	5.4.7 Movement and visitors	19
6.0	THE LECP CONSULTATION PROCESS	20
	6.1 Submissions	21
	6.2 Key messages	22
	6.2.1 Employment activity and skills development	22
	6.2.2 Enterprise	22
	6.2.3 Access and social exclusion	23
	6.2.4 Cross-cutting issues	23
7.0	THE LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN STRUCTURE	24
	7.1 The implementation process	24
8.0	INTEGRATED PRIORITIES: AN OVERVIEW	25
8.1	PROSPERITY JOB CREATION	26
	8.1.1 Job creation: The pathway to prosperity	26
	8.1.2 Breaking the cycle of youth unemployment	26
	8.1.3 The Louth Economic Forum: Collaboration in action	26
	8.1.4 Louth: Capitalising on Foreign Direct Investment	27
	8.1.5 Louth LEO: Stimulating entrepreneurship	28
	8.1.6 Louth: A premier food producer	28
	8.1.7 Louth's Marine industry: Realising its potential	29
	8.1.8 Louth's retail development: Seizing the opportunity	29
	8.1.9 Louth's older people: Our asset	30
	8.1.10 Louth's young people: Giving them the skills	30
	8.1.11 Traveller employment: A fresh focus	31
	8.1.12 Cross border collaboration: Towards better economies	31
	8.1.13 Tourism: A route to employment	31
8.2	ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	32
	8.2.1 Creating opportunities	32
	8.2.2 Meeting future need	33
	8.2.3 Facilitating access	33
	8.2.4 Leveraging third level networks	33
	8.2.5 Creating pathways to third level	34

8.2.6	Communiversality: A new model	34
8.2.7	Libraries: Supporting skills development	35
8.2.8	Traveller education: Targeting the need	35
8.2.9	Adult education: The key to success	36
8.2.10	Working Together	36
8.3	EMPOWERED INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES	38
8.3.1	Louth: Empowering Communities	38
8.3.2	Louth housing provision: Providing sustainable accommodation.....	38
8.3.3	Louth: Support sustainable communities	39
8.3.4	Louth: Enabling wellbeing	39
8.3.5	Louth libraries: A community asset	39
8.3.6	Louth, a volunteering county.....	40
8.3.7	Louth, regenerating our communities	40
8.3.8	Louth, celebrating our older people.....	41
8.3.9	Older people: Adding value	41
8.3.10	Louth, encouraging our younger people	41
8.3.11	Louth, marking our difference	42
8.3.12	Louth, acknowledging diversity.....	42
8.3.13	Louth, affecting peace and reconciliation.....	43
8.3.14	Louth, where communities feel safer.....	43
8.3.15	Louth, looking to the future	44
8.4	HEALTH AND WELLBEING	44
8.4.1	Health: Ensuring equal opportunities	44
8.4.2	Health care in the community: A new model.....	45
8.4.3	The first responder scheme: Improving outcomes.....	45
8.4.4	Encouraging physical activity: Get Ireland Active.....	45
8.4.5	Addressing inequalities	46
8.4.6	Creating a healthy county	46
8.4.7	Improving young people’s health outcomes	46
8.4.8	Intervening early: Better outcomes	47
8.4.9	Young people with disabilities: Being inclusive.....	48
8.4.10	Improving health outcomes for travellers.....	48
8.4.11	Louth: The Age Friendly County.....	48
8.4.12	Rural transport: Connecting rural communities	49
8.4.13	Opening up spaces for active communities.....	50
8.4.14	Louth Sports Partnership: Reaching out to communities.....	50
8.4.15	Tacking substance and alcohol misuse in Louth.....	51
8.5	ENTREPRENEURSHIP, INNOVATION AND ENTERPRISE.....	51
8.5.1	Louth: Supporting entrepreneurs	51
8.5.2	Louth: Leveraging regional advantages.....	52
8.5.3	Stimulating innovation	53
8.5.4	Creative industries: Building innovation capacity	53
8.6	A VALUED, SUSTAINABLE AND CONNECTED ENVIRONMENT	54
8.6.1	Sustainable Development: Guiding economic progress.....	55
8.6.2	Louth’s coastline: A precious asset	56
8.6.3	Flood risk: Managing the threat	56
8.6.4	Sustainable rural development: Protecting our green infrastructure	56
8.6.5	Third level sustainability: Acting local, thinking global	57
8.6.6	Louth, leading the way: Sustainable energy.....	57
8.6.7	Louth’s Infrastructure: Planning for the future.....	58

8.6.8 Roads and cycling networks: Promoting alternatives	58
8.6.9 Rural transport: Achieving more connectivity	59
8.6.10 Broadband: Pioneering new technology.....	59
8.6.11 Tourism: Broadening our horizon.....	60
8.6.12 Celebrating our arts and culture.....	60
8.6.13 Sharing our heriage.....	61
8.6.14 Louth, Tidy Towns Together	62
9.0 LOUTH ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN	63
9.1 Louth LECP Economic Goals.....	64
9.2 Economic Objectives at a glance	65
9.3 Louth LECP Economic Actions.....	66
9.4 Louth LECP Community Goals.....	81
9.5 Louth LECP Community Actions.....	82
APPENDICES.....	?

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 While Louth is the smallest county in the State, it is the second most densely populated county in Ireland, with two of the largest towns in the country - Drogheda and Dundalk - coming under the remit of Louth County Council. Apart from these 2 major urban centres, the county also contains a number of substantial towns and villages including Ardee, Dunleer, Clogherhead and Carlingford. The county is strategically located on the Dublin - Belfast economic corridor and has strong links to Northern Ireland.

1.2 By reason of its location, combined with a high quality infrastructure (road and rail), accessibility to ports and airports (north and south), high speed broadband and a skilled and educated workforce, the county is well placed to continue to grow in both population and economic terms. The overall population of Louth and its hinterland is set to grow to almost 140,000 by 2020.¹ The population within a 60 kilometre radius of Drogheda is circa 1.8 million, while within a 60 kilometre radius of Dundalk it is circa 1.3 million. This large catchment area provides a strong skills set for potential employers to access.

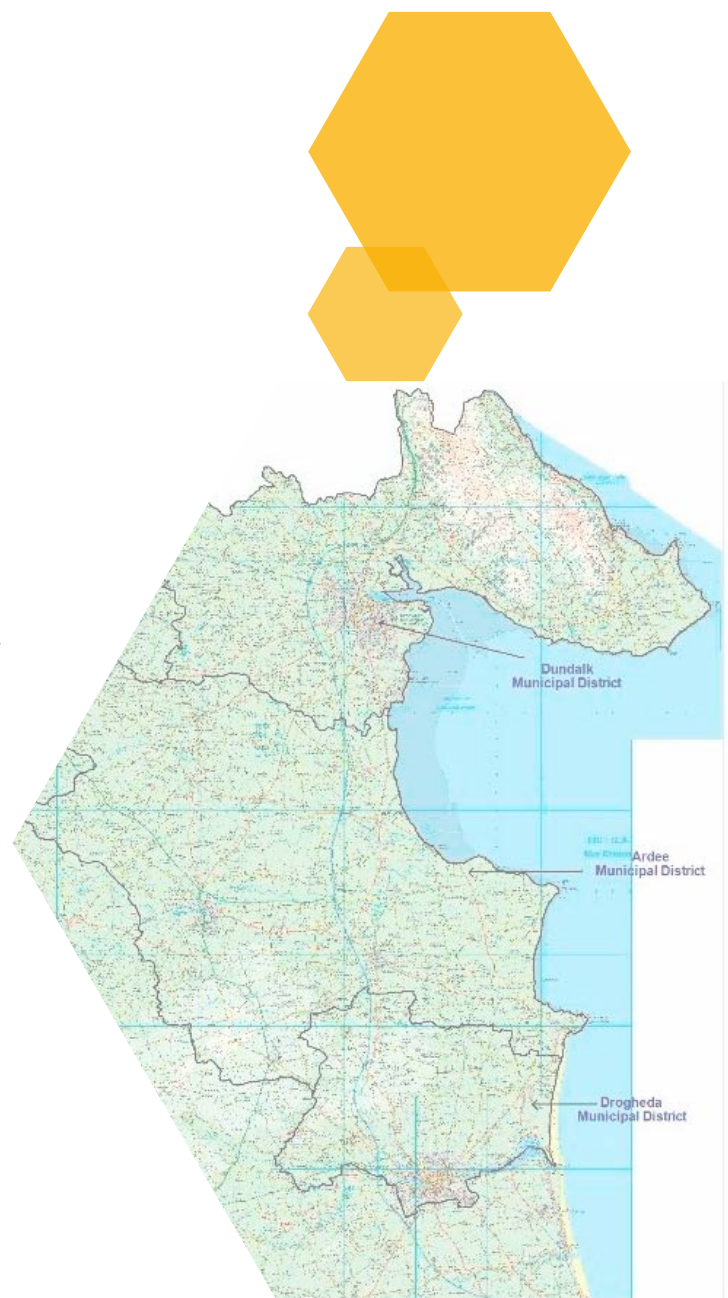
1.3 Under the Local Government Act 2014, each LA is obliged to develop a Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP). Ministerial guidance published in 2015 further defines the purpose of this plan: a series of high level goals, objectives and actions to promote and support the economic development and the community development of the relevant LA area, both by itself directly, and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders. The process will be overseen by the LCDC, the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC of Louth County Council and an advisory Steering Group comprised of nominees from both bodies. The legislation stipulates that the LECP will include two elements:

- a local economic element prepared and adopted by the Local Authority via the SPC, and
- a community development element, prepared and adopted by the Local Community Development Committee. (LCDC).

1.3.1 Its integrated high level economic and community goals and objectives, which when adopted, will have a six year lifespan, and will guide policy until 2021. They will be periodically monitored and reviewed by the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC in the case of the economic actions; the LCDC will

oversee the implementation and monitoring of the community actions.

1.3.2 What differentiates the LECP from other plans made for the county is that a number of targeted complementary measurable actions, with clearly defined timeframes and indicators, will be delivered in partnership with other economic, statutory and community development stakeholders. Planning in this way will avoid unnecessary overlap and duplication; it will enable stakeholders work more closely together to deliver on their mutual goals to support and promote economic and community development across County Louth.



¹ Updated socio-economic profile

2.0 POLICY LINKS

2.1 High level European targets supporting employment, productivity and social cohesion in Europe have been referenced in the making of the Louth LECP including employment, research and development/innovation, climate change/energy, education and poverty and social exclusion.² The LECP references Europe 2020 key priorities including:

- increasing labour market participation;
- improving education and training systems to develop a skilled workforce;
- combating social exclusion;
- addressing the agenda for new skills and jobs;
- supporting entrepreneurs and the self-employed.

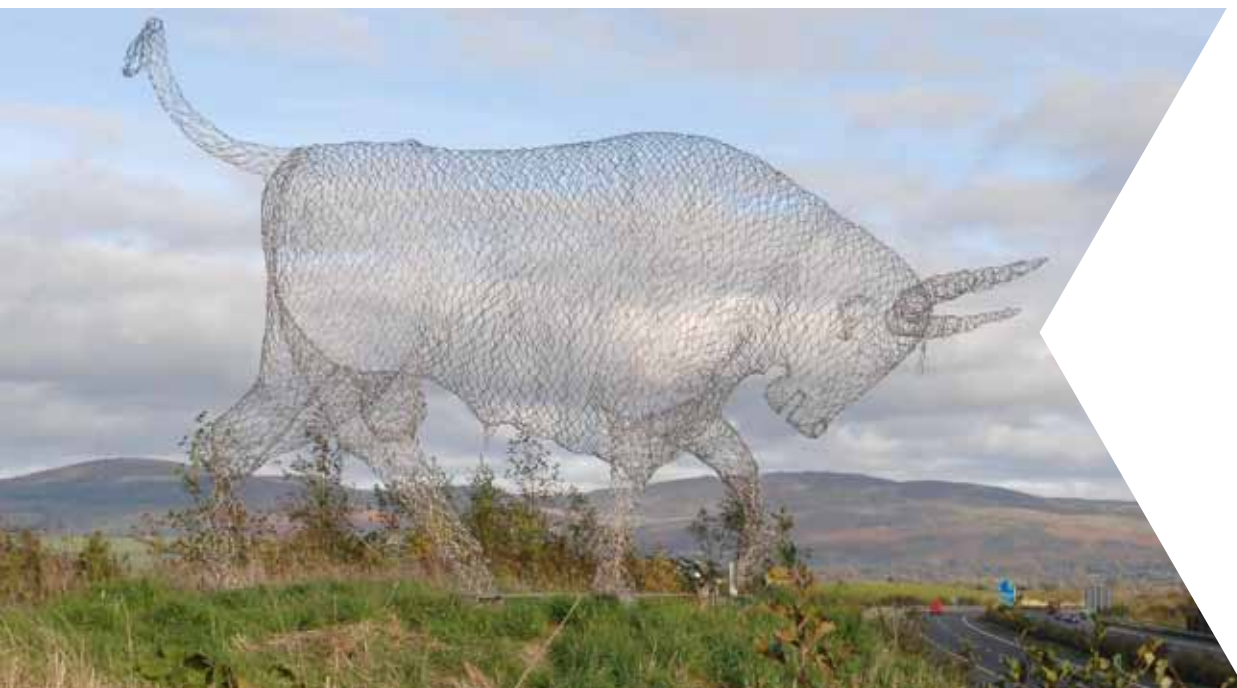
2.2 European targets are further expanded to identify three key priorities for funding, under the related EU Common Strategic Framework (CSF) thematic objectives, country priorities and specific objectives for Ireland, where it focuses on actions to address the social, economic and physical needs of communities:

- tackling poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion;
- supporting training and up-skilling, creating and sustaining employment and self-employment opportunities, and investing in local economic development;
- providing small-scale sustainable infrastructure and community facilities and investment in physical regeneration and environmental improvements.

These European thematic objectives underpin Louth's LECP integrated priorities which in turn parallel the LECP's high level goals and objectives.

2.3 In addition, the LECP also draws from other plans and strategies that have been developed at national, regional and local level including but not limited to:

- The Government's National Reform Programme (NRP) 2014 which identified seven country-specific recommendations to enhance economic performance in the areas of public finances, healthcare, labour market, education and training, social inclusion, access to finance, financial sector and legal services.
- The National Spatial Strategy, National Development Plan, Rural Development Strategy, the Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017; the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, the Medium Term Economic Strategy 2014-2020 (MTES), and the Enterprise strategy as set out in Making it Happen – Growing Enterprise for Ireland.
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022.
- The County Louth Development Plan 2015-2021 and the Louth Economic Forum 10 point plans.
- The Louth Meath Education and Training Strategy.³
- Healthy Ireland – A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing.
- The Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA).



² Europe 2020, The Strategy for Growth

³ Appendix (bibliography)

3.0 SUMMARY OF THE PREPARATION OF THE LECP

3.1 The making of the Louth LECP has followed the statutory guidelines issued by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government on the making of integrated Local Economic and Community Plans which were formally published in June 2015 for general dissemination.

3.2 Preparing the LECP has been an iterative process. Extensive public consultation was undertaken supported by the publication of a Socio-Economic Statement to which the public was invited to make submissions. Detailed discussions took place with public authorities, publicly funded bodies, the community and voluntary sector and local communities⁴. Workshops were held with key informants as well as a day long conference to discuss the draft goals and objectives and to encourage a partnership approach in their delivery. Findings of an extensive Louth Community Safety Survey carried out in 2014 were also referenced⁵. Following this public consultation process, shared economic and

community priorities and themes were agreed with a complementary set of economic and community goals, accompanied by objectives and measurable actions. These were reviewed by the LECP steering group and subsequently adopted by the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC in the case of the economic elements of the Plan, and by the LCDC for the community elements of the Plan.

3.3 The final adoption of the Plan by the County Council was preceded by a presentation of the draft Economic elements and the draft Community elements to the Municipal Districts and to the Regional Assembly. Each Municipal and Borough District and the Regional Assembly adopted a statement of consistency with:

- a. the Core Strategy and the objectives of the Development Plan;
- b. any Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, or any Regional Guidelines and;
- c. respective community and economic elements of the Plan.

4.0 LOUTH LECP INTEGRATED PRIORITIES: HOW THEY EVOLVED

4.1 The OECD LEED programme (Local Economic and Employment Development) has identified that governments can intervene in many ways at local level, but rarely are these interventions co-ordinated effectively. LEED believes that closer inter-agency working must be encouraged in situations where resources are limited; there has to be a greater focus on combined action between services and different government programmes, and ideally actions should be based on comprehensive local economic intelligence. A 'one size fits all' public policy is no longer effective. It asserts that local solutions to local problems are the key to success, and flexibility is needed so that local agencies can work together to respond to local conditions, seize local opportunities and build on local strengths.

4.2 Analysis of Louth's socio-economic profile and its vision for the county reinforces its strengths and its challenge: to create a prosperous and thriving county, in partnership with the private sector and voluntary groups, where no individual or social group is excluded from the benefits of development that will improve living standards, and where the social and cultural development of its inhabitants can be enabled.

Sitting within this framework and within the context of Better Local Government (2014) the Louth LECP integrated priorities echo the County Development Plan's principles of environmental, economic and social sustainability; including protection of the County's resources, heritage, and the natural and built environment. Additionally, they have been designed with due regard for all other local, regional and national policies and the broader European policy base.

4.3 During discussions about LECP priorities with its statutory and non-statutory stakeholders, it became apparent that there were many similarities in corporate vision and fundamental objectives between them; they recognised synergies with one another's strategic priorities and proposed actions; they engaged with similar target groups, albeit from different perspectives and while they might be delivering different services, there were interdependencies, which if tapped into, could work to the benefit of their service users. From this set of shared priorities, a complementary set of integrated economic and community goals were designed which were 'tested' throughout the consultation phase for the LECP.

⁴ Appendix Consultation report

⁵ County Louth Community Safety Strategy 2015

- 4.4** In addition, key issues that emerged in the making of the LECP have included:
- growing insight into the complementarity of the economic and community shared priorities and their impacts;
 - the desire for sustainability across each thematic area;
 - acknowledgment that while the new Rural Development Programme (2014-2020) and the Social Inclusion and Community Activation programmes (2015-2017) will underpin the implementation of the LECP, existing budgetary resources must also be aligned with local, economic and community development strategic priorities identified in this plan;
 - an acceptance that the need for increased cross-agency collaboration and open communication will be vital, not only to avoid duplication of services and achieve individual stakeholder operational targets, but to deliver on the ambitious targets set out in the LECP.
- 4.5** The basis for the LECP's economic goals has been drawn from the Louth Economic Forum's 10 point plans. The Louth Economic Forum (LEF) was formed in April 2009 following the publication of the Indecon suite of reports of that year, which set out detailed evidence based and comprehensive economic development strategies for Louth over the period 2009 – 2015. Reviews of these plans are currently underway. They range from foreign direct investment to developing indigenous industry to sustainable development with a specific emphasis on renewable energy and the smart economy. They also include tourism and heritage, age-friendly business, infrastructural development, education and training, and agriculture, food and fisheries.
- 4.5.1** The economic goals set out in the LEF plans, together with a suite of objectives and measurable actions will be the primary tools by which economic growth will be created and measured in Louth over the lifetime of the LECP.
- 4.5.2** As set out in the legislation, the community elements of the Louth LECP should promote community engagement and participation with particular reference to the government's recent framework policy on community development⁶, and address the specific needs of target groups including:
- measures to address the social, economic and physical needs of communities aimed at tackling poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion;
 - support for training and up-skilling; creating and sustaining employment and self-employment opportunities; and
 - investment in local economic developments to improve the economic future and quality of life of their inhabitants.
- 4.5.3** The community element of the Louth LECP will be the primary tool to advance the goals and horizontal themes of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) and the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), which reflect both rural and urban areas and the priority strategic objectives that the LCDC serves. Projected SICAP outcomes anticipate greater participation by members of disadvantaged groups and communities in a community development context with increased target group representation. They seek more participation of disadvantaged groups in local policy and decision making processes that address social exclusion. They also seek improved employment rates by ensuring that individuals are better prepared to enter the labour market through increased participation in education and training, and improved supports for those who have left school early. The LECP has identified and acknowledged these priorities and focuses on a series of actions to deliver them. This, it is hoped, will result in a more developed social economy and social enterprise sector at local level.
- 4.6** Since objectives arising from the LECP community elements will run beyond the current SICAP time horizon of 2017 – 2021, they must be credible and measurable not only to aid in SICAP annual planning, but also to judge its effectiveness. Consequently, the Louth LECP will evolve to respond to the needs of current SICAP target populations and the voice of the community in a way that recognises and builds upon the existing identified local services, programmes and groups.
- 4.7** A critical player in the delivery of the LECP community goals, objectives and specific actions, on behalf of the LCDC, will be the Louth LEADER Partnership (LLP) whose LEADER/RDP Programme is closely aligned to the strategic priorities of the LECP, and for whom economic, social, cultural and environmental service provision - in collaboration with other statutory and non-statutory service providers - is a core part of its brief. A key challenge for the partners will be to avoid duplication of services and improve the targeting of resources to those groups most in need.
- 4.8** As the voice of the Community and Voluntary sector, many of the LECP community objectives and actions reflect the role of the Louth Public Participation Network (PPN) which contributes to the ongoing development of the county and has a major part to play in its role of community engagement. Its network comprises three pillars: social inclusion, the voluntary sector and the environment. It represents the interests of more than 230 organisations on the LCDC. They reflect a wide range of interests such as local community groups, environment and heritage groups, social services and social enterprise groups, older people, sport and youth groups and many others; emphasising the extent of voluntary effort that is ongoing in the county.

⁶ A Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland (2015)

VISION

Louth will be a prosperous, proud, safe, and inclusive county where people want to live, work, visit and invest, and where there is equal opportunity for all



LECP ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY GOALS

Economic Goals		Community Goals	
Foreign Direct Investment	Promote and develop Louth as a key investment location on the Eastern Economic Corridor.	Strong, Safe & Flourishing Communities	Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.
Sustainable Development	Promote the growth of new and existing business in communities in Louth, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.	Access to Education	Ensure that everyone can access and participate in education, skills development and life long learning.
Education & Training	Advance economic and social development by providing a targeted continuum of lifelong learning and skills development.	Prosperous, Inclusive Communities & Places	Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.
Future-focused Innovation	Ensure that Louth will be a leader in business development, creating new models of flexible value and enterprise.	Health & Wellbeing	Provide environments and conditions that support healthy, self-directed, fulfilled and purposeful lives.
Business & Indigenous Industry	Deliver viable local economies underpinned by innovation and entrepreneurship.	Nurturing Children & Young People	Nurture and develop our children and young people from early childhood to young adulthood.
Tourism & Heritage	Ensure that Louth's unique Tourism offering positions it as a market leader of national significance.	An Age Friendly Society	Embrace and foster the rich contribution our people make to our communities.
Agriculture, Food & Fisheries	Establish Louth as a premier producer in the Agri-Farming, Food and Fisheries sector.	Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Enterprise	Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.
Broadband Connectivity & Transport	Ensure availability of high speed broadband connectivity county-wide to develop and sustain business and connect our communities.	A Valued Environment	Value and sustain our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in our county.



5.0 LOUTH: SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE

5.1 This is an update of the initial socio-economic profile prepared by Murtagh & Partners on behalf of Louth County Council in August 2014 to act as the baseline for the LECP. It should be read in conjunction with that profile⁷ and it supports the socio-economic statement of the LECP issued in August 2015⁸. It also encompasses the profiles forming part of Louth County Council's Corporate Plan 2014 – 2019, the County Development Plan 2015 -2021, and the Louth Development Strategy, December 2015.

5.2 Census data is the primary source of socio-economic profiling information. The last census of population was in 2011 and as a result, population statistics are generally somewhat outmoded. Socio-economic trends are therefore inferred here; primarily using quarterly statistics and reviews by CSO, ESRI and Eurostat. In turn, Louth's performance is inferred by reference to targets for growth set by government.

5.3 This socio - economic profile takes the subject areas of the original Murtagh & Partners profile and uses them as a guide to provide an updated picture of the relative status and trends in Louth under the following headings:

5.4 Summary



5.4.1 population profile;

5.4.2 household formation and families;

5.4.3 accommodation;

5.4.4 employment;

5.4.5 education;

5.4.6 consumer confidence and consumer price index (CPI); and,

5.4.7 movement and visitors.

5.4 Summary

1.1 The Local Government Act 2014, in addition to inaugurating LECPs, streamlined local and regional authorities. In Louth, both the former Dundalk and Ardee Town and Drogheda Borough Councils were subsumed into 3 Municipal Districts which formed the County Council. At the regional level, three regional assemblies were established in place of the extant eight regional authorities. At this regional level, the county has moved from the Border Region and is now part of the eastern and midland regional assembly which consists of the former Dublin, eastern and midland regions.

1.2 Louth's location, recognised in its regional move to partner counties along the eastern economic corridor coupled with its indicative youthful population, high commuter levels and reducing unemployment rates means that trends identified at regional level will be more like those of the former eastern rather than border region. Therefore, using CSO estimates, it is projected that at 2015, the population of the county had increased by 4% to around 127,350 from the last census in 2011. This estimate is verified by primary school attendees for the period 2010/2011, which increased by 6% to the period 2014/2015.

1.3 The 2011 census recorded for Louth (relative to the state) high levels of home ownership living in

predominately houses, which is also indicative of households in the county being predominated by families. Owing to the relative value for money of new homes in Louth into 2015, the youthful population of Louth and higher incidence of fertility relative to the state recorded at 2011, it is likely that at the next census the population of Louth will remain relatively youthful.

1.4 During the period 2007 to 2009, GNP (constant market prices) fell by some 11%. Recovery since 2009 has been stronger than was generally anticipated with growth recorded in every year except 2011, when a small decrease of 0.8% was recorded. GNP has grown by 13.6% (Q4 2011 to Q4 2014) and has grown by 6.3% in Q4 2014 compared with the same quarter in 2013. Equivalent GDP annual growth in 2014 was 4.8% and it is anticipated that growth for 2015 will be approximately 4%⁹.

1.5 The recovery indicated by GNP and GDP improvements since 2009 is reflected in increased consumer sentiment which will be reflected in Louth, where rates of general unemployment have dropped to improve those national figures; from a position in 2011 where the county experienced higher rates of unemployment than the state average. However, on the latest live register of February 2016, Louth is experiencing higher rates of youth unemployment (13.83% under 25) than the state average (12.4%).

⁷ Appendix 1

⁸ Appendix 2

⁹ Ireland National Social Report 2015, DSP, April 2015

- 1.6** Increased consumer sentiment can also be attributed to low annual inflation in 2015 which was -0.3%. But when the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for 2015 is reviewed, we see that there was a 0.1% increase in the index from December 2014 to 2015, and consumer sentiment may be tempered by the areas in which the greatest increases were experienced¹⁰. It seems that increases in prices in 2015 have occurred in areas of non-discretionary spending with the likely effect that perceptions of significant increases in disposable income will not be widespread, and expected increases in consumer spending are at 3.4% for 2016, down from the 3.6% for 2015.
- 1.7** House prices are recovering in Louth, although it offers the least expensive homes of the former east and Dublin regions. Levels of home ownership in Louth were higher than the state average at the last census, but like the rest of the country, the largest proportion resides in rental accommodation.
- 1.8** Louth recorded a rise in LCC rents of just over 15% between 2006 and 2011 and a dip of about 8% in private rent levels over the same period. Since that time, increases in annual private rents for Louth are

recorded to 2015, although it is the 5th highest ranked county of Leinster in rental terms. Significantly behind Louth in terms of rental differences in 2015 are the remaining counties of Leinster; Louth averages about 52% the equivalent cost of rentals in Dublin; the 6th ranked county of Kilkenny is 44% and the last (12th) is Longford at 31% of Dublin rental rates. This indicates that Louth experiences a notably higher level of competition for rental accommodation emanating from Dublin and the greater Dublin area, and will benefit from employment growth in those areas as a result.

- 1.9** While there is an indicative nationally relatively fast-growing population in Louth, the level of in-migration since the 2011 census to the county is not known. Nationally, rates of net out-migration are estimated to have slowed between 2014 and 2015 and the majority of migrants and immigrants have higher or third level education (around 60%).
- 1.10** Louth, with 2.68% of the national population in 2011, only holds 2% of recorded visitor attractions in the Fáilte Ireland survey (2009-2013) but may benefit from visitors to nearby and associated attractions in Meath.

5.4.1 Population profile

- 1.1** In 2011, Louth at 122,897¹¹ (49% male, 51% female) accounted for 2.68% of the state population: 77% of those were over 15 years and nearly 10% of them were over 66 years.
- 1.2** Where we take direction from the CSO estimated population growth up to April 2015 on a regional basis, we find that the expected population of Louth has dropped to 117,506 (-4%) using the border region estimate; it has increased to 124,746 (+2%) by the

state average, and to 127,350 (+4%) if we take the mid-east region estimate.

- 1.3** It is considered that owing to Louth's location, indicative youthful population, high commuter levels and reducing unemployment rates that it is most likely to reflect the mid-east rather than the border region, and is therefore likely to have experienced 4% population growth to 2015; with the same male to female 49% ratio as 2011.

	LOUTH	BORDER		MIDEAST		STATE	
	Actual population 2011	Population change estimate 2011 - 2015	2015 Louth population using Border Region Estimate	Population change estimate 2011 - 2015	2015 Louth population using Mid East Region Estimate	Population change estimate 2011 - 2015	2015 Louth population using State Estimate
MALE	60,763	0.986	57,391	1.073	62,063	1.043	61,385
FEMALE	62,134	0.995	60,115	1.078	65,287	1.037	63,361
TOTAL	122,897	0.991	117,506	1.076	127,350	1.040	124,746

Table 1 projected population of Louth 2015 using CSO Border and Mid East Regions and State averages.

Local Electoral Areas	Population 2011	Local Electoral Areas	Population 2011
Ardee	27,890	Dundalk Carlingford	24,589
Drogheda	41,925	Dundalk South	28,493
Total		122,897	

¹⁰ Greatest increases of between 3.8% and 1.7% in Education, Miscellaneous Goods & Services, Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas & Other Fuels and Communications whilst recording an overall drop of between 4.3% and 1% in Transport, Clothing & Footwear, Furnishings, Household Equipment & Routine Household Maintenance and Food & Non-Alcoholic Beverages.

¹¹ The Local Government (Boundaries) (Town Elections) Regulations 1994 (S.I. No. 114/1994) altered the boundaries of Drogheda for the purposes of local elections to include part of the electoral division of St. Mary's (Meath) in county Louth for electoral purposes. Thus for 2011 census results St. Mary's Part is included in Louth.

1.4 The Border Regional Authority Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022 sets a target population for Louth of 142,000 by 2022 using a Gateway-led model; where Dundalk delivers 47,200 (up from 35,085 in 2011) Drogheda 38,415 (up from 32,331 in 2011)¹² and the remainder of the county 57,185. The County Development Plan takes account of this target; envisaging a population horizon of 141,050 for 2021. In view of the indicative population increase in Louth of most likely in the range of + 4% to 2015, it is expected that the target set for the county will be achieved, even when the economic deprivations of the recent years discouraging significant in-migration are taken into account.

1.5 The 2011 census showed that Louth has the highest urban population concentration of any county apart from the Dublin authorities, Kildare and Wicklow. Although one of the most densely populated counties in the state in 2011, Louth was also one of the smallest and thus held 2.68% of the state’s

population and ranked 13th of the 26 counties in terms of population size, or ranked 16th of the 31 Local Authority areas.

1.6 While they were not the fastest growing towns in the country between census years 2006 and 2011, Drogheda followed by Dundalk topped the table of ‘most populated towns’ in Ireland with over 10,000 population, of which there were 39, in the 2011 census results.

1.7 The CSO expanded the local electoral division areas of the towns of Ireland where the “...built-up areas have extended beyond the legally defined town boundary.” Using this CSO town definition, Dundalk experienced 7.8% population growth to 37,816, and Drogheda 9.9% growth to 38,578 between 2006 and 2011¹⁵. The fact that Drogheda and Dundalk were the most populated towns in 2011, although not experiencing the highest growth rates, indicates their robust and historic urban presence.

5.4.2 Household formation and families

1.1 50% of households in Louth included children in the 2011 census. 37% were couples with children slightly above the then national average of 35%. The lone parent household stated average of 11% was also exceeded by Louth at just over 12%. The predominance of children in households was reflected in household formation rate at 2.8 rather than the 2.4 national average and only 40% of households in Louth comprised of one person¹⁴ and couples with no children¹⁵, as opposed to just under 43% nationally.

1.2 The 2011 Census shows that Louth’s population structure has a younger profile than that of the state at 27.1% aged 17 or under, as opposed to the state figure of 25.1%.

1.3 The likelihood of increasing population above the then border region rates estimated by the CSO is endorsed by the increase in families and children in Louth between 2014 and 2015, when using child benefit as an indicator. By April 2015, just over 35,000 children aged 18 and under, are estimated for Louth in 2015 using the state CSO mid east region estimates. On 30th November 2015 there were 18,588 families with 35,649 children in receipt of child benefit; an increase of 36 families from 18,552 and an increase of 268 children from 35,381 in 2014¹⁶. In this way, it seems that the population of Louth is increasing in line with the highest estimated rates in the state; that of the mid east region, and continues to hold a youthful population characterised by children and persons in family formation stage.

Family Size by no. of children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
No. of children	7,416	6,804	3,207	889	210	42	16	2	2	18,588

Table 2 Child benefit by family size, Louth 2015¹⁷

¹²The Regional Planning guidelines use the designated urban areas (by ED) of each town to track their size. The CSO when reporting town size define their own boundaries based on the spatial extent of what they consider to be ‘urban areas’. Therefore it is common to see the populations for both Dundalk and Drogheda to be reported at higher levels by the CSO than those in the regional planning policy.

¹³Census 2011 records the defined urban areas of Dundalk with a population of 31,149 and Drogheda at 30,393.

¹⁴One person household 2011: just under 23% in Louth and just over nationally

¹⁵Couples, no children households 2011: 17% in Louth and 19% nationally

¹⁶Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2014, DSP, 2015 [NOTE: Child Benefit is payable to the parents or guardians of children under 16 years of age, or under 18 years of age if the child is in full-time education, Youthreach training or has a disability. Child Benefit is not paid on behalf of 18-year olds. For twins, Child Benefit is paid at one and a half times the normal monthly rate for each child. For triplets and other multiple births, Child Benefit is paid at double the normal monthly rate for each child.]

¹⁷There is no information available regarding the age breakdown of the children in receipt of child benefit in 2015 in County Louth.

1.4 In line with national and international trends, family size and household formation rates are expected to fall. The Housing Strategy supporting the recently adopted County Development Plan envisages that

the average household size or formation rate in County Louth is expected to fall from 2.80 in 2011 to 2.70 by 2016, and further to 2.58 by 2022.

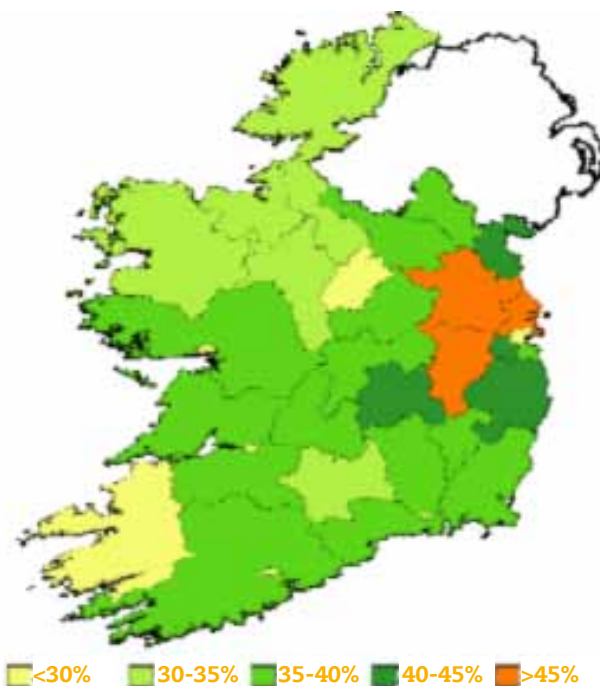
5.4.3 Accommodation

1.1 Louth with 51,344 housing units in 2011 accounted for 2.57% of housing stock in the country as compared to holding 2.68% of the country's population; again evidencing the youthful population of Louth.

1.2 Census analysis by the CSO from 2011 indicates that Louth, relative to other counties, experienced higher than state average home ownership by mortgage uptakes, notwithstanding the majority of people in Louth, like the state were, renting homes¹⁸. In addition, in 2011 85% of the housing types recorded in Louth were houses or bungalows, which was slightly lower than the national average of just over 87% where remaining housing types recorded were apartments and bedsits.

1.3 By 2011 there were 1,994,845 permanent housing units in the state; an increase of 12.7% (225,232 units) since the 2006 census that had itself seen an increase of 21% (309,560) since the preceding census in 2001. Unprecedented levels of building were seen between 2001 and 2011 with 55% of all apartments and 25% of all houses built during that time. 83% of those units were occupied on census night and 85% generally permanently occupied. The rate of building has slowed, having seen rates of residential building at 72% outpacing population growth 30% between 1991 to 2011, or 784 new housing units for each 1,000 unit growth of population¹⁹.

1.4 In Louth, house completions mirrored those of the state and experienced a significant slow down in building rates to 2015, when compared to the zenith of 2007 to levels in 2013 to 2015 similar to the early 1990s.



State House Completions

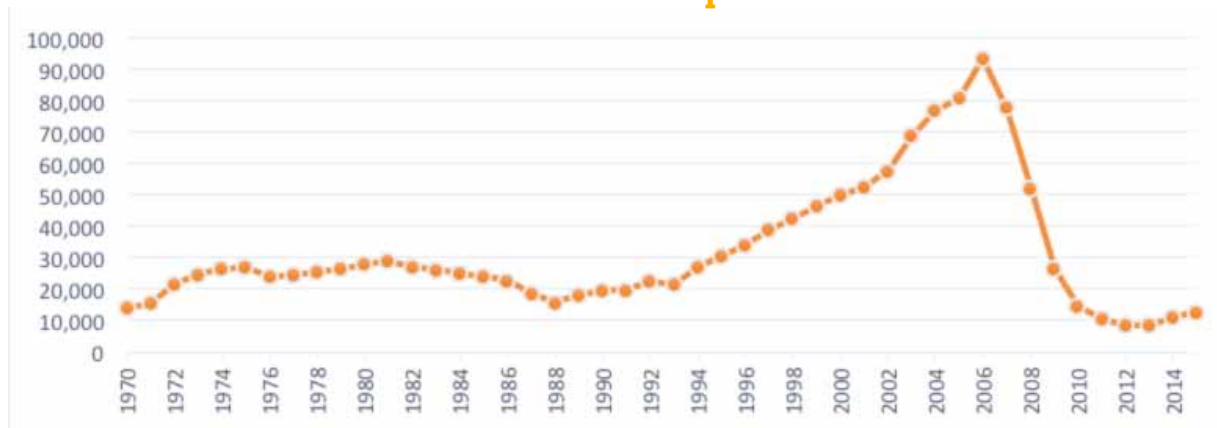


Figure 2 State House Completions, DoCHLG Construction Activity – Completions by Area (based on ESB connections by month)

¹⁸Nature of occupancy of households where the reference person moved in the previous year (census 2011 from 2010).

¹⁹Census 2011, Profile 4, The Roof over our Heads, CSO, 2012 Figure 12

Louth County Council House Completions

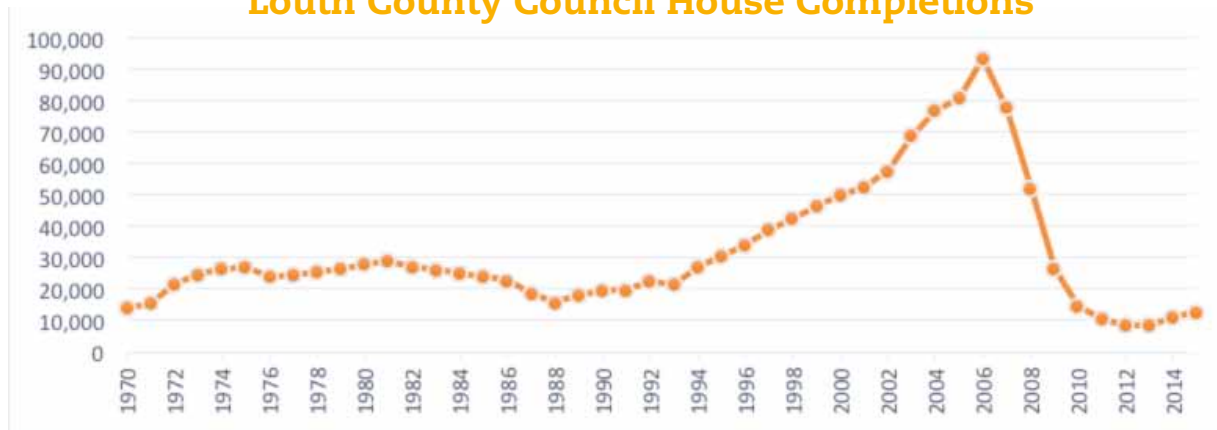


Figure 3 Louth County Council House Completions, DoCHLG Construction Activity – Completions by Area (based on ESB connections by month)

1.5 The County Development Plan 2015 -2021 restates that the occupation rates of dwellings in Louth in 2011 was lower than the national average at 12.4% as opposed to 14.7%. This belies the indicative significant holiday home existence and demand, as almost 10% of the unoccupied units were accounted for by holiday homes.

1.6 The County Development Plan further identifies a requirement for an average of 667 new residential units per annum between 2015 and 2021 or a total of 4,001. In the same projections, a new unit total of 7,422 (or 675 per annum) units were required between 2012 and 2022. At this time the housing completion rates fall well below required annualised averages being around 300 for the years 2012 – 2015, although recovering from 268 in 2012 to 368 in 2015.

1.7 Louth County Council, in conjunction with Future Analytics Consulting Ltd (FAC), prepared a Housing Strategy for County Louth to support the County Development Plan 2015 – 2021. The strategy found that the per annum shortfall in affordability of housing will fluctuate between 11.5% and 13.5% over the Plan period and translates to a requirement of an additional 475 social housing units between 2015-2021. These units were to be primarily delivered by

new development at a rate of 12%. As part of local government reform, social housing targets from new development have been revised to be 10% nationally.

1.8 The expected 10% social housing from certain new developments is to be augmented by social housing building and purchase programmes and housing assistance (HAP) to achieve a national reduction of 25% on social housing waiting lists. Social housing targets were set for the period 2015-2017 where the provisional budget sets Louth 22nd of 31 authorities at a total of € 57,224,354; Leitrim assigned the least at €4,384,968 and Dublin City Council the greatest at €292,194,455. For this budget, Louth is ranked 23rd of 31 authorities in terms of expected new unit provision at 778 units; Leitrim to deliver the least at 119 and Dublin City Council greatest at 3,347²⁰. The 778 units over 2015 – 2017 figure for Louth equates to a 21% increase on current social housing stock of 3,646²¹ and is nearly double the estimated number of social housing units to be delivered by new development alone over 2015 – 2021.

1.9 In July 2015, a recorded 4,764 persons were on the Louth social housing list²². This increased to a reported 4,772 by the end of 2015 which was 2.67%

²⁰The 25% reduction in the housing waiting list is to be accompanied by a targeted assistance of 28,000 people through the HAP scheme to give them supported accommodation in the private rented sector. This was after Social Housing Strategy 2020: Support, Supply and Reform, November 2014. Nationally Phase 1, building on Budget 2015, sets a target of 18,000 additional housing units and 32,000 HAP/RAS units by end 2017. Phase 2 sets a target of 17,000 additional housing units and 43,000 HAP/RAS units by end 2020.

²¹Louth County Council Social Housing Stock at July 2015

	Total
Social Housing Stock	3646
Unsold Affordable in Voluntary Social Leasing Tenancies	54
Social Leasing Units (incl Mortgage to Rent)	352
Council owned dwellings managed by Voluntary Housing Associations	41
Voluntary Units	768
Properties in Rental Accommodation Scheme	165

²²Louth Social Housing Stats July 2015

Number of applicants approved for 1 bed units	1804
Number of applicants approved for 2 bed units	1672
Number applicants approved for 3 bed units	1154
Number applicants approved for 4 bed units	129
Number applicants approved for 5 bed units	5
Total number of applicants on social housing waiting list	4764



of the estimated 130,008 on the social housing lists nationally²³. Louth is not subject to pressures as significant as those experienced nationally, where between 2013 and 2015 social housing lists increased by an average of 44.9%, while Louth experienced an increase of 25.28% over that time from 3,809. This increase in social housing need nationally was not confined to urban areas but, in percentage terms was very evident in rural authorities like Mayo whose list increased by 100% from 1,479 to 2,965 and Roscommon by 157% from 252 to 648. Due to the relative needs increasing elsewhere Louth's percentage of the social housing list national percentage dropped from 4.24% of 89,662 in 2013 to the figure of 2.67% in 2015 mentioned

above, which is equivalent to the overall population percentage of Louth at 2.68% in 2011.

- 1.10** In the initial socio-economic profile for the LECP prepared in 2014, it was found that Louth did not generally suffer the higher than average levels of deprivation by the Pobal deprivation index compared to the rest of the then border region. The 2014 socio-economic profile found that by 2011 census year, Louth's deprivation score position had improved from the last census of 2006 by marginally outperforming the national average to move Louth from the 8th to the 9th most disadvantaged Local Authority area in Ireland.

5.4.4 Employment

- 1.1** In 2014 the state employment rate for women and men aged 20-64 was 67.0% in 2014, was up by more than 3% since 2012; showing a continuing improvement in the labour market after a fall from 74% in 2007 to 71% in 2008 and less than 64% in 2012. The employment rate for young people aged 20-24 had risen from 46.1% in 2012 to 49.4% in 2014. The government predicts that the 0.5% annual increase required to meet EU targets will be feasible, so long as recent recovery rates are maintained²⁴.
- 1.2** The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is estimated at 10% at Q1 2015, reduced from a peak of 15% in early 2012, but is expressed by government to remain unacceptably high. The male seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 11.5% compares with a female unemployment rate of 8.2%²⁵. The initial socio-economic profile prepared for the Louth LECP found that in 2014, Louth performed slightly better than the state in terms of gender bias unemployment rates.
- 1.3** There are no detailed sectoral breakdowns of employment categories for Louth since the 2011 census. In 2011 the national unemployment rate was 19% and 24% in Louth. However, Louth from June 2011 to 2014 had incrementally better (lower) unemployment rates than the state, with a reduction to 12.6% (to 16,054) for Louth as opposed to 11.7% (to 404,515) for the state.
- 1.4** By May 2015 Louth's performance had again improved with the total number on the live register further dropping to 14,148 (or 88% of the 2014 level). The state had experienced a similar, although lesser reduction to 345,633 (or 85% of the 2014 level). Despite the now slightly better performing unemployment rate of Louth, it was slower to experience reduction in live register numbers than the state. Recently, both the county and state have aligned with month on month reductions to 12,902 for Louth and 321,802 for the state in January 2016; each 80% of the 2014 unemployment figures²⁶.
- 1.5** Latest unemployment figures for January 2016 tell us that the total number on the live register has dropped to 321,802 and that Louth accounts for 4% of that number²⁷ which is proportionally higher than its total population relative to the state at 2.68%. Therefore, whilst Louth has recently experienced better than state unemployment level reductions and has a youthful population, its unemployment rate remains unacceptably high - even where it exceeds EU targets.
- 1.6** Given Ireland's recent economic performance, it is unsurprising that the number employed decreased on an annual basis each year from Q1 2009 to Q1 2012, before showing an increase of 20,500 (+1.1%) in the year to Q1 2013 and then +2.3% in Q1 2014. The national number of persons in employment was increased 2.2% in Q1 2015 over the year (to 1,929,500, an increase of 41,300). These results appear favourable but do not indicate a significant recovery, as between Q1 2009 and Q1 2015, the number in employment fell by 3.4% (66,900)²⁸.
- 1.7** The total number of persons classified as self-employed decreased by 4.4% from 333,500 in Q1 2009 to 318,800 in Q1 2015. The number of employees fell from 1,648,000 to 1,598,600 (-49,400 or -3.0%) during this time²⁹. On average employment in Ireland is in the SME Sector in companies of 11 to 50 people (from 50% in Q1 2009 to 43% in the same quarter in 2015), the next largest employer category is less than 11 people at 27% in Q1 2009 to 23% in the same quarter in 2015. An average of 15% of people work in companies of 100 to 500 people and 10% in companies of over 500 employees averaged over Q1 of 2009 to 2015³⁰.

²³ FOI from local authorities by Fianna Fail 2013 to 2015 social housing lists, reported September 2015.

²⁴ Ireland National Social Report 2015, April 2015

²⁵ Ireland National Social Report 2015, April 2015

²⁶ Persons on Live Register (Number) by Sex, Age Group, Social Welfare Office and Month, generated February 2016.

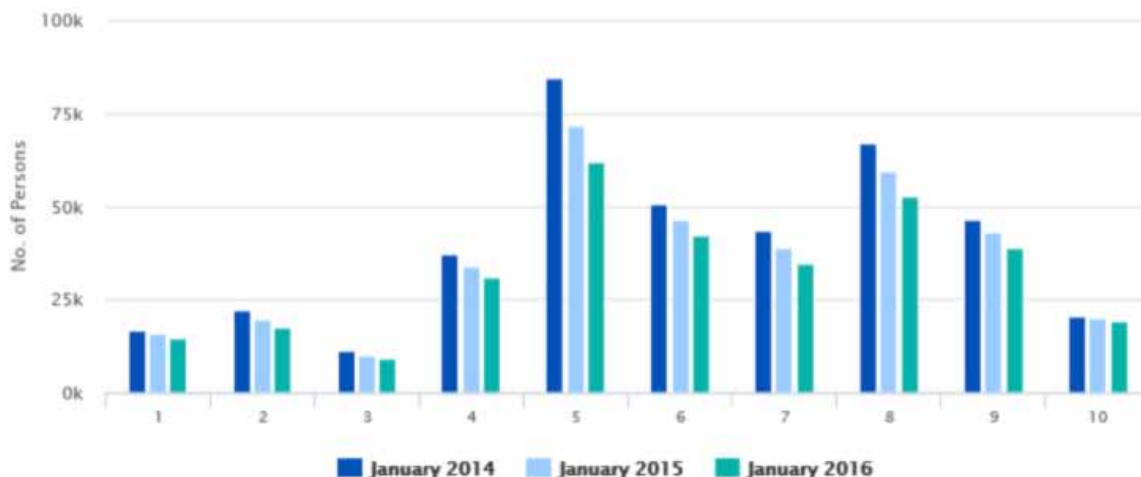
²⁷ CSO Stat bank, Live Register LRM07, accessed February 2016

²⁸ Quarterly National Household Survey QNHS Detailed Employment Series Quarter 1 2009 - Quarter 1 2015, CSO, 25th June 2015

²⁹ Quarterly National Household Survey QNHS Detailed Employment Series Quarter 1 2009 - Quarter 1 2015, CSO, 25th June 2015

³⁰ Quarterly National Household Survey QNHS Detailed Employment Series Quarter 1 2009 - Quarter 1 2015, Table 13 Persons aged 15 years and over in employment (ILO) classified by detailed size of firm, CSO, 25th June 2015

Figure 4 Live Register classified by last held occupation



Source: CSO Ireland

KEY: 1- Managers and administrators, 2- Professional, 3- Associate professional and technical, 4- Clerical and secretarial, 5- Craft and related, 6- Personal and Protective service, 7- Sales, 8- Plant and machine operatives, 9- Other occupation, 10- No occupation
Figure 4 National live register classification by last held occupation, January 2016³¹

- 1.8 Both the reduction in unemployed versus employed rates since 2013 is positive despite a real reduction in numbers of people employed at 2009.
- 1.9 As stated, the EU has set a target of 69-71% of 20-64 year olds to be employed by 2020 in Ireland. Nationally, under 25s had an unemployment rate of 23.9% in 2014 (32.5% for 15-19 year-olds and 21.6% for 20-24 year-olds down from 30.4% in 2012). In 2014 about 38% of these were out of work for more than 1 year. This is higher than then unemployment rate

of 10.4% for ages 25–54. Despite the high rate of youth unemployment, the absolute number of young unemployed people has fallen from close to 80,000 on average in 2009 to 47,000 on average in 2014.

- 1.10 Latest live register information from January 2016 tells us that the live register holds 87.6% aged 25 and over with 12.4% accounting for under 25s. Louth is experiencing relatively higher youth unemployment with 13.83% being under 25s and 86.17% 25 and over³².

5.4.5 Education

- 1.1 The initial socio-economic profile provides an analysis of 2011 census figures in respect of educational attainment for Louth. It was noted that in 2011, 35.6% of students in Louth left school before age 17, compared to 29.9% in the State. At that time rates of lower educational attainment in Louth, relative to the state, were noted with 1.8% as opposed to 1.4% having no formal education, and 35.6% as opposed to 30.4% attesting to only primary lower secondary levels of education. The LMETB has noted these trends, which are repeated to a lesser extent in Meath.
- 1.2 Total pupils recorded in mainstream primary schools (including special schools) was 16,911 in Louth for the school year 2014-2015; this is a 6% increase on the recorded 15,943 figure for 2010/2011. There were 12,232 recorded in second level education

(mainstream secondary, vocational and community) over the school year 2014 - 2015³³.

- 1.3 Taken together, this is 29,143 children attending mainstream schools in County Louth for the school year 2014-2015. It is likely to be an underestimate of total school pupils from Louth, in view of children attending mainstream schools in neighbouring counties and the exclusion of private schools from this figure. It is noted that all estimates of population growth for the age category of 4-16 for Louth estimate this age group to be around 35,000 at 2015. It reinforces the view that this is an underestimation of the total children in Louth but remains a reinforcing indicator of the growing youth population of Louth.

³¹ Live Register January 2016, CSO, 4th February 2016

³² CSOStatbank, Live RegisterLRM07, accessed February 2016

³³ Department of Education Database, latest releases, access Feb. 2016



5.4.6 Consumer Confidence and Consumer Price Index (CPI)

- 1.1** As part of the Louth Housing and Retail Strategy, calculations were made supporting the County Development Plan 2015 -2021 projections of disposable income. These projections were based on the CSO Household Budget Survey and estimates of disposable income in County Louth for 2011 at 0.981% of the national annual average (€119,659.74 for the state, and €117,380.20 for Louth).
- 1.2** For 2011, this translates as approximately one third of the households in Louth with an average annual disposable income of €16,314 (about €313.73 per week). Using a 3.6% annual growth rate, the projections proceed to apply the average disposable income into 2024, to find that in 2022 the real disposable average annual income for the lowest decile will be €14,754 and for the highest; €173,220; which retains the assumption that average disposable income in Louth will be just below the national average.
- 1.3** Prices on average, as measured by the CSO Consumer Price Index (CPI), were 0.1% higher in December 2015 compared with December 2014 but decreased by the same amount in the month from November 2015³⁴. The annual average rate of inflation in 2015 was -0.3%. This compares to a rise of 0.2% for 2014 and 0.5% for 2013.
- 1.4** Whilst inflation for the consumer seems favourable³⁵, decreases in the year were in transport, clothing and footwear, furnishing and routine household maintenance; all potentially part of disposable income whilst house prices, miscellaneous goods and services, power, fuels and education all increased³⁶.
- 1.5** House prices increased at a lower rate than predicted in 2014 -2015 the calculations supporting the development plan where annual price increases were expected to be over 3%, and were actually 2.6% averaged across the country.
- 1.6** Louth recorded a rise in LCC rents of just over 15% between 2006 and 2011, and an opposing reduction of about 8% in other rents over the same period. These trends were repeated countrywide with the exception of all Dublin authorities, and Wicklow and Kildare, who recorded reductions in both Local Authority and private weekly rents over the same period³⁷.
- 1.7** Private rents have increased by 13.8% on average in Louth between Q4 2014 and the same period 2015. Q4 reports from 2015 show that of the 12 counties in Leinster, Louth is the 5th most expensive ranked in terms of weekly rents; each of which is influenced by proximity to Dublin, where Dublin ranks 1st followed by Wicklow, Kildare, Meath and then Louth. Significantly behind Louth in terms of rental differences are the remaining counties of Leinster; Louth averages about 52% the equivalent cost of rentals in Dublin; the next ranked county of Kilkenny is 44% and the last (12th) is Longford at 31% the Dublin rental rates. Louth contains the Gateway of Dundalk and ranks behind Cork and Galway, but is ahead of Limerick and Waterford in terms of rental costs per unit. These rental figures are indicative of Louth's proximity to Dublin³⁸.
- 1.8** Residential asking prices have increased by 12.9% on average in Louth between Q4 2014 and the same period 2015. This is commensurate with counties like Kildare and Meath over the same year. In line with rental trends, house asking prices in Louth rank just behind Wicklow (€202,000), Kildare (€158,000) and Meath (€145,000) in Leinster with an average asking price for a 3 bed semi-detached unit of €126,000. This is just over €10,000 ahead of the next ranked county, Kilkenny at €117,000 and well ahead of the last ranked county in Leinster; Longford at €65,000. The percentage rise in average cost of houses versus rental demand indicates the higher rental demand generally³⁹.

³⁴The most significant monthly price changes were decreases in Alcoholic Beverages & Tobacco (-1.6%) and Transport (-0.3%). There were increases in Miscellaneous Goods & Services (+0.5%) and Furnishings, Household Equipment & Routine Household Maintenance

³⁵The most notable changes in the year were increases in Education (+3.8%), Miscellaneous Goods & Services (+2.6%), Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas & Other Fuels (+2.1%) and Communications (+1.7%). There were decreases in Transport (-4.3%), Clothing & Footwear (-4.1%), Furnishings, Household Equipment & Routine Household Maintenance (-1.5%) and Food & Non-Alcoholic Beverages (-1.0%). The largest year-on-year price decrease was recorded in April 2015 when prices fell by 0.7%. There were ten months where the year-on-year price changes were negative with prices remaining unchanged in August and increasing by 0.1% in December.

³⁶CSO statistical release, 14 January 2016, 11am Consumer Price Index December 2015

³⁷Census 2011, Profile 4, The roof over our Heads, CSO, 2012 Figure 12

³⁸The Daft.ie Rental Report, An analysis of recent trends in the Irish rental market, 2015 in Review

³⁹The Daft.ie House Price Report, An analysis of recent trends in the Irish residential sales market, 2015 Year in Review

County Louth

- 1.9** The indicative increase in prices in items which can be considered to be discretionary spend are reflected in depressed retail sales over the same period 2014 -2015. The volume of retail sales (i.e. excluding price effects and motor trade which accounted for 0.4% increase alone) decreased by 0.7% between November and December 2015, but there was an increase of 5.9% in the annual figure⁴⁰.
- 1.10** Alongside the 0.1% decrease in CPI prices between November and December 2015 but increase of the same amount over the year; there was a commensurate decrease of 0.8% in the value of retail sales between November and December 2015 with an annual increase of 3.5%, when compared with December 2014. If motor trades are excluded, there was a decrease of 0.9% in the value of retail sales and an annual increase of 3.0%⁴¹.
- 1.11** The levels of retail turnover in Ireland generally are correcting from the 2008 rates and therefore the general indicative decrease in retail volume and value between November and December 2015, set against the general increases over the same period, are indicative of tentative recovery in spending and thus consumer confidence, which is reflected throughout most of Europe (see figure 6 from EuroStat records of retail turnover from 2006 to 2014⁴²).
- 1.12** Prices on average, as measured by the EU Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP), increased by 0.2% compared with December 2014 but showed the same decrease of -.01% between November and December 2015 as the CPI⁴³.
- 1.13** Irish consumer confidence, expressed as sentiment, is increasing in January 2016 from 103.9 in December 2015 to 108.6⁴⁴ and endorsed by ESRI economic commentary which is showing expected marginal increases in consumer expenditure for 2016 of 3.4% , which is down from 3.6% in 2015 but improved from -0.08% in 2012, -0.3% in 2013 and 2% in 2014⁴⁵. See figure 6.

Index of Retail Turnover



Figure 5 EuroStat Index of deflated Retail turnover (except of motor vehicles, motorcycles and fuel)

⁴⁰ The sectors with the largest month on month volume increases were Food beverages & Tobacco (+1.0%), Hardware, Paints & Glass (+1.0%) and Pharmaceuticals Medical & Cosmetic Articles (+0.7%). The sectors with the largest monthly decreases were Electrical Goods (-12.6%), Department Stores (-5.0%) and Motor Trades (-2.2%).

⁴¹ CSO statistical release, 28 January 2016, 11am, Retail Sales Index, November 2015 (Provisional) December 2015 (Final)

⁴² EuroStat, accessed, January 2016, Calendar adjusted data, not seasonally adjusted data Percentage change compared to same period in previous year

⁴³ Consumer Price Index, CSO statistical release, 14 January 2016, 11am December 2015

⁴⁴ KBC Ireland/ESRI Consumer Sentiment Index, ESRI, 2016

⁴⁵ ESRI, Quarterly Economic Commentary Winter 2015, December 2015

Chart 1: Consumer Sentiment Index



Figure 6 KBC Ireland/ESRI Consumer Sentiment Index, ESRI, 2016

5.4.7 Movement and visitors

1.1 No detailed information of county or country origins exist for Louth since the last 2011 census. The CSO does track national levels of in-migration and out-migration. The CSO estimated that rates of national net out-migration have slowed to April 2015 to 11,600; nearly half of the 21,400 estimated out-migration for 2014.

1.2 Emigration figures are estimated to be 80,900 for the year to April 2015 compared to 81,900 for the year to April 2014. Immigrants have been estimated to have increased by nearly 9,000 from April 2014 to 69,300 April 2015. Emigrants and immigrants have comparable estimated educational attainment levels with an indication

that emigrants with post leaving certificate and third level education accounted for 58% as opposed to 60% immigrants⁴⁶.

1.3 Fáilte Ireland compiles Visitors to Tourist attractions numbers for the country on an annual basis. The figures for 2009 – 2013 are the most recent complete dataset. These consistently show an over representation of attractions in Dublin City and adjacent counties. However of the 258 attractions recorded only 5 (2%) occur in County Louth. The county may however benefit indirectly by visitors recorded in Meath in relation to Brú na Bóinne attractions (7 no.) and from those visiting Sonairte in Laytown, adjacent to Drogheda.

National Position	Rank	Name of Attraction*	2009*	2010*	2011*	2012*	2013*
Top 50% [ending at no. 129]		n/a					
Bottom 50%	140	Stephenstown Pond, Enterprise, Conference Centre & Nature Way	31,884	30,000	28,000	25,000	18,000
	184	Mellifont Abbey	12,581	14,315	14,224	12,182	8,253
	188	Millmount Museum					6,321
	206	Beaulieu House & Gardens	1,800	1,600	1,700	1,800	4,000
Bottom 10% [beginning at no. 232]	233	Carlingford Heritage Centre	560	450	1,000	900	1,100

Table 3 County Louth attractions.

National Position	Rank	Name of Attraction*	2009*	2010*	2011*	2012*	2013*
Top 25% [ending at no. 65]	36	Brú na Boinne Newgrange	130,083	122,785	132,760	132,649	133,616
Top 50% [ending at no. 129]	71	Battle of the Boyne	41,799	40,334	38,846	62,004	60,796
	80	Brú na Boinne Knowth	51,941	49,414	51,962	54,350	51,138
	92	Brú Na Boinne Visitor Centre	40,406	37,071	43,828	42,481	44,990
Bottom 50%	191	Sonairte: The National Ecology Centre	9,500	7,000	5,000	5,000	6,000
	223	Slane Castle	1,800	1,800	2,000	2,050	2,548

Table 4 County Meath attractions from which Louth may benefit.

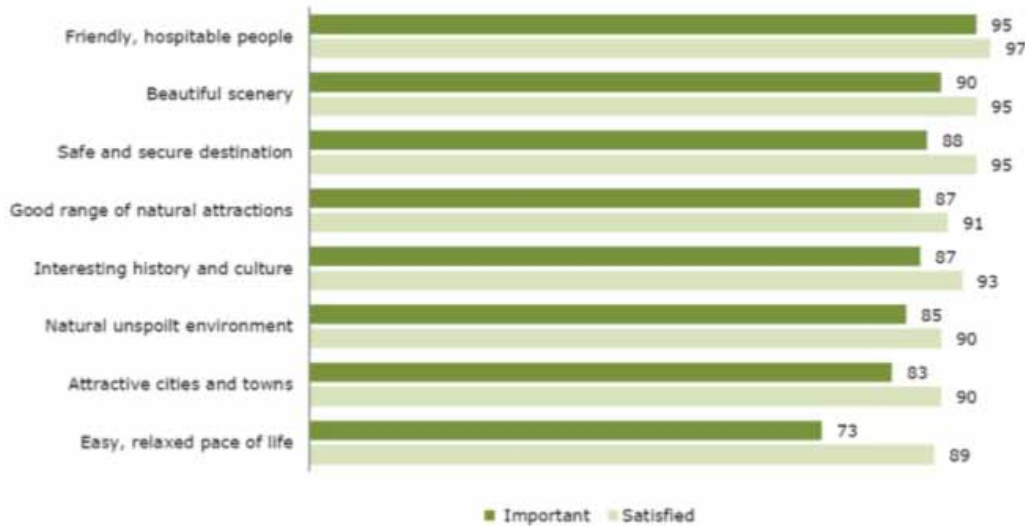
[NOTE] Rankings shown compiled from Fáilte Ireland, Visitors to Tourist Attractions 2009-2013 dataset information transposed and denoted thus* It seems that the order of display of data indicates that ranking is based on most recent performance.

⁴⁶ Population and Migration Estimates April 2015, CSO, 26 August 2015

1.4 As identified in the County Development Plan 2015 – 2021, census 2011 returns indicate that Louth contains a relatively high level of holiday homes in its scenic areas. Visitor numbers in the tables above do not reflect visitors to all attractions nor to open countryside and landscapes, and thus visitor types and numbers to the county are higher than indicated

in the above survey. Recent surveys of overseas visitors by Fáilte Ireland finds that people, landscape and natural scenery are the strongest attractors for visitors. This profile is expected to be repeated for local visitors with the historic towns of Louth featuring as attractors.(See figure 7).

Importance and rating of destination issues among overseas holidaymakers (%)



Source: Fáilte Ireland's Post Survey of Overseas Holidaymakers 2014

Figure 7 Importance and rating of destination issues among overseas holidaymakers (%) from Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Facts 2014

6.0 THE LECP CONSULTATION PROCESS

1.1 Sections 66C(2) and 66C(3) of the Local Government Act 2014 set out the statutory consultation to be undertaken by the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC and the LCDC in developing the economic and community elements of the LECP. In particular, Sections 66C(2) (a)(i) and (3)(a) (i) require that the LCDC consults with members of the public, and publicly funded bodies who may make a contribution to the furthering of the LECP, by publishing a notice inviting submissions to the economic and community elements of the LECP.

1.2 Circular LG1/2015 recommended meaningful consultation with the public in general, local communities, organisations and stakeholders in the formulation of the LECP and identifies 2 distinct considerations.

1. Issues identified in the community
2. The ability of the LECP and the key stakeholders to respond to those issues

1.3 It also recommended 3 levels of engagement:

1. Consultation with the actual partners/stakeholders of the LCDC who will have

2. Consultation with stakeholders in groups/ organisations outside the LCDC who also will have considerable responsibility in delivering the plan.
3. Consultation with community groups and the general public who will identify specific issues both thematic and on a geographic basis through the PPN, the Older People's Forum and Comhairle na nÓg.



- 1.4 As a consequence, the Louth LECP has been developed with a strong focus on citizen engagement, briefing of elected members, the LCDC and the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC, consultation with key agency stakeholder informants and continuous liaising with the relevant departments within Louth County Council. Agreed goals, objectives and actions emerged from the initial call for submissions via the socio-economic analysis and have been refined and amended on an ongoing basis⁴⁷.
- 1.5 The consultation process has been underpinned by a number of key objectives to:
- Develop a consultation framework that met the requirements of multiple stakeholders,
 - Maximise the tools available for meaningful consultation in order to stimulate equally meaningful responses;
- Leverage existing stakeholders and networks to maximise time and resources available;
 - Inspire trust and confidence in a partnership approach that will deliver tangible outcomes and meet the requirements of the LECP;
 - Build on the extensive work undertaken by the statutory and non-statutory stakeholders;
 - ‘Listen’ locally to harness the best of what already works so that individuals and organisations are empowered to be a vehicle for the future to ensure effective implementation of the LECP;
 - Recognise that our differences are our most valuable assets, and that the process created needs to find a shared and common understanding of what is possible in the future; with the reassurance that it will be monitored, evaluated, reviewed and developed as needs evolve.

6.1 Submissions

- 1.1 Written submissions were invited to the LECP from August 2015 until September 2015. A dedicated email account was made to receive submissions electronically. Invitation was extended to this process via press release, media activity and a dedicated webpage on the Louth County Council website. Individual letters inviting submissions were also sent to the LCDC, Louth Economic Forum, Louth Co Council Strategic Policy Committees and a range of statutory service providers, business interests and other service providers throughout the county. They were accompanied by a reader friendly guide to the LECP. Specific stakeholders in the areas of older people, young people and community development circulated information on the consultation process and promoted it through their own networks and databases.
- 1.2 Persons wishing to make submissions were invited to refer to a Socio-Economic Statement prepared by Louth County Council Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC as part of the LECP to support the public consultation phase. This statement set out a series of identified draft Economic and Community indicative objectives.
- 1.3 The content of all submissions received was summarised in order to contribute to an ‘up to date’ profile of Louth, and existing and emergent socio-economic trends. The submissions also enabled the formal identification of some of the stakeholders and actors who are fundamental to drive the objectives of the LECP over this ‘design of the Plan’ period, and into the next in order “to promote the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities”. A total of 12 written submissions were received⁴⁸.
- 1.4 More than 30 meetings were held between September and December 2015 with a variety of agency stakeholder, community representatives and elected members of Louth Co Council to elicit their views on the broad themes of the LECP: employment and economic activity; education, training and skills; and poverty and social exclusion. From these meetings and the analysis of the written submissions consensus began to emerge on high level goals.⁴⁹
- 1.5 A cross-section of Louth Community, Economic and Enterprise stakeholders were invited to participate in a consultation ‘Partnership in Progress’ conference on 14th October 2015 at Bellingham Castle⁵⁰ in Castlebellingham, where motivational guest speaker Mary Davies CEO of Special Olympics Ireland, spoke about the benefits of effective leadership and the partnership approach. The objective of the workshop was to:
- Build understanding about the LECP and its implications for service delivery.
 - Share the draft Community & Economic goals developed with stakeholders and identify how relevant they were for organisations.
 - Identify what actions needed to be taken to help organisations work better together in order to achieve the LECP themes of:
 1. Employment and economic activity
 2. Education, skills development and training
 3. Poverty and social exclusion
- 1.6 The consultation comprised three stages: visioning, comparing draft goals and objectives with individual organisation’s corporate objectives, and discussing an approach to more collaborative working.

⁴⁷ Appendix 3 for list of consultees

⁴⁸ Appendix list of written submissions

⁴⁹ Summary of submissions received

⁵⁰ Appendix xxxxx list of attendees at conference

- 1.7 Organisations were asked to 'vision' their situations in 2020 and what they would have hoped to achieve by then. Inputs were wide ranging and included seeking improvements in physical and mental health, wellbeing and quality of life, infrastructure, good quality housing and sustainability, employment and employers, entrepreneurship and tourism development, education, literacy and work ready skills development, social inclusion, rural isolation, substance misuse and safety and the need to focus on individual needs of citizens in Co Louth throughout the life course.
- 1.8 Participants reviewed the relevance of the proposed goals and objectives to their individual corporate visions, goals, objectives and programmes of work. The overall consensus was that the draft goals were sufficiently broad and rigorous to encompass organisations' remits. Participants believed that two issues in particular should be highlighted.
- The importance of early child development and education, and,
 - Sustainability as an overriding principle underpinning each of the goals; environmental sustainability and sustainability as legacy.
- 1.9 It was agreed that integrated agency collaboration would be essential to deliver on the proposed LECF goals and objectives.
- 1.10 The final session focused on identifying and prioritising actions and how participants might take a more collaborative approach to service delivery in the context of the LECF.

6.2 Key messages

A number of key messages emerged under a series of overlapping headings: Employment activity, education and skills development, enterprise, access and social inclusion.

6.2.1 Employment activity and skills development

- The key driver here is DkIT and its role in the regional development centre. It is essential that DkIT continues to review and adapt its curriculum to ensure that it provides an enterprise ready workforce that employers can access. It must continue to engage with industry on their future requirements. DkIT must also consider how its programmes reach out and attract marginal groups. It takes 5-6 years for universities to revise their certified programme but there is greater scope to revise short skills courses.
- The third level curriculum needs to be adapted for people with special needs as they have difficulty accessing it currently (DKIT & DCU). There is a need for access to supports for special needs through to main stream at a similar level to second level education. Libraries can play a bigger voice/role for DEIS, children and young peoples' organisations.
- The skills development gap is for people with low skills, there is a lack of support and education for low skill workers. There is a perceived lack of skills development specifically for young people under 18 who have dropped out of education and/or employment.
- Ardee lacks affordable education and training rooms. School room facilities are not accessible outside school term. There is a requirement for affordable development of existing space.
- The recently formed Regional Skills Forum has potential for great impact as stakeholders gain a shared understanding of issues, develops its remit and rolls out.
- Louth Meath Education Training Board (LMETB) is a vital framework (including apprenticeship and SOLAS programmes). It is essential that the programmes are enterprise-ready and employers are aware, engage with and input into programme development.
- The recently formed Regional Skills Forum has potential for great impact as it develops its remit, begins to be implemented and stakeholders gain a shared understanding of issues.

6.2.2 Enterprise

- There is a need to provide a one stop integrated service for those seeking employment/job creation via LEO to minimise people being bounced from agency to agency.
- Organisations require help to develop skills to apply for tenders and to access micro/soft loans to finance new business not available via banks. There is a micro-finance service available.
- Promote the message that businesses need mentoring regardless of business stage and especially for people applying for start-up grants. It is essential that people with business ideas are mentored on pre-business



businesses under the Development Contribution Scheme.

The Louth Economic Forum (LEF) is a good structure for public and private interests and detailed plans exist. Businesses have become more specialised than the traditional ICT/Food/Engineering. The county needs to understand what it needs to do to attract specialised industry growth areas e.g. artisan food, sports technology, data analytics, payment and transaction services. There is a need to pick areas to lead in the area of smart hubs and to do a visioning exercise in order to understand what kind of economy we want Louth to be in the future. Then we can align incentives in an integrated way to achieve that vision.

- steps as finance alone will not guarantee success. Ideas workshops need to be provided to help people translate ideas into business reality. Other support structures that exist in Louth include 4 Community Enterprise Centres, IDA & Enterprise Ireland.
- There is a need for Louth County Council to consider the rates it charges for businesses setting up in derelict areas or areas that require renewal. There is also a need to evaluate the types of businesses and incentives offered to attract the right kind of

- There is a need for an integrated vision/brand across the Louth offering including tourism, investment, economy, Louth Leader, green renewable centre and wider economic corridor. Louth needs to identify a platform upon which to create a message about tourism, enterprise investment and wider economic corridor and match it with incentives to create a vibrant economy.

6.2.3 Access and social exclusion

- There are strategies, policies and resources available nationally that need to be localised. It is important that people know how to access services.
- Two programmes that have potential and could be rolled out mainstream - as the models already exist - include Cúltaca and the Incredible Years Genesis Programme. The Cúltaca model could be adopted for other groups e.g. Travellers, rural isolation etc. In the case of more isolated people, Cúltaca provides a link person between the isolated person and the resources available and helps build capacity, access and connection to relevant services. The Incredible Years Genesis Programme focuses on early childhood and helps those in disadvantaged areas. There is a need for more crèche facilities, playgrounds and recreational facilities for young people.
- Building resilience and managing mental health especially in times of crisis is vital for young people. There is a need to promote the availability of youth

specific mental health courses to those who need them and ensure practitioners are available to relevant groups. Youth organisations like Foróige and others run specific courses (PX2 programme).

- Building pride and engagement in communities through role models, existing festivals & sporting events is critical to create more cohesive communities.
- A Volunteer strategy is required for Louth to help volunteer organisations to develop their skills to enable them to engage people and leverage existing networks for greater engagement. We should be developing catalytic volunteers to enable people - especially those who self-exclude - to engage and participate in activities. People who self-exclude often don't have the skills to be part of society. There is a need to approach them in a creative way to build their capacity.



6.2.4 Cross-cutting issues

A number of cross-cutting principles and commonalities began to materialise throughout the discussion.

- A partnership approach with improved governance, more shared resources and recognition and support of good practice
- More effective and integrated management of information to support evidence-based planning and reduce duplication of effort.

- Co-responsibility where communities are empowered and involved in decision making that affects their futures.

Feedback and subsequent ideas and views from stakeholders have formed the basis of the high level goals, objectives and actions for the LECP.

7.0 THE LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN STRUCTURE

- 1.1 Economic and community objectives and ensuing actions deliver multiples of their individual goals with the result that no single objective is more important than the rest. As each objective has the potential to drive a net improvement in multiple goals, each objective illustrates interconnectivity. This interconnectivity mirrors the integrated nature of the LECP priorities and assists the required integration of Economic and Community goals, objectives and actions in the plan.
- 1.2 In order to apply logic to the organisation of the draft objectives, each is presented illustrating its impact on its individual goal and has been assigned a running order dictated by the goal; where the greatest impact is expected to occur over the course of the LECP. Where actions appear to be replicated in individual goals, this is to ensure that the full potential of each goal has been interrogated, and shows the mutual interdependency of actions and the requirement for collaborative work practices in their delivery. These interdependencies have been cross-referenced as much as possible.
- 1.3 Actions as stated in the LECP guidance are to be “... specific, time-bound and measurable...” and have been identified in order to achieve the objectives of the LECP. Each action to be achieved over the lifetime of the Plan has been strictly vetted to be measurable, either directly or indirectly by indicator and to be assignable. Where either measurability or assignability is not currently possible then the action identified remains, but waits to be delivered, as appropriate, following each annual statutory review of the performance of the LECP overall objectives and actions.
- 1.4 Actions are allocated under the objectives most likely to be delivered. As a result, any position or numbering of draft objectives is a result of the requirement for organisation and clarity and does not indicate relative importance. Timelines have been agreed with stakeholders but equally will be responsive to individual stakeholder operational plans. Each action is presented in a logic model format:

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
Statement	Lead identified to deliver action Support identified to assist delivery	Time to completion of action	Listed in order to track progress over LECP lifetime

7.1 The implementation process

Implementing the actions in LECP will require further strengthening of working relationships and improving communications processes between the partners in County Louth. The plan sets out lead partners and support partners to deliver on individual actions and proposes timeframes and measures to deliver them. The implementation of the economic elements of the plan will be overseen by the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC on behalf of the Council. The implementation of the community elements of the plan will be overseen by Louth LCDC. Appropriate interagency structures will be established at LCDC level to ensure an integrated approach to delivery and Louth County Council will be the lead agency in monitoring their delivery.

The plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and amendments made where required. Additional DECLG guidelines will be observed in relation to monitoring and implementation. The plan will also be subject to potential adjustments on the publication of the proposed National Planning Framework. Louth County Council will report on the implementation of the plan on an annual basis and the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) will also scrutinise the performance of Louth County Council in this regard.



8.0 INTEGRATED PRIORITIES: AN OVERVIEW

A PLAN FOR THE PROMOTION OF ECONOMIC
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN COUNTY LOUTH



8.1 Prosperity Job Creation

8.1.1 Job creation: The pathway to prosperity

Economic, social and moral arguments acknowledge that work is the most effective way to improve the well-being of individuals, their families and their communities. The ability to work is an integral part of individual identity, social roles and social status and is essential for material well-being and full participation in today's society. There is also growing awareness that (long-term) worklessness is harmful to physical and mental health.

Increasing employment and supporting people into work are key elements of The Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017 (Northeast/North West). The urgency around creating more jobs to enable prosperity was raised consistently throughout the LECP consultation and is a priority for the LECP.

Creating employment opportunities and competitive advantage has been one of the key drivers for Louth County Council, which is in a unique position, as it has the benefit of advice and expertise of a group of highly skilled stakeholders, the Louth Economic Forum (LEF). This group meets on a regular basis to identify and promote the conditions in which jobs can be created, as well as recognising and acting upon activities with economic development potential.

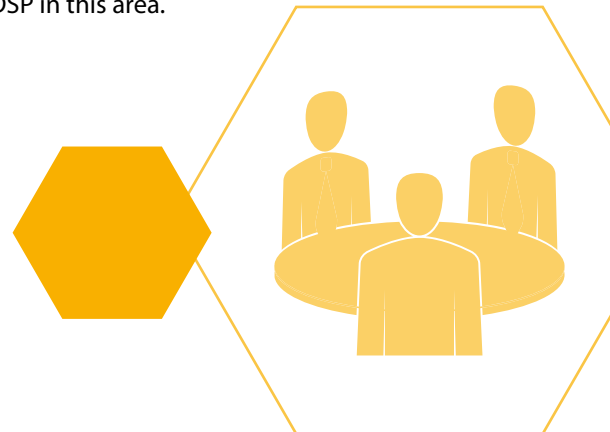
Analysis of live register unemployment figures for Louth shows that there were 439,422 people on the Live Register in the State in February 2012. The figure for Louth was 17,809, the second highest figure among the Border Regions, after Donegal (21,267).

8.1.2 Breaking the cycle of youth unemployment

Unemployment in towns like Ardee, Drogheda and Dundalk is most pronounced among young males (under 25 years of age) with low levels of educational attainment living in the more socially disadvantaged areas. Catering for their needs - through up-skilling and preparing them to enter or re-enter the labour market - remains a significant challenge and is currently being addressed by initiatives to achieve more streamlined training and labour activation from the Department of Social Protection (DSP), CTEC, the Louth Meath Education Training Board (LMETB) and SOLAS as well as proactive facilitation of job creation by the private sector (indigenous and foreign direct investment) which in Co Louth has been encouraged and promoted by the Louth Economic Forum (LEF).

One of DSP's priority groups continues to be young people (18 - 25). Intensive engagement with this group will continue throughout the period of the LECP which will also include working with young people with disabilities. People with

disabilities in general have been clearly identified as a cohort for DSP engagement and activation under Pathways to Work 2016 - 2020 and plans are currently being developed at local level to put appropriate supports in place. Intensive engagement with long term unemployed people in Louth has been contracted to Louth Leader Partnership (LLP), Local Employment Services and JobPath, who will be providing a lead role with DSP in this area.



8.1.3 The Louth Economic Forum: Collaboration in action

A key focus of the LEF, since its establishment in April 2009, has been to implement its economic strategies and actions in a coordinated manner. It was decided to get the collaboration of the State development agencies and the business community in Louth to take an active part in the ownership of the strategies through the LEF; recognising

the comparative economic strengths and opportunities of Louth's urban centres - Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee - and the county's rural parts, including mid-Louth and the Cooley Peninsula, evidenced in the 2012 Indecon reports.



Louth is characterised by a number of comparative economic advantages and opportunities including its favourable location close to major national and international markets and its world class fibre optic infrastructure in its three main towns. From a total of approx. 60,000 premises, over 50,700 of these will have high speed broadband connectivity by the end of 2016. These figures place County Louth as one of the most connected counties for high speed broadband in Ireland and a major incentive for companies to invest in the county. Louth has developed a position as a leading centre in the country in respect of sustainable

energy technologies. Dundalk is Ireland’s first designated Sustainable Energy Zone under the European Commission’s Concerto Programme (Holistic) (Dundalk 2020). The town’s sustainable energy community has achieved a reduction of 4,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO2) per annum through the promotion of energy efficiency products. These areas have also been highlighted by Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017 as opportunities for the future. The LEF works via its ten point action plans to leverage these strengths to proactively facilitate economic development and job creation.

8.1.4 Louth: Capitalising on Foreign Direct Investment

One of the most striking developments for Louth since the formation of the LEF is the dramatic improvement in the county’s FDI’s performance; among others, companies as diverse as PayPal, E Bay, Yapstone, Actavis, International Fund Services (IFS), Prometric and Cargotec are now well established in the county.

The LEF’s role in facilitating these jobs has been its marketing and selling of Louth as a host location through the packaging of the county’s comparative economic strengths; including

suitable sites for development, and ensuring the availability of a panel of experts to deal with queries from investors through IDA Ireland. Actively promoting Louth for FDI also includes promoting ConnectIreland.com to the people of Louth, who in turn can target the diaspora and other players overseas to consider Ireland as a place to connect with the EU market.

Looking to the future in its recently published FDI plan, the LEF envisages that the best growth and employment

opportunities for Louth will be FDI including bio-pharmaceuticals; global business services including financial services, high-value manufacturing and key indigenous sectors; agri-food, renewable energy technologies and tourism. Planning permission has been obtained for two major BioPharma facilities and related high quality office developments at the IDA Dundalk Science & Technology Park at Mullagharlin, Dundalk and if investment is secured, a further benefit will come in subsequent jobs as the impact is felt in the greater economy.

The IDA is the primary agency engaged with securing internationally funded business development in Ireland. The Council and the LEF recognise the locational and quality of life advantages that Louth has to offer. In this regard, it has undertaken a review of Drogheda in order to identify two locations suitable for accommodating larger scale employment - generating uses suitable to be marketed to

8.1.5 Louth LEO: Stimulating entrepreneurship

The Louth Local Enterprise Office (LEO) performs a central role in the economic well-being and growth of County Louth and works closely with all economic actors and stakeholders in the region. Louth LEO promotes entrepreneurship, fosters business start-ups and develops existing micro and small businesses to drive job creation and to provide accessible high quality supports that will enhance businesses in County Louth. Its key priority is to promote job creation and job retention in the county. While the recent sustained drops in the live register figures nationally and locally are very welcome, Louth still has higher than average unemployment rates. The LEO will continue to focus on developing programmes and directing funding to projects that have potential employee growth.

The overall population of Louth and its hinterland is set to grow to almost 190,000 by 2015; with a population within a 60-kilometre radius of Drogheda at 1.7m while the equivalent figure for Dundalk is over 764,000. Drogheda and Dundalk are ranked as the 1st and the 3rd largest population catchment areas in the country and provide a wealth of opportunities for indigenous employment and a strong

outside investors. In this way, Louth aims to attract and retain potential outside investment sources in the county.

An essential element in winning investment in global business services is to have a good supply of quality office accommodation. It is also particularly dependent on availability of skilled staff with third level qualifications at a minimum. Louth has had success in the Global Business Services with companies like PayPal, eBay, IFS, Vesta, and SMT Fund Services locating here. Dedicated response to their needs is essential. DkIT's willingness to work in partnership in response to the graduate needs in IFS and SMT Fund Services was perhaps the single most important intervention in securing their presence. This spirit of partnership was cited many times during the LECP consultation phase and was seen as an essential component in the future delivery of the Plan.

skills set to employers. In capitalising on the skills and talent available to them, employers will be supported by Louth LEO's strategic objectives, underpinned by targeted actions to:

- provide high quality business and advisory services;
- provide high quality enterprise supports to grow new and existing businesses;
- foster entrepreneurship, and
- contribute to Local Enterprise development services.

Apart from the wide range of supports offered by Louth LEO, a range of enterprise initiatives for local entrepreneurs, including information about the range of supports are available at DkIT to promote and encourage entrepreneurship and innovation in the county. Researchers at DkIT are also targeting a number of sectors including IT and software development, renewable energy technologies, active ageing and creative arts.

8.1.6 Louth: A premier food producer

Louth has a long tradition in food and beverage production dating back to the 18th century; testament to the local availability of raw materials. The government's food strategy Harvest 2020 asserts that desired growth in the food sector will depend on improved productivity, increased scale, targeted research, and enhanced skills and organisational capabilities. The Louth County Development Plan supports low-impact rural and marine resource-based industrial, commercial, business and service uses that contribute to diversification and growth of the rural economy, and which are intrinsically linked to the rural area. Louth LEADER programme's priorities reiterate the benefits of agricultural

diversification, documented in the LEF's agriculture strategy and in the LECP, and states that among its key priorities will be:

- provision of tourism facilities: including the renovation of farm buildings for tourism purposes, walking, cycling, angling, pony trekking, and bird watching;
- development of niche tourism and educational services such as arts and crafts, specialty food provision, and open farms;
- development of farm shops selling home/locally grown and manufactured products;

- organic food production and marine based enterprises including mariculture; and
- low-impact rural and marine resource based industry/commercial/business.

The LEF strategy for agriculture envisages Louth as a premier producer of fresh, natural, safe, and quality food products for domestic and export markets. It will be delivered by entrepreneurial and skilled personnel using sustainable methods, processes and resources. Louth already has a proven track record of successful foreign owned food companies such as H.J Heinz Company in Dundalk, which produces Weight Watchers ready meals, and Hilton Food Group, a specialist meat packing company. Louth has also recently enjoyed significant success in the attraction of

new non-food foreign direct investment, confirming its attractiveness as a location for new inward investment.

From a skills and 'work ready' perspective, DkIT has an established track record in the delivery of programmes in the agriculture and food area. Through its links with Ballyhaise Agricultural College in Cavan, it provides a number of agriculture programmes including a programme in sustainable agriculture. It is hoped to develop an agri-food undergraduate programme there and other part-time programmes to support the Agriculture and Food sector. DkIT also carries out research and development in the food sector and can provide enterprise support through the work of the Regional Development Centre.

8.1.7 Louth's Marine industry: Realising its potential

With its long and accessible seaboard, Louth is an ideal location for production of marine based products and fresh fish, including shellfish and seafood in places like Dundalk, Greenore, Carlingford and Clogherhead, where these activities are being successfully combined with tourism and leisure events. The latest Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) Strategy for Small and Fishing Dependent Communities in Louth, Meath and Dublin addresses the coastal fishing dependent communities from

Omeath in Louth to Howth in Dublin. The strategy prioritises seafood products for new markets, the north east Coastal

Trail, training and diversification for fishing communities, and enhancing harbour, pier and coastal infrastructure.

One of the LEF's aims is to establish a smart Agri/Food/Fish cluster of innovation companies in the north east region for the development of new products, added value products and new markets, where technology can foster increased productivity and quality.

The LEF agriculture, food and fisheries action plan notes that part of Louth's marketing strategy is to highlight the region's green credentials. It will focus on employing Bord Bia's Origin Green initiative in partnership with industry, where companies will be encouraged to participate in a unique accredited quality assurance scheme and sustainability programme. Such a strategy indicates the commitment of farmers, fishermen and food producers to sustainable development; meeting the needs of the present, without compromising the capacity of future generations.

8.1.8 Louth's retail development: Seizing the opportunity

Retail development in Louth is to be led for the period 2015 – 2021 by the recently adopted County Development Plan and its Retail Strategy. In line with the settlement hierarchy for the county and retail planning guidelines, new retail development is to be sequentially driven to core retail areas on a hierarchical basis to the Gateway of Dundalk with Drogheda (Level 2) followed by Ardee and district centres around Drogheda and Dundalk (Level 3); then local and neighbourhood centres, smaller towns and villages (Level 4) and finally; the lowest level (5) corner shops and small villages. The Retail Strategy was supported by household, shopper and retail floor space surveys, which were set against projected population growth which identifies additional comparison and convenience retail floorspace requirements for both Dundalk and Drogheda, with lower levels required for Ardee and other centres providing new retail floor space on a case by case basis. In view of the existing supply

of bulky goods, retailing space and lands, no additional provision for this retail land use category has been made for the current Development Plan period.

These surveys identified vacancy rates for the core shopping areas of Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee; finding levels of 17% for Dundalk (of 241 buildings), 21% for Drogheda (41 buildings) and 13% for Ardee (129 buildings) which are favoured for reuse as retail stores. We find that vacancy rates for the towns surveyed in 2013 were comparable to national rates at around the same time (see figure 1 overleaf), with only Drogheda exceeding average vacancy rates. The Retail Strategy identified the undesirability of the higher rate of vacancy in the core retail area of Drogheda and in an effort to reverse retail vacancy rates, goes on to identify Retail Opportunity Sites in all 3 core shopping areas suitable for modern retailing formats.

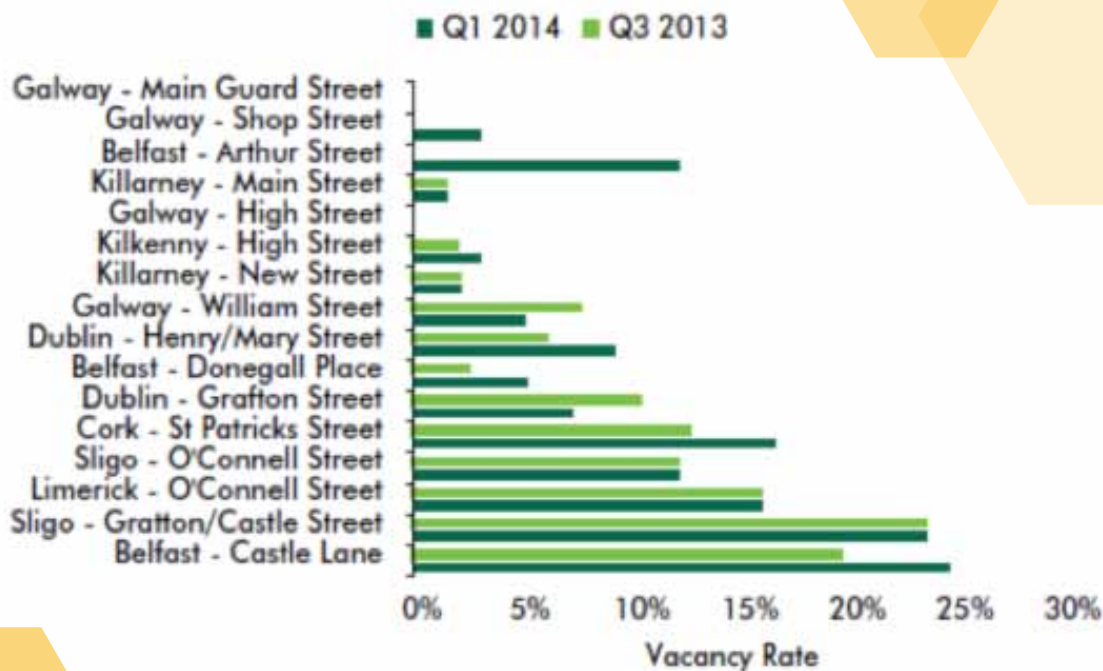


Figure 8 High Street Vacancy Rates Q1 2014 v Q3 2013 Source: CBRE Research, Ireland Retail MarketView Q1 2014



8.1.9 Louth’s older people: Our asset

The active ageing sector is becoming more important as people live longer and the age-dependency ratio is expected to increase in the coming years. Louth is the first county in Ireland to earn the

World Health Organisation (WHO) designation as an ‘Age-Friendly City’. The economic significance of initiatives like The Great Northern Haven (which is a collaboration between LCC and DkIT; resulting in a purpose-built development of 16 smart-technology apartments for older people, fifteen of which are occupied by older people participating in the project and the sixteenth unit acting as a demonstration and transitional unit) is that they act as another positive differentiator for Louth.

Louth is also playing a pioneering part in the development of age-friendly technologies; for which markets are likely to expand in the medium term. Its age-friendly status puts it in a comparably strong position to attract firms active in new technologies designed to meet the needs of older people; along with DkIT’s research and innovation strengths in age-related technologies through its Netwell (Nestling Technology for Wellness) Centre and CASALA (Centre for Affective Solutions for Ambient Living Awareness). The LEF has also contributed to greater awareness of the economic opportunities concerning older people through a number of initiatives with local Chambers of Commerce; thereby helping to further raise the profile of Louth nationwide and internationally. LEO, Louth LEADER and LMETB in different ways facilitate the engagement and reactivation of older people with the labour market.

8.1.10 Louth’s young people: Giving them the skills

A demographic profile of the Louth’s youth population undertaken by Louth Youth and Children’s Services in 2012 indicated that the county’s youth population is likely to increase to over 28,000 by 2026. Drogheda has experienced the largest growth in youth population in the county: the number of young people in the town increased by 12% between 2006 and 2011. Dundalk, however, has the largest youth population with over 4,500 10 to 18 year olds. The proportion of young people is highest in the rural areas of the county.

Statistics relating to poverty levels, disability, ethnic minorities, young people as carers, and young people at risk

generally present many challenges to the partners who will be delivering the LECP, and places a major onus on them to deliver on governmental outcomes set out in its strategy for children and young people: Better Outcomes, Better Futures where 5 priorities are placed to the forefront: health and wellbeing, education and skills development, safety at every stage of their development, economic prosperity and engagement with and connectivity to society. The LECP addresses this focus via a partnership approach in a number of different ways; including pathways to employment, education and creating access for those who may be socially excluded through physical disability, class, gender or creed.

The Department for Social Protection (DSP) is working with the 'harder to reach' cohort of young people and facilitating entry to the work force through its various schemes. It has also introduced a number of special initiatives in the north east under the Youth Guarantee which are aimed at getting young people back into employment. DSP has also worked with local companies and organisations to provide opportunities for local unemployed youth through the Louth

LEADER Partnership and a variety of local employers. LMETB is partnering in providing appropriate programmes to assist school retention, transition; ensuring that young people are work ready, providing re-skilling opportunities for the 18-24 age group who are out of work for long periods, as well as anticipating the future needs of employers across a broad spectrum of needs from technology to tourism.

8.1.11 Traveller employment: A fresh focus

Research has demonstrated that Travellers and Roma are the most marginalised groups in the labour market, experiencing barriers including:

- Literacy confidence (to a greater extent than literacy problems)
- Educational qualifications – particularly where the Leaving Certificate is an entry level requirement for jobs
- Ageism – particularly for those older workers who have not had the opportunity to complete the Leaving Certificate
- Prejudice and racism
- Confidence.

The government-appointed Task Force on the Travelling Community (1995)⁵¹ provided an important insight into the unique nature of the Traveller economy, explaining that what distinguishes the Traveller economy is not so much the particular economic activities that Travellers engage in but the distinct manner in which these activities are organised'. Research from Pavée Point and elsewhere⁵² identifies a number of key features of the Traveller economy:

- Nomadism – where mobility makes marginal activity viable
- A focus on income-generation rather than job-creation
- An emphasis on self-employment
- The extended family as the basic economic unit
- Home-base and work-base are one and the same
- Flexibility – often in response to market demands

According to the Task Force report these core features are key to enabling Travellers to make a profit in what may be considered by others to be non-viable areas. In its submission to the LECP, Pavée Point asserts that as part of this, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) needs strengthening, and that 'any unnecessary barriers or entry requirements for employment should be removed, as there is a risk that such provisions may lead to undermined access to employment for Travellers'.

8.1.12 Cross border collaboration: Towards better economies

The Action Plan for Jobs Northeast/North West highlights the benefits of cross border collaboration to further economic development. Cooperation between Louth County Council and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has been enhanced by an MoU setting out the basis of the Strategic Alliance between the two Local Authorities, where it seeks to support and promote the economic development and

competitiveness of the cross-border region in which they are located. The Low Carbon Business Network, which aims to become a leader in the development and application of low carbon technologies, and which is a key driver of regional sustainable economic development has been strengthened in its location, midway between the two sustainable energy communities in Dundalk and Newry.

8.1.13 Tourism: A route to employment

The Action Plan for Jobs Northeast/North West also notes that tourism will be one of the key indigenous development opportunities to encourage employment at local level. Louth's position on the east coast, its transport infrastructure and its proximity to Dublin is a further catalyst serving to develop tourism and enhance local employment in the

county. Its Tourism and Heritage strategy focuses on three pillars: heritage and culture, recreation and leisure, and the arts, food and festivals. Each of these elements resonates with national tourism policy, and the opportunities offered by Ireland's Ancient East Strategy further strengthen its value proposition.

⁵¹ Task Force on the Travelling Community (1995): Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community. Dublin: Government Publications.

⁵² Pavée Point (1993): Recycling and the Travelling Community: Income, Jobs and Wealth Creation. Dublin: DTEDG, and McCarthy, D., and McCarthy, P. (1998): Market Economy: Trading in the Traveller Economy. Dublin: Pavée Point Publications.

Creating more physical cross-border links together with the development of the Cooley, Mourne Gullion region for tourists and visitors continues to be explored. With the help of funding from Louth County Council and Newry and Mourne District Council and through the East Border Region Committee, the ambitious Cooley, Mournes and Ring of Gullion Geo-Tourism Project is being developed. In addition, Louth's vibrant arts scene further enhances its value

proposition through attracting niche audiences to various arts events. These audiences then have an opportunity to sample the county's other attractions. The LEADER programme has also identified growth opportunities in this area and these initiatives should drive new employment opportunities for arts practitioners and communities at local level.

8.2 Access to education and skills development

8.2.1 Creating opportunities

Education has an important role to play in developing sustainable and balanced communities and encouraging families to participate fully in social, civic and working life. The economic impact of education and training has been a key selling point for Ireland and central to Ireland's economic prosperity generally, and this has encouraged and continues to deliver an increased output of high quality graduates into the labour force.

However, the need for equality of opportunity, active inclusion and access to education throughout the life course were among the core principles underpinning round table discussions throughout the consultation phase of the LECP. Delegates noted that the benefits from investment in skills at all levels are numerous, and have positive economic social and cultural consequences. Evidence shows that a focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills has a significant impact on employment potential; while community

education empowers people to grow in confidence in their own employability and engage effectively with the labour market. Not only that, the sense of self worth and self-esteem arising from gainful employment are a platform upon which positive community participation and engagement can flourish.

The HAASE Deprivation Index lists Louth as being the ninth most disadvantaged Local Authority area nationally, with significant disadvantage and low educational attainment to be found in the urban areas of Dundalk and Drogheda, paralleling former RAPID designated areas. In relation to rural deprivation, the areas of Castletown and Westgate have significantly high levels of unemployment and low educational completion rates for adult populations. The fastest growing areas of population in Louth include Carlingford, Collon and Termonfeckin.⁵³

Table 1 Principal Economic Status - Population Aged 15 Years and over Co. Louth (CSO 2011)

Principal Economic Status – Population Aged 15 years and over	Louth
Population	122,897
Unemployed having lost or given up job	12,725
Student	10,143
At work	44,232
Unable to work due to sickness /disability	4,929
Looking after home or family	9,108

Table 2

Highest Level Education Completed – Population over 15 years	Louth
No formal education	1,396
Primary education	12,761
Lower secondary	15,312
Upper secondary	15,348
Technical or Vocational Qualification	6,956
Advanced Certificate	4,508
Higher Certificate	3,677

⁵³ LMETB 2015



Pathways to Work (2012) notes that Ireland performs very well on a range of key international education indicators, stating that most of our young people are strongly positioned to move into employment and contribute

to economic growth. Ireland is already exceeding European targets for 2020 on early school leaving, tertiary education attainment, early childhood education and post primary achievement in reading and science. What is of concern is that the performance of the broader adult population and engagement with lifelong learning in Ireland is low by European standards.

8.2.2 Meeting future need

SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority, is tasked with ensuring the provision of 21st century high-quality Further Education and Training (FET) programmes which are responsive to the needs of learners and the requirements of a changed and changing economy. Its strategy 2014-2019 notes that employers lie at the heart of skill needs, while the learner lies at the heart of the FET service. The strategy recognises that 'skills are a resource for economic growth and for job creation; they drive increased productivity; they can affect the 'smartening' of economies where jobs are becoming knowledge intensive. They are an enabler to a better society. Having the requisite skills acts as an insulator from unemployment: as job security gives way to labour market flexibility and the focus moves from a 'job for life' to 'work for life.' SOLAS overall aim is to increase the supply of 'job ready' individuals through the further development and roll-out of effective FET work-based learning models, including new employer-led apprenticeships and traineeships, particularly in the early phase of the FET strategy roll-out.

The SOLAS strategy is being implemented at a local level through a number of providers including Louth Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) which aims to achieve a world class integrated FET system, highly valued by learners and employers, where a higher proportion of those who engage in FET - including those with barriers to participation - stay engaged with FET, complete qualifications, transition successfully into employment or, where appropriate, move into higher level qualifications in FET or HET.

Both the Pathways to Work, and the Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2020 advocate a multi-agency approach to targeting persons who are long term unemployed /or actively seeking work. The aim is to encourage and enable participation of those who are unemployed in courses and programmes, thereby facilitating improved educational attainment levels, up skilling in key competencies and skills acquisition. This ultimately results in improved self-esteem and personal confidence levels for participants.

8.2.3 Facilitating access

The Department for Social Protection (DSP) ensures further training and upskilling via its contracted service provider CTEC which provides training programmes for those who are educationally disadvantaged and ensures equality of access to its training programmes. The LMETB, SOLAS and Louth LEADER Partnership (LLP) are already working closely together to engage with the target groups⁵⁴ in Louth; collaborating with the DSP and providing incentives to further education and training; with the intention of getting as many people back into the workplace or newly employed. Employment and education programmes are playing an important role in enhancing individual employability.

A key objective of Pathways to Work 2016-2020 is to ensure that employment programmes are work-focused while also ensuring an appropriate supply of labour market relevant, locally/regionally adaptive training and education. The region's economic profile indicates a broad mix of agricultural businesses, local indigenous and multi-national industries e.g. Paypal, Rank Xerox, Ebay, Glen Dimplex and Horsewear. What is emerging from discussion with employers is that they need graduates or workers who, on joining the work force, require minimum training and are as 'work ready' as they can possibly be for fast-moving sectors.

8.2.4 Leveraging third level networks

At third level, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) has earned a reputation as the leading higher education provider in the north east. It provides quality educational opportunities in a broad range of disciplines from undergraduate degree to PhD level. As a major resource in the region, it is a key stakeholder in ensuring that industry and business skills requirements are met through its capability to provide high level research and innovation. DkIT has shown its willingness to respond quickly to the ever changing educational and training needs of both business and industry sectors; a point also raised in discussion

preceding the writing of the LCEP. Employer networks have been established to liaise with educational institutions to enable development of targeted education programmes to meet existing and future skills needs.

PLC colleges, Ó Fiaich Institute of Further Education and Drogheda Institute of Further Education, working in partnership with DKIT, are founding members of NEFHEA (North East Further and Higher Education Alliance) which aims to provide improved progression opportunities for learners in the region; while ensuring complementarity of

⁵⁴ Appendix Target groups


service provision, best use of resources and ease of transfer across institutions. Employers facilitate work placement for 1,500 PLC students annually as well as supported employment placements, and pre-apprenticeship in company courses. The importance of these networks was stressed in the consultation process for the LECP. Provision

of in-company training courses as part of the Skills for Work Programme and part-time flexible, blended learning opportunities afforded in PLCs, enables the up-skilling of existing employees. This was a point also raised during the LECP consultation. Managers believed that better educated staff were more motivated to achieve better results.

8.2.5 Creating pathways to third level

Throughout the LECP consultation, numerous references were made to DkIT's potential to address issues of access to education and inclusion by providing an entry to further education and lifelong learning for those who are either returning to education, or for those who have not had the opportunity to pursue third level education due to disadvantage or marginalisation. DkIT has an excellent access record; their statistics show that 80% of students attending the college are first in their families to undertake a degree programme⁵⁵.

With many students attending from outside the county, DkIT's undergraduate and post-graduate student population has mushroomed; masters and doctoral students are engaged in traditional PhDs, enterprise oriented PhDs and professional doctorates aimed at lifelong learning. Its strong research portfolio focusing on four research and development themes is responsive to the forward looking innovation agenda discussed in the LECP, and each demonstrates the potential to collaborate in future partnerships to advance Louth's economic ambition. They include:



As part of its commitment to the wider community, DkIT has been running the Certificate in Skills for Independent Living for 5 years and to date has had more than 40 graduates. This programme enables learners with an intellectual disability to develop relevant knowledge and competence, and to be able to use a range of skills under supervision so that they will develop a lifelong learning ethos together with the opportunity of inclusion in third-level education.

- Ageing and Health (with Centres in Smooth Muscle Research and Assistive Living/ Technologies (Netwell Centre);
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation (with Centres in Entrepreneurship Research and the Regional Development Centre which co-ordinates the Institute's Industrial Innovation programmes);
- Informatics and Creative Media (with a Centre in Software Technology and emerging research in Humanities, Music/Music Technology & Creative Media);
- Sustainable Energy and Environment (with Centres in Renewable Energy and Freshwater Research).

8.2.6 Communiversities: A new model

Louth LEADER Partnership (LLP) provides a variety of skills development, training courses and 'back to work' programmes for those hardest to reach in collaboration with DSP. It also offers a range of community development and social inclusion training programmes; promoting social stability and prosperity by empowering participants with the skills needed to contribute toward building a better future for their communities in areas ranging from pre-development training, specific skills training, interpersonal training; organisational training and Community health awareness training. A recent and very successful pilot initiative was the Communiversities programme; an innovative adult education programme delivered by Louth Leader Partnership in conjunction with Maynooth University, under The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2015 – 2017. It entailed a collaboration with Louth County Libraries, one morning per week, and offered participants the opportunity to experience facilitated discussions and debates of higher education in the familiar surroundings of their local community. One of the aims of this programme is to de-

mystify the idea of higher education in the minds of people who may feel alienated from universities and academics; the fact that it took place in the more informal library setting reinforced the important facilitative role held by local libraries. As part of the Communiversities Programme, students explored subject areas such as Local History, Psychology, Community Development and Youth Work, without the added pressure of exams or assignments.

LLP currently implements the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance scheme and the Short Term Enterprise Allowance scheme in Co. Louth. The schemes are provided by the Department of Social Protection as nationwide schemes to encourage and support unemployed persons who can return to the work force as self-employed persons. Supports provided also include assistance with paperwork, small financial assistance for start-ups and support for relevant training. The LLP Start Your Own Business skills development programme has been designed to address the needs of those wishing to start their own business, or those who have

⁵⁵ DkIT internal survey of new students 2012/2013

recently started trading. It is aimed at providing practical support, advice and guidance in a broad range of business areas.

TÚS is another partnership initiative between the LLP and DSP. Prospective participants are selected at random from the unemployment register, and contacted by their social welfare office. It offers a wide range of meaningful and quality work placements ranging from social care of all age groups and people with disabilities, coaching of sporting activities, community development, administration, caretaking, renovation and event management and work in support of cultural, heritage and environmental activities. Participants work 19.5 hours a week and the placement lasts 12 months.

Current job sponsor organisations throughout Co. Louth include the Irish Wheelchair Association, Action Against

Addiction (N.E), Men's Sheds, Ardee Celtic, Women's Aid, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and a multitude of District Development Groups, local Tidy Town Committees, Family Resource Centres and Charities. The scheme has an enormous community impact; it not only enhances the skills and employability of those who participate, it provides social engagement, connectivity, and in many cases, care for its recipients.

One of DSP's priority groups continues to be young people (18 - 25). Intensive engagement is proposed for this group continuing 2016 – 2020. It will also include an emphasis on working with young people with disabilities. People with disabilities in general have been clearly identified as a cohort for DSP engagement and activation under Pathways to Work 2016 - 2020. Plans are currently being developed in Louth to put appropriate supports in place.

8.2.7 Libraries: Supporting skills development

Libraries across the county have hosted numerous visits by school classes, adult students and other groups. There has been much work carried out in the expansion of IT facilities for the public with obvious developmental and educational benefits. These include courses for public use on terminals,

public cards for use on public internet terminals and the provision of a wide selection of CD ROMs and talking books. Libraries also facilitate literacy and other skills development training programmes in partnership with service providers, as well as providing platforms for arts-based events.

8.2.8 Traveller education: Targeting the need

Census 2011 highlighted the following statistics with regard to Travellers in Ireland and their educational attainment:

- 55% (of Travellers whose education had ceased) had completed their education before the age of 15, compared with 11% for the total population.
- Only 3.1% continued their education past the age of 18, compared with 41.2% for the total population, and only 1% of Travellers progressing to third level education (compared with 31% of the settled population).
- The percentage of Travellers with no formal education in 2011 was 17.7% compared with 1.4% in the general population.

Studies undertaken refer to education attainment and negative experiences of Travellers in school:

- The Report on the First Phase of the Evaluation of DEIS (2011) found that the educational attainment of Travellers remains significantly lower than that of their settled peers in both reading and mathematics. The

magnitude of the difference between the scores of the two groups is large in every case⁵⁶.

- The 2012 State of the Nation's Children report found that Traveller children, immigrant children and children with a disability are more likely to report being bullied at school.

A government-appointed Task Force on the Travelling Community (1995)⁵⁷ provided an important insight into the unique nature of the Traveller economy, explaining that what distinguishes the Traveller economy is not so much the particular economic activities that Travellers engage in but the distinct manner in which these activities are organised. Research undertaken by the Equal at Work initiative in 2003 identified the range of barriers experienced by Travellers with regard to progression in the labour market. These include literacy confidence (more so than literacy problems); educational qualifications – particularly where the Leaving Certificate is an entry level requirement for jobs; and ageism – particularly for older workers who have not had the opportunity to complete the Leaving Certificate, prejudice in relation to where people live, and confidence⁵⁸.

⁵⁶ Department of Education (2011) Report on the First Phase of the Evaluation of DEIS. Dublin: Department of Education

⁵⁷ Task Force on the Travelling Community (1995): Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community. Dublin: Government Publications.

⁵⁸ Murphy, P. (2003): Report on Community Employment Skills and Progression. Report carried out by Equal at Work on behalf of South Dublin Public Sector Site

Pavee Point’s submission to the LECP stressed the importance of equality of access for travellers to education that is traveller specific i.e. specific training in self-employment and entrepreneurial skills development. Until 2010, traveller education and training needs in Louth were delivered by a number of traveller education centres dotted around the county. However, with the encouragement of the traveller community, they have been mainstreamed into direct provision delivered under the aegis of LMETB and

LLP and other providers as appropriate. There is targeted provision for travellers in second level DEIS schools in Co Louth. Travellers participate on VTOS programmes and on adult literacy programmes run by LMETB. LLP works in the community to address traveller literacy issues with a particular focus on adult education while LMETB includes them in their targeted cohort on the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI). In addition, Louth County Libraries facilitates many literacy initiatives for traveller groups.

8.2.9 Adult education: The key to success

LMETB believes that the learner is at the heart of adult continuing and further education provision, and in the design of its courses/programmes LMETB has consulted with employers and DSP to ensure flexibility, inclusivity and responsiveness to the needs of both learners and the market. The LMETB has also continued to build on its partnership approach with DSP, LAA and LLP through targeted educational initiatives such as Adult Literacy, VTOS, BTEI Training programmes and Community Education. These programmes have surpassed key government targets for engagement of long term unemployed persons on its courses and programmes. Additionally, LMETB offers significant opportunities for second chance education to young people and adults who may not have completed

post primary school. Supports such as literacy and guidance are a critical support available to learners at every stage of development.

A range of measures are in place to facilitate access by target groups - an issue raised throughout the consultation for the LECP - and access to LMETB programmes is supported through appropriate entry arrangements, effective information provision including advertising and recruitment campaigns and availability of programmes and courses at a number of locations/venues across the LMETB region. Early identification of learner needs to provide appropriate supports such as counselling, guidance and psychological services is also facilitated with the LLP.

Total Number of Beneficiaries in Louth FET Service 2015:

Programme	Beneficiaries 2015
PLC Programme	2,713
VTOS Programme	220
Regional Skills and Training Programme	2,848
BTEI (Back to Education) Programme	1,157
Adult Literacy Service	3,193
Community Education	1,011
Youthreach Programme	245
Evening Class Programme	2,024
Total No. Beneficiaries Louth FET Service:	13,411

8.2.10 Working Together

North East Further and Higher Education Alliance: Improving progression

It has been recognised that progression of learners into further education courses to equip them to take up employment is essential. Clear transfer and progression routes from all courses/programmes have been established

across the region as well as continuums of courses, thus enabling progression in qualifications level and ease of progression from one college and centre to another. PLC colleges OFI and DIFE, working in partnership with DkIT are founding members of NEFHEA (North East Further and Higher Education Alliance) which aims to promote higher take up of further and higher educational opportunities to all learners in the region and particularly to those groups of learners who are currently under represented. They also seek to provide improved progression opportunities for learners in the region, while ensuring complementarity of service provision, best use of resources and ease of transfer across institutions. Another aim of the alliance is to increase the transition rates of students from the further education

colleges in the north east region to DkIT. Innovative courses and programmes are being introduced there to meet the changing needs of the economy. Key areas include ICT, engineering, renewable energies, food science, culinary arts, animal care, sales and marketing, childcare, healthcare, laboratory science, and sports and recreation. For instance, Louth Co. Co. energy office is currently engaging with LMETB and SEAI to develop a Pilot Small Business Energy Assessors training course, where trainees as part of the course, will carry out energy assessments for up to 60 partners from the business community across Louth- Meath, as part of the practical element of the training course.

The ACE initiative: Nurturing entrepreneurs

The Accelerating Campus Entrepreneurship (ACE) initiative: Creating the Entrepreneurial Graduate⁵⁹ is a joint collaboration of Cork Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown, Institute of Technology Sligo and National University of Ireland Galway, which is being led by DkIT. It recognises that to encourage and sustain a vibrant, successful knowledge economy, Ireland must increase its

number and quality of indigenous companies and create graduates, irrespective of discipline, who are entrepreneurial thinkers and doers. The ACE Initiative, therefore, seeks to explore how the Higher Education Institutions in Ireland can develop and deliver a framework for embedding entrepreneurship education across all disciplines to fulfil the aim of 'Creating the Entrepreneurial Graduate.'

The LEO Student Enterprise Award schemes lays a foundation for this initiative in second level schools in Louth. It aims to give second level students the chance to think about entrepreneurship and self-employment as a viable career choice, and enhances the teaching of business and entrepreneurship in schools by combining class room learning with business reality.

The LEF Age Friendly Business plan also stresses the fact that upskilling and maintaining older people in the work force or giving them the opportunity to re-enter the work force, whether as employees or entrepreneurs/self-employed is a valuable asset which should be utilised throughout the county at different levels. Louth LEO already uses the skills and experience of older people to act in a mentoring capacity across a number of its programmes.



⁵⁹ Louth Economic Forum education and training strategy

8.3 Empowered Inclusive Communities

8.3.1 Louth: Empowering Communities

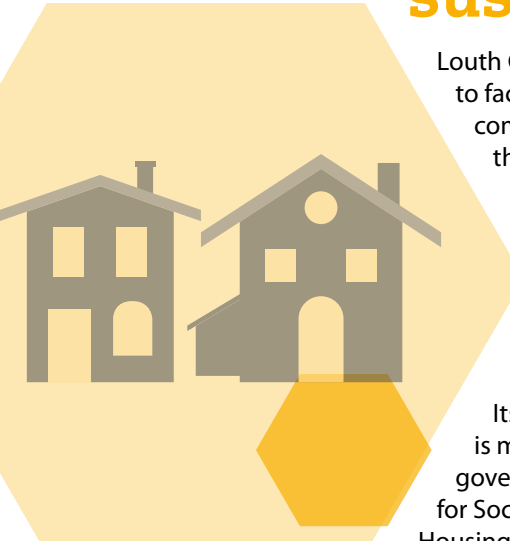
Louth County Council aims to encourage and support the development of inclusive communities; facilitating equal physical, social and cultural access and integration for everybody in the county. This is supported by one of the Local Economic and Community Plan's key deliverables: a statement of strategies and actions that will guide future development in a sustainable way, deliver more employment and prosperity; encourage increased participation and engagement in local communities, and ensure that everyone, regardless of their means, has access to services and education to enable a better quality of life, health and well-being.

In this instance, quality of life should not be confused with standard of living, which is based primarily on income. Instead, common indicators of quality of life include wealth and employment, the built environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, and social

belonging; each of these indicators is supported by actions in the LECP. Well-being refers to a person's physical, social and mental state. It requires that basic needs are met, that people have a sense of purpose, and that they feel able to achieve important goals, to participate in society and to live the lives they value and have reason to value⁶⁰.

Over its 6 year duration, critical indicators for the LECP will be the extent to which everybody in Louth has equal access to accommodation and employment; equal opportunity to avail of education and skills development throughout the life course, and confidence that they live in an inclusive society where poverty and social exclusion are shunned. This means having a place that can be called 'home' in a well-serviced environment free of anti-social behaviour. It means being able to access available skills development; no matter what age or stage of the course life and having an acceptable standard of living and quality of life, free from poverty.

8.3.2 Louth housing provision: Providing sustainable accommodation



Louth County Council aims to facilitate sustainable communities through the provision of accommodation that responds to the differing needs of local residents through a process of community planning. Its housing provision is managed through the government's Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing which, since the onset of the recession, has focused on providing social housing through

lease arrangements with existing property owners, and developers carrying unsold housing stock.

In addition, to normal direct provision by the Housing Authority, accommodation is supported through the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS); an initiative administered by local authorities in support of their social housing programmes. This involves good quality privately owned accommodation being leased on behalf of eligible tenants (people with permanent residency rights in the State who have a long-term housing need, and are in receipt of rent supplement for more than 18 months). The Rental

Accommodation Scheme is now additionally, supplemented by a government leasing scheme for unsold affordable houses and a long-term leasing initiative (of 10-20 year lease duration), whereby properties will be leased from the private sector (with rents guaranteed for the whole lease period, but subject to review depending on market conditions) and used to accommodate households from LCC waiting lists. Louth County Council is one of the pilot sites for the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) model of Social Housing Support and continues to promote it. The Housing Authority is therefore quite reliant on provision of suitable dwellings from the private rented sector.

Louth County Council also meets all Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) operating in the county on a periodic basis and is currently working with them to address supply for those with disability issues: mental health disabilities, mild intellectual disabilities or behavioural issues and those experiencing homelessness. Louth County Council has a strong record of working with these voluntary bodies for the provision of general housing needs and now has more than 700 units in use.

Over the period 2015 to 2017, approval in principal has been received from the Department of Environment for the provision of 778 dwelling units of all types. These will be delivered through Construction, Part V provision, Acquisition, Capital Assistance Scheme and Leasing. A similar commitment has been given for securing over 1600 tenancies through the HAP process for the same period.

⁶⁰ Our Communities: A Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland (2015)

8.3.3 Louth: Supporting sustainable communities

Sustainable empowered communities desire a sense of pride of place, a sense of belonging and positive self-image within a strong active community framework which involves them in participative community planning and decision-making and supports them through the many life cycle stages. This is reiterated in the most recent government policy document Our Communities: A Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland (2015), where it states that local economic regeneration and social cohesion can only be achieved through:

- a strong local government system securing individual and community engagement and participation in policy development, planning and delivery, and decision making processes;
- meaningful engagement with local communities, local development organisations and State bodies;
- robust local collaboration structures that encourage transparency, democratic legitimacy, accountability, participation and evidence-based decision making; and

- support for voluntary activity and active citizenship, underpinned by supporting the capacity of communities to pro-actively engage, as vital elements of flourishing communities.

The Framework for Community Development also noted that active citizens:

- support and become involved in different types of voluntary and community activities;
- respect and listen to those with different views from their own;
- play their part in making decisions on issues that affect themselves and others, in particular by participating in the democratic process;
- respect ethnic and cultural diversity and are open to change; and
- welcome new people who come to live in Ireland.

8.3.4 Louth: Enabling wellbeing

County Louth has a long history of involvement in community initiatives and service provision at local level, including libraries, leisure, recreation, arts and amenity facilities and services, as well as estate management, urban and village renewal, tidy towns, 'pride of place' and the operation of community employment schemes. Numerous organisations in Co Louth provide social, health and educational services to enhance social, cultural and economic development in the county. Apart from the statutory service delivery providers: Louth Co. Co., the Department for Social Protection, the HSE, An Garda Síochána, The Louth Children and Young People's Services Committee, Louth LEADER Partnership and Louth Meath Education Training Board,

there have been many projects funded by the Peace and Reconciliation Partnership through the Peace Programme and delivered in partnership with local communities. Family Resource Centres play an active part in building community capacity in LCC estates. Citizen's Information Services, youth services and other disadvantaged youth projects have high levels of engagement; the Northeastern Drugs and Alcohol Taskforce, the Age-friendly Alliance, traveller support groups, migrant support groups and Volunteer Louth, a support group for volunteers, are active across the county. This was apparent at the consultation conference in Castlebellingham where the spirit of volunteerism and partnership underway in many sectors was palpable.

8.3.5 Louth libraries: A community asset

A network of library services serves individual communities and the county as a whole, and is a valuable social and education resource for local communities providing opportunities for people to engage and connect with one another. There are five libraries in the county; Dundalk, Drogheda, Carlingford, Ardee and Dunleer. Dundalk and Drogheda provide a regional service. Additional services that have been introduced include RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) self service points/kiosks and free Wi-Fi access. The library service continues to expand its collection of eBooks and eAudio downloads. This service allows library members to browse the collection from home and download items to their computer or mobile device. The smaller libraries and mobile library service continue to improve library participation by reaching communities in the more local centres. The mobile library service has continued to extend its range of stops to suit the needs of the community,

incorporating as many stops as possible both urban and rural.

Looking at the census 2011 figures which showed that the numbers of people in the 65+ age group increasing by 14.4% in the previous five years, older people are now featuring as an increasingly significant demographic in the communities to be served by public libraries. Public libraries value their older customer base; support for older people is recognised as a natural progression along the route toward a more inclusive service for the entire community. The library service recognises that older users wish to avail of the entire range of library services including access to leisure reading collections, business




support and information on health. Over the lifetime of the LECP, the library service will be improving access by older people to information in the library's collection and elsewhere, including information available in other local community agencies and on the Internet, by various means such as the provision of:

- Visual and auditory access: clear signage, appropriate formats; large print books, audio books etc.;
- Physical access: buildings, floor levels, rooms, shelves, toilets etc.;

- Electronic access: information both in the library (PCs, CDs, DVDs) and on the Internet including social media;
- Assistive technologies: low tech magnification devices, MAGIC and/or AFFINITY screen magnification, JAWS screen reading software and Kurzweil text to speech.

They will also continue to provide targeted events, activities and educational programmes that are inclusive of older people.

8.3.6 Louth, a volunteering county



The benefits of volunteering cannot be underestimated in forging more inclusive communities at a local level. This is reflected in the dynamic spirit of volunteerism in local communities in Louth, who are supported by LCC and in many cases enabled by Volunteer Louth. British research⁶¹ undertaken in more marginalised communities noted that 'those at risk of social exclusion', including those out of work, with a disability, and ethnic minorities, showed lower levels and less inclination to volunteer.

Assessments of the barriers to volunteering for these groups indicated that volunteering should be open to, and inclusive of all social groups. Using this research as a comparative model and without local baseline data available, the LECP should provide an opportunity for more volunteerism at local level through the LCDC and PPN structures.

Many organisations work on a voluntary basis in Co Louth, and give their time in the sports and recreation sector. Individuals and community groups participate through the award-winning vibrant Tidy Towns infrastructure, and a lively arts scene is exemplified by local theatre groups, art galleries, individual artists and craft workers, and classical and contemporary music with an international reach and reputation. For many years, the Irish Country Women's Association based at An Grianán has made significant impact in creating a social and personal development framework for rural women all over the country. Macra na Feirme and the Irish Farmer's Association also played a capacity building role in the more rural areas and in more remote areas assist in combatting rural isolation. All of these are important and rich interventions that help build social capital, and have been a fundamental part of local and community development to date.

8.3.7 Louth, regenerating our communities

Louth County Council continues to revitalise areas by physical regeneration, planning, investment and community development via social inclusion measures. Louth Leader Partnership supports both urban and rural communities in the county, promoting social inclusion, enterprise development and employment creation; facilitating access to education, training and lifelong learning and assisting community groups to deal with the causes and consequences of social and economic disadvantage or poverty.

The Pobal-funded RAPID programme, administered by LCC and focusing on Peace III target groups and other local residents in the three Joint Policing Committee areas in Co Louth: Ardee, Drogheda and Dundalk, has made many positive interventions and fostered a collaborative approach to managing issues of concern to local communities. Some general programmes include The Incredible Years programme, an area based childhood initiative; a schools based programme for the 4-10 years age group; The Futsol League in collaboration with the FAI, and Midnight Soccer Leagues for the over 18 age group, incentivising positive relationship-building with An Garda Síochána, have been very successful.

Programmes and projects have been delivered in two designated areas of disadvantage in Dundalk over the past number of years: Cox's Demesne and Muirhevnamor, both RAPID and PEACE III target areas, under the guidance of a steering committee consisting of representatives of the local community, the voluntary sector, LCC, LMETB, SOLAS and An Garda Síochána. These include the redevelopment of Ashling Park, enterprise creation within the Muirhevnamor Community Gardens project; development of community based CCTV system and a range of educational and training related programmes.

The RAPID programme also enabled an interagency response to the identified needs of seven estates in Drogheda: Moneymore, Yellowbatter, Pearse Park, St Finian's Park, Rathmullen Park, Ballsgrove and Marian Park; targeting anti-social behaviour and installing CCTV; delivering new and improved services, developing health initiatives and public education programmes, providing new community facilities and implementing environmental improvements; all of which have encouraged positive engagement with their communities.

⁶¹ Understanding the drivers of volunteering in culture and sport: analysis of the Taking Part Survey 2011

8.3.8 Louth, celebrating our older people

Louth leads the way in innovatively forging new directions for older people and ensuring that they are valued. In April 2011, Louth had 13,477 people aged 65 years and over. 51.7% of retired people are male, the rest female. A third of people with disabilities in Louth are age 65+ and there are 4,944 widowed people in Louth, 76.6% of which are female. By 2036, it is anticipated that that older people in Ireland will be 20% of the total population and will include many people over 80.

The National Positive Ageing strategy stresses that Ireland will be 'a society in which the equality, independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity of older people are pursued at all times'. Independence, fulfilment, care, participation and dignity are principles underpinning the Louth Age-Friendly Alliance which endeavours to work in partnership with older people to create an age friendly environment in Louth. Among other elements such as empowering older people, engaging with them across all strands of community life and valuing their contribution, it seeks to enable people to grow older with confidence, security and dignity in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. The HSE has acknowledged this need in providing Step Down facilities in Louth County Hospital and the Cottage Hospital, the Stroke Rehabilitation Unit in Louth County Hospital, the Medical Assessment Unit and GENIO.

Since its inception, the strategy has pioneered a number of direct and indirect initiatives which have enhanced older peoples' safety and quality of life in the county; ranging from establishing a safe age-friendly parks programme, 'walkability' programmes where improvements have been put in place to make rural and urban areas easier, safer and more pleasant places to walk; as well as providing easier access to public buildings, public pavements programmes, and adapting traffic light timings and road and street signage to suit older peoples' needs. Members of Louth Garda Síochána link into the Louth Age-Friendly strategy where they undertake to work in partnership with Louth Age-Friendly Alliance and LCC, encourage older persons' participation in Neighbourhood Watch and Community Text Alert initiatives and other crime prevention initiatives; use local media outlets to promote safety and security and to communicate with older people across the county and visit older persons' groups on a regular basis to promote different Garda initiatives.

Louth is the first county in Ireland to earn the World Health Organisation (WHO) designation as an 'Age-Friendly County' and numerous initiatives are underway under the aegis of the Louth Economic Forum using smart technologies to enhance quality of life for people as they grow older.

8.3.9 Older people: Adding value

International research has pointed to the effectiveness of intergenerational programmes which by their nature emphasise a culture of respect to enhance understanding between older people and younger people. It fulfils older peoples' need to mentor, share and pass on their experience to the younger generation and leads to greater mutual respect ultimately⁶². It has also become apparent that apart from diluting the sense of isolation experienced by many older people and restoring a feeling of self-worth that intergenerational practice and interaction has an important role to play in neighbourhood renewal, and in building stronger community relationships. The value of the intergenerational approach was stressed during the LECP consultation; noting that it gave mutual access and enjoyment to both older and younger people. Delegates declared that it also brings people together in 'purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations'. In addition, it contributes to building more cohesive communities.

'Intergenerational practice is inclusive, building on the positive resources that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them'⁶³.

A number of intergenerational projects⁶⁴ have already taken place in Co Louth under the aegis of Louth County Council's Age-Friendly County and have proven very successful: DVD Generations, where Louth County Council and Louth Comhairle na nÓg comprising 3 older people and 3 younger people jointly produced a DVD capturing attitudes of both groups towards one another and Growing through the Ages, which involved a collaboration between Louth County Council and groups of younger and older people in creating biodiversity gardens in Ardee and Blackrock. In all, 150 people from 2 years upwards participated. At a consultation focus group meeting of Ardee community safety 'text alert' groups, members of the Ardee intergenerational group stressed the value of this kind of activity to the participants.

8.3.10 Louth, encouraging our younger people

National policy for young people Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures highlights 5 keys transformative goals and outcomes for young people from:

- focusing on early interventions and quality

services to promoting best outcomes for children, particularly in the vitally-important early years;

- working better together to protect young

⁶² Towards More Confident Communities, Beth Johnson Foundation

⁶³ Beth Johnson Foundation 2001

⁶⁴ Intergenerational Projects: An Overview. Caroline Finn and Thomas Scharf. Irish Centre for Social Gerontology. NUIG

- people who are marginalised, at-risk or who demonstrate challenging or high-risk behaviour;
- setting a target of lifting 70,000 children out of poverty by 2020;
- improving childhood health & wellbeing in line with goals of 'Healthy Ireland';
- enhancing job opportunities for young people – building on the 'Action Plan for Jobs' and Youth Guarantee; and,
- delivering better supports for families and parenting.

Census 2011 indicates that Louth has the second largest population of young people (35.3%) in the country after Kildare, (35.4%). Louth Children's Services Committees is responsible for improving the lives of children and families at local and community level through integrated planning,

working and service delivery. Louth Comhairle na nÓg encourages young people to be heard and supports them to input meaningfully to decision-making in issues that affect them; they are considered a key stakeholder for the purposes of highlighting young people's needs and priorities for delivery by the LECP.

Peer leadership programmes and creatively connecting with young people across all social strata through the arts, and sport have sown very positive seeds for future engagement with them. Findings from the 2014 Community Safety Survey of young people pointed to the lack of youth facilities and job opportunities available to them in the county. These were issues highlighted during the consultation process for the LECP. Matters relating to young people at risk or those 'harder to reach' are further discussed in the integrated priority on health and wellbeing.

8.3.11 Louth, marking our difference

Where Louth markedly differentiates itself is its border county status, its long standing involvement with the Northern conflict and the repercussions of the conflict north and south of the border. While much progress has been made to alleviate the tensions, the legacy of those times is still very alive in local memory and there are many people who were imprisoned during the troubles, who were 'displaced' during the troubles, who lost family members during the troubles, who were young people growing up during those times or who were associated in one way or another with the fallout of the conflict. Among factors highlighted in the 2014 Community Safety survey by those 'displaced' by the conflict were a belief that they are marginalised through disadvantage, unemployment and poor educational opportunity and their frustration with what they deemed to be the impact of institutional discrimination on, and marginalisation of, a uniquely disadvantaged community

with a diverse demographic profile.

Apart from the considerable investment in regeneration of areas where displaced people have settled in Dundalk and Drogheda, programmes such as the Diverse Leaders' Programme (LMETB)⁶⁵ which sought to build the leadership skills of minority and excluded groups in the hope of creating more cohesive communities, and the Aftermath Programme (Diversity Challenges)⁶⁶ whose aim was to identify and engage a broad range of people impacted by the conflict, (both funded by the PEACE III project) have accomplished an enormous amount. The Peace of Art Project⁶⁷ which used the arts as a tool to create links across cultures, languages and religions and aimed to increase understanding of diversity, identity and conflict resolution within the wider community, has also been particularly effective in integrating new communities and dispelling fear and misunderstanding.

8.3.12 Louth, acknowledging diversity

With the rapid social and economic changes in Ireland, the transformation in Louth's population profile since the 2006 census, and the ongoing activity of the PEACE III programme to address this legacy of conflict in the border counties, Louth has also become one of the most diverse communities in the country. There are increased numbers of non-Irish nationals - many of them highly educated and ambitious - who have settled permanently in the county. Figures from the 2011 census reveal in some detail the variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the new communities in the county, which serve to highlight the challenges for service providers in building harmonious interaction within communities. Non-Irish nationals accounted for 10.4% of the population

of Louth. Polish was the most common language spoken at home, while 12, 826 persons spoke a language other than Irish or English at home. UK nationals were the largest group (2,018) followed by Polish nationals (1,880). There were 106,845 Roman Catholics in the area at census time. A further 8,882 were adherents of other stated religions (e.g. Church of Ireland, Islam, Presbyterian, Orthodox), while 5,414 persons indicated that they had no religion.

It is worth noting that while different minority ethnic

⁶⁵ Muslim community Intercultural day, Men's Shed Dundalk; Culture Connect Drogheda; Louth Traveller Movement; Wellington Hall project; Muirthevnamor Displaced People's Project; Islamic foundation of Drogheda Intercultural Day ;Simul Polonia; Muslim Interfaith Project; Drogheda Civic Trust

⁶⁶ Victims Programme and Displaced Persons' Programme

⁶⁷ 15 multi-disciplinary projects were supported via PEACE III funding.



communities and Irish travellers can experience similar problems with regard to racism and discrimination and have similar needs, the reality is more complex. It is also interesting to note that there is a clear link between poverty and racism. Minority groups have expressed concerns about the 'one solution fits all' approach to their issues. The Traveller community has expressed particular concerns in this regard. This is borne out by the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 which identifies Travellers, migrants and members of ethnic minority groups as groups vulnerable to poverty and disadvantage. This factor presents the added challenge of racist behaviour and in many instances acts as an inhibitor to cohesive

community building in already marginalised, disadvantaged communities where there is low educational attainment. The critical role of community development work has been highlighted to prevent social polarisation and alienation of these communities. It has also been stressed that involving communities in their own development as well as in shaping the integration process will be critical to ensure community cohesion. In a number of submissions to the LECP, Pavee Point, on behalf of Travellers and Roma communities, among other issues, sought more representation and participation in decision-making at local level for their groups and more policies and programmes to support Travellers in enterprise, the mainstream labour market and the Traveller economy.

8.3.13 Louth, affecting peace and reconciliation

The Louth Peace and Reconciliation Partnership's four objectives touched on capacity-building of its target groups to engage meaningfully in anti-sectarian and anti-racist work. It also aimed to build and share learning in a 'safe' space to address sectarianism and racism while appreciating and valuing other cultures and supporting peace-building leadership across the county; encouraging a more inclusive society through relationship building, and facilitating community dialogue. It invested significantly in initiatives to address racism and sectarianism in Co Louth. These have been delivered through focusing on children and young people; supporting the PEACE III target groups including minority communities, local victims and survivors, and displaced persons, and those who experience, and are

affected by sectarianism and racism. LMETB, Louth County Libraries, LLP, Creative Spark and other community and voluntary organisations have been instrumental in working with these communities. One particularly effective initiative has been the establishment in 2010 of the Louth Minority Ethnic Consortium, whose members link in in different ways with An Garda Síochána and Louth County Council. Its membership focuses on issues of difference, ethnicity, culture and religion; explores issues of racism and sectarianism, and supports conflict resolution and mediation, at a local level in Co Louth and on a north/south basis. Irish Travellers, Dundalk Muslim Community, Simul and Louth African Women's Group are members of the group.

8.3.14 Louth, where communities feel safer

One of the most critical indicators for local communities to reflect quality of life and wellbeing is community safety or the perception of feeling safe in a locality. More often than not, their most significant concerns are those relating to safety and security and County Louth is no different. However, where Louth markedly differentiates itself is its border county status, its long standing involvement with the Northern conflict and the repercussions of the conflict north and south of the border.

Results from the 2014 county-wide Community Safety Survey demonstrated that approximately 8 in 10 residents and businesses in Louth responded that they were proud of the area where they live and work; describing it as open and welcoming, and accepting of new people. Through the partnership approach taken to date by Louth Co Co and Louth LEADER Partnership, this sense of place appears to be very strong e.g. exemplified in Louth's innovative approach to addressing the needs of its older people, its very strong local community networks and its Tidy Towns initiative, to

name but a few. Looking to the future it is clear that residents are keen for their areas to shift towards greater employment, to foster a greater sense of being open and welcoming, accepting of new people, respectful, positive and safe.

Building successful safer communities is about creating a trust in people that agencies are prepared to listen, are willing to engage and are ready to act with them, and on their behalf to combat anti-social behaviour and low level disorder. The Community Safety Strategy for Louth will act as a supporting framework for the Louth LECP and will attempt to assuage and address concerns expressed during the extensive community safety strategy consultation process, and additionally, raised by stakeholders throughout the consultation for the LECP. It will provide a six year cross-agency plan for the Joint Policing Committee which acting on an area basis will adopt area-focused priorities and measurable actions to address the impact of crime, substance misuse and anti-social behaviour in the county.

8.3.15 Louth, looking to the future

Developing sustainable solutions to the needs of local communities will be one of the key challenges facing the combined resources of the LCDC. It will entail supporting social enterprise, social capital, encouraging volunteering and promoting active citizenship. No single agency or group has the single solution to achieving the desired cultural and attitudinal change. Agencies and other service-providers working at a systemic level across sectors, with mutual interlinking of strategic priorities and actions in an environment of tolerance and respect, will be essential to ensure peaceful community co-existence, where new and existing residents adapt to one another and to their local areas within a shared set of values and purpose.

Empowering community involvement in decision-making processes regarding their futures will be enhanced by the ongoing development of the Louth Public Participation Network (PPN) which is central to local community consultation and engagement. Louth LCDC also has parallel mechanisms of engagement and consultation through its membership and how it communicates with individual groups and communities; particularly those suffering geographic isolation, lack of basic services and those who are marginalised and hard to reach. PPN representation on the Louth LCDC will facilitate productive two-way information sharing.

8.4 Health & Wellbeing

8.4.1 Health: Ensuring equal opportunities

realise his or her own abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and be able to make a contribution to his or her community. The strategy emphasises that consideration of health and wellbeing requires a shift in focus from what can go wrong in people's lives, to focusing on what makes their lives go well⁶⁸.

The Healthy Ireland definition of health and wellbeing underpinned discussion at the LECP consultation process and, in tandem with current HSE priorities in Louth, is the basis upon which the LECP health goals, objectives and actions were agreed. In the 2011 census, 87.8% of the total population in Louth stated that they were in very good or good health, marginally down on the national figure which stood at 88.3% of total persons. 1.7% of total persons in Louth said they were in bad or very bad health. Again, this compares with 1.5% of total persons nationally, and is not surprising when Louth's deprivation levels and its pockets of disadvantaged communities are considered.

It is widely acknowledged that people in lower socio-economic groups experience higher levels of chronic ill health and die younger. A report issued by the WHO on the social determinants of health notes that inequalities in health do not arise by chance⁶⁹. It asserts that they are shaped by the unequal distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels. The factors that influence our lives most and that shape health inequalities are the social, economic and environmental conditions in which we live and how they interact.

Good health is a key factor in employment, earnings, productivity, economic development and growth. According to Healthy Ireland, the latest HSE strategy on addressing public health issues in Ireland today, health is an essential resource for everyday life and healthy people contribute to the health and quality of the society in which they live, work and play. Wellbeing is an integral part of this definition of health. It reflects the quality of life that a person experiences and the various factors which can influence it throughout the life course. Wellbeing also reflects the concept of positive mental health, in which a person can

⁶⁸ Healthy Ireland: A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025

⁶⁹ WHO. Health 2020. Policy Framework and Strategy. 2012

8.4.2 Health care in the community: A new model

Community health care services already play a critical role in promoting health and wellbeing by making every healthcare contact count and by working across sectors to create the conditions which support good health, on equal terms, for the entire population. Community Healthcare services place a strong emphasis on working with communities and individuals to maintain and improve health and social wellbeing. A HSE report commissioned in 2013 on integrated health care models stressed the importance of developing an integrated model of care which would be responsive to the needs of local communities. Desired outcomes from this

approach included better access; services that are close to where people live without reducing quality; better local decision making; and services in which communities have confidence. The HSE's corporate plan 2015-2017 guarantees quality community and primary care services, which are easily accessible and close to where people live with 95% of all care in the community, outside of acute hospitals. A wide range of health and personal social services are provided to the communities of Co. Louth through the Local Health Office in Louth Community Care Services and through other local Health Centres based in the county.

8.4.3 The first responder scheme: Improving outcomes

A key outcome from the 2014 HIQA review of pre-hospital emergency care services (and an issue raised at the LECP consultation process) was to establish community first responder (CFR) schemes on a system wide basis to work alongside the national ambulance service particularly and in provincial urban and rural communities. The survival rates for out of hospital cardiac arrest in Ireland are not as good as many other countries and the establishment of these schemes is one way of improving outcomes, particularly as

Ireland is significantly more rural than many comparable countries. With 130 schemes currently integrated into the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) and taking all emergency ambulance calls; the National Ambulance Service in conjunction with a voluntary body, CFR Ireland, will be both supporting and targeting communities to develop these schemes as part of the LECP implementation process at local level.

8.4.4 Encouraging physical activity: Get Ireland Active

Get Ireland Active: The National Physical Activity Programme for Ireland⁷⁰ points out people experiencing social or economic disadvantage are often the least active or the most sedentary and may experience other health risks due to their diets, social connectedness or other behaviours.

- Inactive children are at risk of poorer self-esteem, higher anxiety and higher stress levels. They are more likely to smoke and use alcohol and illegal drugs than active children.
- Students with parents in higher socio-economic occupations are more likely to be active participants in physical activity and sports. The research also showed that this socio-economic difference is not specific to the type of activity, but applies to both team and individual sports⁷¹.
- Research from 2006 on 'Physical activity, Health and Quality of Life among People with Disabilities' shows that people with disabilities who met the recommended level of physical activity were more likely to report

a good quality of life, compared to their less active peers.

- Among working adults, inactive employees have double the number of days absenteeism from work compared with employees who are physically active.
- In later life, inactive people lose basic strength and flexibility for daily activities and many can lose independence and suffer from poorer mental health. A similar picture has been recorded by TILDA, The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing, which found that only 34% of older Irish adults report high levels of physical activity. In general across all age groups in the TILDA study, men are more active than women.



⁷⁰ National Guidelines on Physical Activity for Ireland – 'Get Ireland Active'

⁷¹ The Irish Sports Monitor 2013 Annual Report. 2014

8.4.5 Addressing inequalities

Healthy Ireland asserts that health is a collective responsibility and a decision which belongs to every citizen. It signals that achieving a changed approach to health and wellbeing requires an all embracing effort from across all sectors of society. While creating healthy sustainable communities will differ from area to area, researchers point out that critical factors to be addressed when seeking to reduce inequalities consistently include⁷²:

- Healthy childhood and early child development and education
- Positive and healthy ageing
- Employment and working conditions
- The built environment
- Healthy eating and active living

- A tobacco free Ireland
- Prevent and reduce substance misuse and alcohol-related harm
- Mental health and wellbeing/ suicide prevention
- Sustainability
- Social Inclusion and equality of access
- Disability
- Safety

While the Health Service Executive is the lead actor in health service delivery in Louth, local government has a significant supporting role to play in each of these areas through the newly appointed LCDCs and the PPN structures.

8.4.6 Creating a healthy county

Louth Co Council's Development Plan 2015-2021 acknowledges the importance of the built environment as an important determinant of physical activity and behaviour. Supportive environments for walking, cycling and recreational and outdoor physical activity have many benefits beyond the immediate physical activity gains; fulfilling air quality standards and reducing CO2 emissions, traffic congestion and noise pollution. Good quality and safe cycling and walking facilities and their use, particularly

in urban areas, can make a valuable contribution to the reduction in traffic congestion and the encouragement of significant modal shift away from dependency on the car as a mode of transport. The Development Plan also highlights the benefits of the walking and cycling routes being developed in the county not only for tourists but promotes their use as a quality of life indicator for local communities too.

8.4.7 Improving young people's health outcomes

Unfortunately, there are no recent, statistically validated population projections by age group available for County Louth. For this reason, it is impossible to predict with some accuracy the growth of the county's youth population in the coming years. However, projections are available from 2004. These projections have shown very little divergence for 2011 when comparing predicted with actual numbers and may therefore be considered indicative for the coming years. Based on these projections, Louth's population of 10 to 24 year olds is likely to increase by a further 16 per cent to over 28,000 in 2021 (for a breakdown⁷³). This is validated by population projections published by the Central Statistics Office in 2006, which presume that with immigration at moderate levels and a decreased fertility rate, County Louth's youth population would be estimated to increase to 26,600 in 2021. These figures impose an onus on all relevant agencies to address young people's issues. It is estimated that:

- more than 2,850 children in Louth (aged 0 to 18 years) are living in consistent poverty. An additional 2,500 in the 10 to 18 year age cohort are at risk of poverty;

- the number of young people with a disability has increased drastically in the last five years. Approximately 6% of young people aged 15 to 24 years live with a disability. Less than a quarter of these are registered with the national disability databases;
- there are 324 children and young people in Louth who act as carers. The likelihood of becoming a carer increases with age;
- there may be up to 1,150 young LGBT people in Louth. However, it is likely that this number is lower as many LGBT people relocate to urban centres and Dublin and Belfast are within easy reach;
- Nine out of ten young people in Louth are white, Irish, and Roman Catholic. Over 6% have a non-white (including mixed) background;
- the 2011 Census recorded 285 young Irish Travellers (between 10 and 24 years of age) in County Louth which constitute almost a third of the Traveller population in the county.

⁷² Marmot 2010

⁷³ Demographic profile of young people in Co Louth



8.4.8 Intervening early: Better outcomes

Early childhood intervention was one of the key issues to arise at the LECP conference in Bellingham Castle. Figures from the 2011 census shows that 19.2% of Louth population were in the 0-4 and 5-11 age groups compared to 17.5% in the state. Participants stressed the importance of engaging with parents and children alike to ensure socially adapted children who receive full access to educational opportunity to enable them fulfil their potential. Louth Children's Services Committee (CYPSC) has chartered an agreed path for the delivery of services to children and young people in Louth in line with local needs and the five national outcomes for children. It has brought together all the statutory and voluntary agencies involved in providing services and supports to children, young people and their families in Louth in order to ensure better interagency working, planning, sharing of resources and ultimately better outcomes for children and young people in County Louth. CYPSC priorities are addressed by sub-groups:

- Education;
- Tackling alcohol and drugs misuse;
- Youth homelessness;
- Prevention, partnership and family support;
- Young people at risk;
- Youth participation;
- Children First implementation;
- Research and information.

The Genesis programme which involves a consortium of some 50 Partner Organisations is currently implementing the Incredible Years suite of programmes to children between 0-6 years, their families and their communities in a number of deeply entrenched areas of disadvantage where equality of opportunity is lacking, and social exclusion is prolonged in Dundalk and Drogheda. It covers 7 Electoral Divisions and 74 Small Areas with a total population of 18,645. The

Young people at risk: Intervening positively

At 14.4 per 100,000, suicide among young people is a particular concern in Ireland, where the mortality rate from suicide in the 15-24 age group is the fourth highest in the EU, and the third highest among young men aged 15-19. Census 2011 puts the youth suicide rate in Ireland at 21.9% in the 10-17 year age cohort. There is no data available at county level. In a submission to the LECP, CYPSC stated that there is concern about information deficits with regard to mental health services and how to access them for young people, their parents and professionals working with them. Existing health services struggle to meet the demand. There is no defined youth mental health initiative in the county e.g. Headstrong where young people are targeted in a youth friendly environment. While there are national gaps in service provision for 16-17 year olds, who fall between child and adult services, CYPSC notes that introducing an intervention like the Headstrong model could be an early intervention service which might prevent more costly intervention at a later stage.

programme's goal is to prevent and treat young children's behavioural problems and promote their social, emotional and academic competence to improve life choices and outcomes for themselves and their families. CYPSC notes that to date this programme has proven very successful but that it is important that its future is ensured and that it extends to other parts of the county.

Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, the national policy framework for children and young people for 2014 to 2020, aims to ensure that children and young people are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing. Children growing up in active families will also be physically active and family and community are the natural environments for the growth and wellbeing of children. It noted that all children should experience opportunities to be physically active as part of their normal living, and it is important that children develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours likely to enhance lifelong engagement in physical activity and good health.

Programmes such as the Active School Flag (ASF) and the Health Promoting Schools initiatives, already being delivered in schools in Louth, are designed to recognise schools and communities that aim to achieve a physically educated and physically active school community. Schools that are involved in these initiatives are recognised for their efforts in providing a quality programme for all students and for promoting physical activity across the whole school community.



8.4.9 Young people with disabilities: Being inclusive

The 2011 Census sought to establish the type and degree of disabilities among young people in Co Louth for the first time. It shows that difficulty in learning, remembering, or concentrating are the most commonly experienced disability in the 15 to 24 year age group with 2.8%. Just over 300 young people have a difficulty in working or attending school/college. 286 young people are affected by chronic illness or disabilities outside the physical and intellectual disability categories.

Teenagers with a disability should be able to participate in mainstream youth education/training and social activities

and CYPSC recommends that inclusive social groups be formed to provide children and young people with a disability the opportunity to develop their skills and ultimately their self-esteem through their participation in sport, cultural and other social activities according to their abilities. The value of youth work and youth development must be recognised if young people are to experience quality of life and wellbeing. Comhairle na nÓg consultations with young people at a general level acknowledge the importance of involving them and supporting their democratic participation and social engagement necessary for them to meet life's challenges.

8.4.10 Improving health outcomes for Travellers

The 2010 research, *Our Geels*, the All Ireland Traveller Health Survey (AITHS) reports that the general healthcare experience of Travellers is not as good as the general population, with communication cited as a major issue by both Travellers and service providers. Moreover, trust in services is a theme, and the AITHS found that the level of complete trust by Travellers in health professionals was only 41%. This compares with a trust level of 83% by the general population in health professionals. Travellers have a greater burden of chronic diseases than the general population, with conditions such as back conditions, diabetes, and heart attack increased by a factor of 2, and respiratory conditions such as asthma and chronic bronchitis increased by a factor of 2-4, in comparison with the general SLAN⁷⁴ population.

Findings also indicate that Travellers are a 'high-risk' group for suicide as suicide is 6 times higher for Travellers than the general population. This figure is reflective of confirmed suicide cases by the General Register Office (GRO) and does

not take into account external causes of death such as alcohol or drug overdose, which accounted for almost 50% of all Traveller male external causes of death. Suicide rates are nearly 7 times higher in Traveller men compared with the general male population. Suicide accounts for 11% of all Traveller deaths.⁷⁵

Access to health services is good, according to the research, with Travellers stating that their access is at least as good as that of the rest of the population. Access to primary care services is an important element of health services delivery. Over 94% of Travellers have a medical card with this figure rising to 99% in the older age group and nearly 97% of all Travellers are registered with a GP. The AITHS findings also reported that both Travellers and health service providers interviewed acknowledged that 'social determinants' were the main cause of the poor health status of Travellers, this includes accommodation, education, employment, poverty, discrimination, lifestyle and access and utilisation of services.

8.4.11 Improving health and wellbeing for older people

Louth's position as the first Age-Friendly County in the WHO global age-friendly cities network has paved the way for many initiatives for older people to improve their health and wellbeing. Following consultation with a sub-group of older people living there, Ardee became the county's first age-friendly town. Pedestrian crossings, railings, seats, traffic lights and exercise equipment have been provided and located at places agreed by the subgroup. Safety and security was addressed by improving the public lighting, cutting hedges and opening up areas to cut down on anti-social behaviour while local businesses also agreed protocols for

older people.

A number of ground breaking projects have been launched from the CASALA research centre based in DkIT: Great Northern Haven works to enhance the quality of life of older people through Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) technologies via sensor and healthcare technologies; each of them aiming to enhance older people's ability to live within their own communities for as long as possible. The Cave Automatic Virtual Environment (CAVE) is a cube shaped room which offers a multi-person, multiscreen, high-res 3D video and

⁷⁴ Survey of Lifestyle Attitudes and Nutrition

⁷⁵ Evidence & Recommendations on Mental Health, Suicide and Travellers. Pavée Point

audio interactive environment. As the user moves and interacts within the display boundaries, the correct 3D perspective is displayed in real time to achieve a fully immersive experience.

The GENIO (Dementia Friendly Environments) programme has made considerable progress with the development of a pilot "Passport" for patients with dementia. This will allow the patient to have all information with them should they need to attend hospital appointments or be admitted to acute hospitals. It is not always evident that a patient has dementia when entering an acute hospital setting and this often has a very traumatic effect on both the patient and other patients. Additionally, two psychiatrists have been appointed by the HSE with a geriatrician, based in Louth County Hospital, which is a 'step down' facility for older people prior to returning to their own homes or taking up a nursing home place, to address older people's specific issues.



The concept of The Parlour was also developed by Louth Older People's Forum where older people's frontline services such as Drogheda and District Support 4 Older People, Drogheda Senior Citizen's Interest Group and Cuidigh Linn provide drop in centres where older

people can call in to find out information on services, access care and repair, safety and security pendants and care to drive services. The Parlours use the website to access information in a one-stop-shop format. The Great Northern Haven is also deemed a Parlour where older people residing in the GNH use the communal space to meet other older people in the community for classes, information sessions and social gatherings. Equally a website No Wrong Door pioneered by Louth Age-Friendly Alliance communications group was designed to be used by older people, families of older people, frontline services for older people and public services for older people. Louth Age-Friendly County also developed a resource/toolkit to share Louth's learning with other counties contemplating implementing an Age-Friendly Programme.

Through consultation with older people, men were highlighted as a target group that were vulnerable and isolated particularly men that did not/had not engaged socially. The Louth Men's Sheds project was initiated under the Age-Friendly Initiative and targets men at risk of isolation or experiencing major life changes. The 'shed' environment encourages men to share skills and learn new ones for example, skills in wood turning, mechanical work and horticulture, to name but a few. Socialising is a large part of the project too, providing opportunities for the development of new friendships as well as the renewal of old ones. Three sheds - Dundalk, Drogheda and Cooley - have been developed to date and recommendations from the consultation point to the need to establish further Men's Sheds across the county. All of these initiatives improve quality of life and enhance older people's connectedness.

The Library Service: Staying connected

The County Library service also contributes to older people's mental health and social engagement by adopting the age-friendly library concept and improving access by older people to information in the library's collection and elsewhere, including information available in other local community agencies and on the Internet. Plans to further enhance the older person's library experience within the lifetime of the LECP include the provision of:

- Visual and auditory access: clear signage, appropriate formats – large print books, audio books etc.
- Better physical access to buildings, floor levels, rooms, shelves, toilets etc.
- Electronic access: to information both in the library (PCs, CDs, DVDs) and on the Internet including social media.
- Assistive technologies: such as low tech magnification devices, MAGIC and/or AFFINITY screen magnification, JAWS screen reading software and Kurzweil text to speech software.

8.4.12 Rural transport: Connecting rural communities

Transport is a critical factor in enabling independent living while connectivity to services and social events is crucial to longevity. The Age-Friendly programme has had meaningful consultation with older people and people with disabilities, so that they can provide solutions to ensure that transport services are responsive, realistic and participative and influenced by those who need them most. Increased opportunities to accessible transport contributes to social inclusion, reduced expenditure on health, option

to remain at home for longer as people age, reduction in expenditure on social care, and a greater sense of wellbeing and happiness. The Rural Transport Programme (RTP) service creates a sense of independence for people. This is key in fostering self-esteem and confidence. It also serves to reduce the sense of obligation and loss of control associated with reliance on family members for transport. Equally, as older people bemoan busier family lives, and decreasing inter-generational contact (especially during the daytime) they are

becoming ever more dependent on services such as the RTP for basic access to services and healthcare. Access to health services and to shopping services have been identified as services of greatest need in Louth and in 2015, funding was granted to restore services to the Men's Shed in Omeath area,

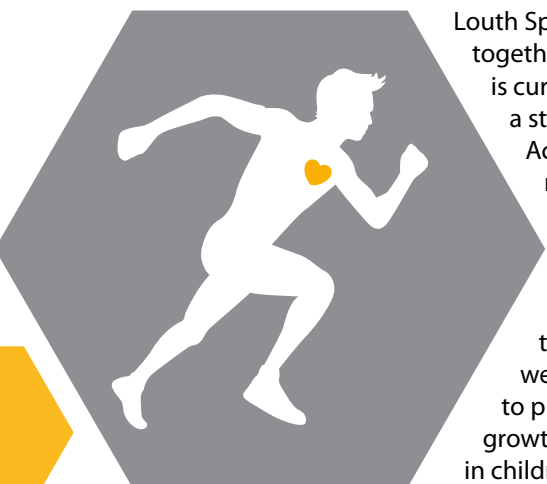
secure the return of the Monasterboice to Dundalk service and resume the weekly service to Ardee or Carrickmacross. Additionally, a community car service is shortly to be rolled out in Co Louth.

8.4.13 Opening up spaces for active communities

Louth's County Development Plan 2015-2021 states that community buildings and sports and recreation facilities play a very important role in fostering a sense of community identity and well being. With the substantial increase in population in the county and projected further growth, it is important that the necessary facilities are provided throughout the county and in new residential developments. It recommends that public open space should be provided in a variety of forms to cater for the active and passive recreational needs of the community: informal flat kick-about areas, circuit training facilities, formal playing fields, together with playgrounds for a specific age group;

Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP) as specified by the National Playing Fields Association for 4-8 year olds or a Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP) for 8-12 year olds and village greens in larger developments depending upon community requirements. In addition, it notes that community facilities, as far as is practical, should be readily accessible from residential areas by safe, convenient and direct walking routes. In this regard, the layouts of new residential developments need to facilitate pedestrian and cycle movements thus encouraging communities to be active and to take regular exercise.

8.4.14 Louth Sports Partnership: Reaching out to communities



Louth Sports Partnership together with its partners is currently devising a strategy based on Active Ireland's recommendations. The strategy reinforces the multiple benefits of physical activity to health and wellbeing, and aims to promote healthy growth and development in children and young people. It will include actions to target priority groups with

a particular emphasis on engaging with those young people who might have less access to team sports or involvement in physical activity. Apart from creating greater awareness about how to overcome barriers to participation and recognise opportunities to be active as part of normal daily lives, it will also address ways at promoting the benefits of physical activity among the growing numbers of older people in the county.

The community sport and physical activity hubs in disadvantaged areas was initiated in Louth through the LSP and the 'Sports Leadership programme' funded by Sports Ireland saw 20 TY students from 5 secondary schools over 6 weeks becoming Community Sports Leaders. Currently 3 exercise programmes are running throughout the county

for older adults. Zumba and Chairobics classes are being conducted for adults with disabilities through the Darro Centre, Drogheda and REHAB Care in Dundalk. The Rising Stars golf programme is being rolled out to students in Louth and more than 1,000 children participated in LSP primary Schools cross country events run simultaneously in both Drogheda and Dundalk.

Many different organisations, agencies, groups and individuals in Co Louth ranging from the GAA through to local rugby clubs, boxing clubs, athletic clubs and cycling clubs are involved in promoting, delivering or supporting programmes which encourage people to be active. A 'Parkrun' weekly event is held in the DkIT grounds and Muirhevnamor District Park while initiatives like Operation Transformation have attracted community participation in physical activity and encourage new models of engagement. A number of initiatives to encourage healthy workplaces and to implement a 'healthy workplace' policy have created a supportive environment that protects and promotes the physical, mental and social wellbeing of employees.

With LCC support, Dundalk Sports Centre will be opening in 2016. Funding was received through the Sports Capital programme for the Pitches 4 Drogheda programme; almost 300 primary and secondary school children are receiving coaching through the basketball outreach programme while sports clubs throughout the county received support through the sport clubs grant scheme. This kind of physical activity provides opportunities for social interaction that helps to build community networks, reduce isolation and exclusion and build social cohesion.

8.4.15 Tackling substance and alcohol misuse in Louth

Alcohol consumption and substance misuse have a significant impact on wellbeing and quality of life in local communities. The impact of anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and family disruption as well as a community's perception of a safe environment have been consistently acknowledged by agencies and service providers in the north east region since 1998⁷⁶. Between 2001- 2006, County Louth was reported to have the highest average incidence of new cases presenting for drug treatment⁷⁷.

The national Drug Prevalence Survey (2007) noted that alcohol and tobacco, followed by benzodiazepines, anti-depressants and tranquillisers, are the most commonly used legal drugs in the north east region, while cannabis is still the most commonly used illicit drug. Statistics on the use of cocaine, whose use has increased by 63% since 2003⁷⁸, further indicate that cocaine use is rarely stand alone, and the trend indicates a wider poly drug use culture which includes ecstasy use, cannabis and alcohol.

The North Eastern Regional Drugs Task Force (NERDTF) was established in 2003 and covers the geographic counties of Louth, Meath, Cavan and Monaghan. It works in partnership

with statutory agencies, community, voluntary and statutory representatives to tackle the harm caused to individuals and society by the misuse of drugs and alcohol through a concerted focus on the National Substance Misuse Strategy's five pillars of supply reduction, education, treatment, rehabilitation and research.⁷⁹

In parallel, Louth County Council, has recognised the extent to which alcohol and substance misuse are affecting peoples' quality of life in certain areas in the county. With the publication of the six year strategy for the county-wide Joint Policing Committees: A Community Safety Strategy for Louth, together with its focus on substance and alcohol misuse, a NERDTF strategy implementation group has been established; comprising of key stakeholders working together to consider how the National Substance Misuse Strategy actions could continue to be implemented on a cross-agency basis. A number of priority actions have been agreed for the region with distinct responsibilities allocated to the NERDTF pillar-themed subcommittees which will be supported by the Community Safety Strategy substance misuse theme.

8.5 Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Enterprise

8.5.1 Louth: Supporting entrepreneurs

Successful entrepreneurship, innovation and enterprise rely on the environment created by people and place. The LECP has identified objectives and actions to promote this integrated priority, largely informed by the action plans of the Louth Economic Forum (LEF) which is dedicated to enhancing the business environment of Louth. Entrepreneurship entails an inner drive, imagination,

resilience, ambition and a willingness to take a risk. It is primarily fostered through education and training in a supportive environment. A supportive environment requires hard and soft supports; this was recognised in the National Entrepreneurship Policy statement launched by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in October 2014.

The 6 mutually reinforcing elements identified by Government to lead and direct policy are:

Culture, human capital and education	Positive societal attitude to entrepreneurship reflected in its education provision and culture.
Business environment and supports	Similar to societal culture, the business environment, including taxation and regulation, can encourage entrepreneurship.
Innovation system	Seen to be the financial and experiential supports provided by public bodies to entrepreneurs.
Access to finance	Provision of a broad spectrum of finance options, matching the different stages of an enterprise's development, is essential.
Networks and mentoring	Practical experience and advice, contacts and interaction, helping entrepreneurs to avoid or overcome difficulties and to realise their potential.
Access to markets	Support access to markets

Table 1 Summary of 6 Key elements of the ecosystem for entrepreneurship in Ireland from the National Entrepreneurship Policy Statement

⁷⁶ Tackling Drugs Together, North Eastern Health Board. 1998.

⁷⁷ Reynolds et al., 2007.

⁷⁸ NERDTF 2008.

⁷⁹ National Substance Misuse Strategy, 2009-2016.

County Louth

Enterprise is the expression of successful entrepreneurship and is concerned with sustaining and growing existing business either home grown or attracted into the County. The objectives of the National Entrepreneurship Policy are to:

- increase the number of startups by 25% (3,000 more startups per annum);
- Increase the survival rate in the first five years by 25% (1,800 more survivors per annum); and,
- Improve the capacity of startups to grow to scale by 25%.

In February 2015 the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation announced the Framework for Regional Enterprise Strategies in order that government supports could be more efficiently deployed on a regional basis where each region was co-ordinated with the other to contribute to national employment creation. In November 2015,

the Department, having regard to A Strategy for Growth Medium-Term Economic Strategy 2014 – 2020, published its first strategy document Enterprise 2025 which, alongside the National Entrepreneurship Policy Statement, sets policy direction for job creation into 2025. A number of strategic actions were identified in Enterprise 2025 and included:

- Building resilience in our sectoral mix;
- Enhancing overall enterprise performance;
- Developing and attracting talent for the 21st century;
- Optimising regional potential – place-making;
- Embedding innovativeness in our enterprises and systems;
- Connectedness – internationally, nationally and regionally;
- Excelling in getting the basics right;
- Effective execution.

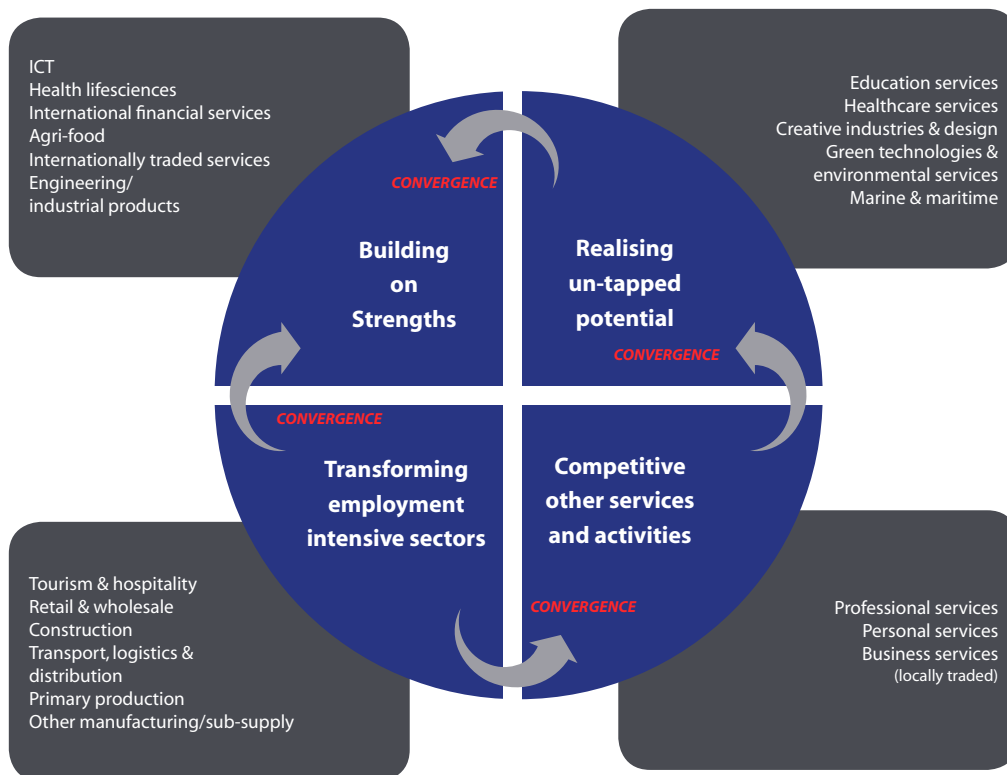


Figure 9 Sectoral Ecosystem priorities from Enterprise 2025

8.5.2 Louth: Leveraging regional advantages

The Action Plan for Jobs launched in January 2016 emphasises regional focus and sets a target of 2.1 million people in employment in Ireland by 2018; 50,000 of those jobs are to be added in 2016. Louth is in the North East / North West Action Plan for Jobs 2015 – 2017 and the actions from this document have been integrated into those of the LECP. Louth recognises its NUTS categorisation alongside its border neighbours, but also acknowledges the opportunities in its realignment to the east and midlands regional assembly area from the North East Region for the purposes of regional planning. In order to manage and derive the opportunities for advancement in policy making and inward investment, the LECP will monitor the northern and eastern regions. Enterprise 2025, takes a 'whole enterprise' approach and

groups existing and desired commercial sectors together whether they are entrepreneurs, start-ups, home grown business or FDI and recognises the mutually reinforcing ethos that all policy and assistances will benefit all sectors.

Louth is ahead of other local authorities and government policy in having the voluntary Louth Economic Forum (LEF) which is indicative of the county's ambition, positive attitude to, and promotion of business in the county. Louth has the unprecedented advantage of being now able to extend the work of the LEF; a resource which has performed analysis and action setting at local level, promoted by current emergent government entrepreneurship and enterprise policy.

8.5.3 Stimulating innovation

Innovation is a key driver of start-ups, business expansion and efficiency thus enhancing job creation and improved economic performance. Louth recognised the importance of innovation in its LEF ten point economic action plans and in the LECP integrated priorities, which in setting out community and economic actions to support people and business, aims to create an environment in which business will thrive. The Louth LECP further recognises that entrepreneurship, innovation and enterprise are the fundamental ingredients to achieve sustainable job creation, and improvements in quality of life to benefit Louth residents and as an attractor for investment and new population. Louth LEO offers structural, behavioural and finance-sourcing aids to all home grown businesses and entrepreneurs operating or intending to operate in Louth. The economic elements of the LECP, particularly in relation to this integrated priority; entrepreneurship, innovation and enterprise, have been led by the work of LEO and the economic development department of Louth County Council.

The LEF's ten point plan (2012) describes the role of the LEF – notable for its prediction of government policy on entrepreneurship, and reflecting the importance of the now formalised PPN. “The LEF is not in the business of directly creating jobs. Rather, its role is to identify and promote the conditions in which jobs can be created by recognising and acting upon activities with economic development potential in a manner that would not be possible without the stakeholder partnership enabled by the LEF. The functions of the LEF also include tackling identified barriers to economic development, as well as nurturing the environment in which business can start, grow and create jobs – all in a proactive manner.”

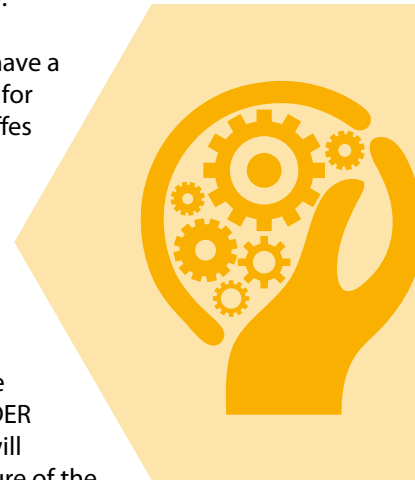
A feature continuously highlighted during the consultation phase for the LECP was Louth's vibrant entrepreneurial culture and its ability to produce successful entrepreneurs. It can claim firms like the agri-food company Nature's Best, technology firm Mcor Technologies, which has pioneered the development of three-dimensional printing technology, Horseware Ireland, which is active in the equestrian sector and Alltech; a global animal health and nutrition company

centred on innovation, research and development, to name but a few.

In addition, Louth continues to have a strong base of indigenous firms, for example, AIBP, Glen Dimplex, Fyffes and Boyne Valley Foods. Each of these companies, provide considerable employment opportunities in the county and also have an international profile. The LDS set out actions focussed on the betterment of the rural area of the county to be implemented by the Louth LEADER Partnership Ltd. These actions will complement the integrated nature of the economic and community priorities of the LECP and will promote entrepreneurship and start-ups in the county.

Apart from the wide range of supports offered by Louth LEO, a range of enterprise initiatives for local entrepreneurs, including information about the range of supports are available at DkIT to promote and encourage entrepreneurship and innovation in the county. Researchers at DkIT are also targeting a number of sectors including IT and software development, renewable energy technologies, active ageing and creative arts.

Another initiative, the Innovation Alliance project aims to break down barriers to the effective transfer and implementation of innovation between Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). It builds synergistic relationships between key stakeholders in the field of higher education and small enterprise to create a new culture of collaboration in innovation support. This culture is consolidated by training SMEs in the skills needed to effectively engage with HEI research, and supplying HEIs with case study guides to illuminate new methodologies for innovation transfer.



8.5.4 Creative industries: Building innovation capacity

One particular strategy adopted by Louth LEO in recent years has been to encourage those small companies who wish to grow to focus on their innovation capacity to inform and guide their growth strategy. The 'Wheel of Business Innovation' approach was developed and refined as part of an EU funded programme called IIME, Introducing Innovation to Micro Enterprises, which was developed by Louth LEO in 2008. This programme brought together academics and business development agencies from across Europe, together with the Fraunhofer Institute in Germany to develop an innovation training programme tailored to micro businesses.

Following on from the success of the IIME project, Louth

LEO has managed, authored or has been a lead contributor to a number of interlinked international projects which have developed an integrated suite of tools designed to support innovation within the micro-enterprise sector including SUPORT, Innovative Trainer; SMEmPower iOTA and SCI-NET. The REAL (Regional Education and Employment Alliances) Project seeks to build the skills and capabilities of the great number of under-employed humanities graduates in the region to empower them to become innovators, entrepreneurs and high value employees.

A number of these projects have received recognition from the EU Commission for their excellence of delivery – SCI-NET

County Louth

is classified as a 'Star' project, SUPORT has been featured in a number of EU conferences and SME-mPower has been recommended by EU Head of Unit for SMEs and is used by the Swiss Federal Government. In 2015 LEO Louth will continue to offer these programmes as part of the overall drive to build innovation capability within the county.

A key action in the Action Plan for Jobs centres around exploring the potential to establish creative hubs to enable the creative sector by bringing individuals together in "creative hubs" to promote design skills, help tourism, attract creative people into the region & improve quality of life. Louth is already to the fore in promoting and facilitating the creative sector.

Creative Spark, established in 2012 to promote creative and cultural industries, (including new and emerging businesses and freelance practitioners), provides a dedicated creative training and workspace facility in Dundalk. It identifies and applies best practice in supporting all creative endeavour whether for community goals, career advancement for creative practitioners or skills acquisition within the creative sector. Louth Craftmark is a web-based support platform which showcases the work of talented Louth makers and designers. Louth Craftmark Designers Network is a group of makers and visual artists who promote and support its members through accessing funding, networking and collaborative projects. Its membership's creative disciplines include ceramics, print, jewellery, textiles, woodwork, furniture, sculpture and painting. In addition to the above, hubs for creative communities in Louth also include:

- The Mill in Drogheda.
- Drogheda Development Centre at Millmount;
- Dundalk Science Services Centre;
- Ardee Community Development Company;
- The Food Hub at Ardee Business Park.

The LECP, in formalising mentoring and networking opportunities identified by the LEF, Economic Development

and Enterprise SPC, LEO and the Action Plan for Jobs similarly recognises the contribution of Dundalk and Drogheda Chambers of Commerce in the county, and their ability to join and facilitate skills development, social and business entrepreneurial and enterprise networks and enhance the business friendly aspect of Louth. Not to be overlooked is the role of DkIT which operates in the 'living laboratory' space referred to within other themes in the LECP. It provides innovative approach to research and development and is currently adapting its modules and courses to be more responsive to learner and employer needs.

Third level collaboration within the region is also provided by the involvement of the three Institutes of Technology within the region in the Campus Entrepreneurship Enterprise Network. CEEN is the HEI led Irish national network for promoting and developing entrepreneurship and enterprise at third level. It aims to create a sustainable national platform for raising the profile, extending engagement and further developing entrepreneurship across the Irish HEI sector.

Enterprise Ireland supports and works in partnership with Dundalk Institute's Regional Development Centre; the commercially oriented interface between DkIT and the industrial, commercial and business life of the region, which makes available the expertise, facilities and resources of the Institute for the wider benefit of the regional economy.

Through the INTERREG VA Programme, SEUPB will support cross-border business investment in Research & Innovation in the implementation of its next programme. The key outputs will focus on SMEs receiving a range of support including collaboration with research institutions; innovation advice; and collaborative research projects. SEUPB will also increase business industry-relevant Research and Innovation capacity across the region within two sectors; 'Health & Life Sciences' and 'Renewable Energy' each of which has distinct relevance for Louth. The combination of these players working in an integrated way within the LECP framework will enhance Louth's opportunity to achieve its ambitious targets.

8.6 A valued, sustainable and connected environment

Louth is better placed than many other counties to benefit from overall competitiveness and improvements in the Irish economy due to its location and infrastructure qualities. Its strong transport infrastructure (motorway, rail and port) and proximity to international airports reinforces Louth's access to markets nationally and internationally in addition to providing tourism and other opportunities. Much has already been achieved in Louth with regard to environmental sustainability in recent years, both from an economic and community perspective. Broadband connectivity is progressing quickly, despite problems in some rural areas. The county is innovative in the area of sustainable energy creating a very productive partnership with Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland (SEAI) at a practical level and with DkIT from a research and innovation perspective. Louth County Council's strategic objectives (Corporate Plan 2014-2019) stressed the critical provision of hard

infrastructural elements (e.g. transportation, broadband, marine, water and sustainable energy) and softer elements (e.g. arts, culture, heritage and leisure) to create a viable thriving globally connected economy that attracts and provides a good quality of life for its citizens. The Louth Economic Forum (LEF) ten point economic action plans demonstrate the progress that has been achieved and what needs to be improved if Louth is to build on its strengths and capitalise upon the momentum it has gained as the leading green location in Ireland.

Louth's heritage brand and cultural legacy offering, including Ireland's Ancient East, The Boyne Valley and the Cooley Mourne Gullion regions, combined with its fast-expanding eco-tourism offering, the Green Way, waterways, and sandy coastline, create a unique experience for local communities and tourists. The county's rich landscape from mountains to sea, undisturbed wildlife habitats and outdoor amenities

is a rich resource for those seeking access to eco and agri-tourism. However the challenges, especially in the area of Climate Change, together with the complexity of managing the needs and demands of disparate stakeholders, reinforces the fact that there must be continued joined up thinking,

integrated planning and systemic sustainability for Louth to achieve its goals.

8.6.1 Sustainable Development: Guiding economic progress

The principles of sustainable development permeate every aspect of the Louth County Development Plan (2015-2021). These include the conservation of natural resources; protection of the natural environment; reducing dependence on fossil fuels and promoting renewable energy; facilitating environmentally friendly patterns of development, energy efficiency and high quality design. Its core strategy sets out in an evidence-based approach for the sustainable spatial development of the county based on high quality sustainable residential communities, developed in conjunction with social and recreational infrastructure.

Sustainable development is characterised as a continuous, guided process of economic, environmental and social change aimed at promoting wellbeing of citizens now and into the future.⁸⁰ The principles of sustainable development as 'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' underpin the Louth LECP. Biodiversity, which encompasses natural wildlife, flora and fauna, is also an important foundation to the healthy functioning of

ecosystems. In addition, the 3 pillars of the Aarhus Convention: access to information; public participation in decision-making; and access to justice in environmental matters were some of the elements that informed the LECP process.

If Louth maintains its projected economic trajectory, environmental challenges will emerge. Maintaining the focus on sustainability, sustainable consumption and production, in parallel with economic recovery and growth will be important. The 2012 Government report on sustainable development identified that challenges are likely to arise in areas such as greenhouse gas emissions, expansion of key agriculture sectors and private transport growth, but significant opportunities also exist in greening the economy and the green economy. The concept of sustainable competitiveness is a crucial touchstone, with clear international evidence that being green is not only good for business but it's beneficial for the environment too. Ireland has significant targets to meet

if it is to reach its 2020 greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, and pressure is on all of us to do this in an integrated way. Louth has already taken major strides in its Dundalk Smart town initiative and its focus on sustainable energy in its ten point economic action plan.

The county has its fair share of environmental challenges. Unauthorised dumping and toxic sludge from diesel laundering are especially problematic. Low levels of soil fertility on new dairy farms combined with phosphorus fertilisation restrictions on the most intensive holdings will present a serious challenge, as will slurry storage capacities on dairy/beef farms⁸¹. Raising public awareness of the importance of understanding biodiversity and water quality issues is vital; particularly among rural communities where greater protection of local water resources is essential for their survival. Environmental schemes have the potential to play a pivotal role in addressing pressures on water reserves, and in supporting the local community to conserve this valuable resource.



⁸⁰ Our Sustainable Future: National strategy on sustainable development (DECLG, 2012).

⁸¹ Teagasc: Laois/Kildare/Meath/Louth/Dublin Advisory Region Strategic Plan 2015 - 2020.

8.6.2 Louth's coastline: A precious asset

Louths' coastline is of high intrinsic and special amenity value and is home to a variety of natural habitats. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) designations cover much of the coastline. Termonfeckin Strand, Clogherhead, and Templetown are superb beaches which have considerable tourism potential. The latter three beaches were awarded Blue Flag status in 2015. The coastline also contains economically significant sites which include

the ports at Drogheda, Greenore, Dundalk and Clogherhead. The coastal waters off County Louth provide an important resource, supporting and generating employment and recreational activities. But this coastline is susceptible to pressure for development, which has the potential to encroach on sensitive sites and cause pollution. Coastal erosion measures were identified in the County Development Plan to mitigate against these pressures.

8.6.3 Flood risk: Managing the threat

As Ireland's climate continues to change it is acknowledged that 20% of Ireland's coast is at risk of erosion, and that County Louth is at particular risk⁸². The Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Study (ICPSS) which examined the northeast coast from Dublin to Greenore illustrated that coastal flood hazard exists predominantly in or near coastal settlements, and four of the seven coastal settlements lie in County Louth:

- Drogheda to Laytown;
- Annagassan to Cruisetown;
- Dundalk; and,
- Carlingford to Greenore.

Much work has also been done by the OPW through its Catchment Flood Risk Assessment & Management Studies (CFRAMS). The county area and its settlements, as designated in the County Development Plan 2009 – 2015, have been analysed using GIS for the presence of three flood risk factors: recorded flood events, benefiting lands and mineral alluvial deposits. Recorded flood events are most concentrated

in the south of the county in the urban area of Drogheda and to the south of Dundalk.

Major Flood Defence Schemes are run by the OPW and Louth County Council where such works are technically feasible, cost beneficial and environmentally compatible. The Minor Flood Defence Scheme has enabled Louth County Council to address coastal repair works at Blackrock Sea Wall, Whitestown, Carlingford Sea Wall, Ballagan, Greenore and Annagassan; where the build-up of silt in the harbour area has limited the berthing capacity of the pier. The breaching of the embankment at Bellurgan has been especially difficult due to funding pressures.

8.6.4 Sustainable rural development: Protecting our green infrastructure

The Louth County Development Plan notes that Louth needs to protect and support rural settlements and the countryside by accommodating limited growth in accordance with the needs of rural dwellers, whilst providing careful management of physical and environmental resources. The LECP focuses on the positive benefits that a well-designed public realm, green spaces and recreational areas and protected wilder habitats have for local economies and well-being while the Louth LEADER strategy emphasises the role that local communities have in maintaining their local environments: Human health benefits of contact with nature and green spaces are well proven and are key to encouraging the active lifestyles needed to prevent issues such as obesity, cardiovascular disease and type-2 diabetes that are affecting much of our population. For this reason, sustainable communities will require recreational spaces and also areas of wildness. This 'green infrastructure' would be provided via informed planning at Local Authority level, and then actively maintained by local groups and public bodies. It suggests that schemes such as LEADER could be used to support this by developing projects to deliver, for example: infrastructure

that enables physical activity; mapping our natural heritage; safe walking in rural roads. LEADER funding has supported many environmental projects in Louth with positive impacts for local communities.

In its submission to the LECP, the Inver Colpa Rowing club stated that the River Boyne presents an opportunity to reconnect people and place, connecting communities with their social and cultural heritage. The quality and merit of the River Boyne and its relationship with the people of Drogheda should be reflected in the LECP. Stressing the huge health and sport benefit potential to people using the river, their submission emphasised the strong maritime, fishing and rowing heritage in Drogheda; improving access and use of the river would improve the quality of life of the community and improve traditional skills. It would also give local people of all ages and backgrounds the opportunity to engage with the river in a safe, affordable, educational, healthy and enjoyable way, adding to the quality of life of local communities.

⁸² Prof John Sweeney, NUI Maynooth

8.6.5 Third level sustainability: Acting local, thinking global

In its role as third level institute for the northeast region, DkIT supports the social, economic and cultural development of the region via its mission statement 'Working sustainably and with a practical focus, we will help lead the regeneration of the North East region and Ireland by acting locally and thinking global'. DkIT achieved Green Campus status in 2012 and has played a lead role in encouraging sustainable development, both on campus and in the networks, partnerships and linkages it has created with stakeholders, including local schools and Louth County Council, to promote a more sustainable society. In addition, it has a range of initiatives in place to support technology transfer and social innovation. This includes the work of the Regional Development Centre (RDC) where there is a Centre for Fresh Water Studies, a Centre for Renewable Energy, Netwell and Water is Life. Sustainable development features in a range of research activities, academic programmes and modules; including Renewable Energy Systems, Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Design, Applied Bio-Science, Introduction to Large Scale Wind Turbines, Solar Domestic Hot Water Systems.

In 2005 through the Centre for Renewable Energy (CREDIT) a wind turbine was constructed on the DkIT campus. The turbine is essentially a research project; a living laboratory and has become a visitor attraction. In practical terms, the turbine has become a symbol for the College and for the town of Dundalk. It currently generates more than 30% of the total electricity requirements of the College. The Sustainable Energy Unit of Louth County Council will be collaborating with the development of a second wind turbine in conjunction with IDA, SEAI, and DkIT. DkIT also became involved in a number of initiatives with local interest groups, including local schools and Louth County Council. Some of these are:

- Dundalk 2020;
- Concerto Project;
- Age Friendly County;
- DkIT and Sustainable Energy Zone;
- Go Dundalk Initiative.

It is also hoped during the life of the LECP that through research and the living lab principle that these partnerships will be sustained and develop further for the economic and social benefit of the county.

8.6.6 Louth Leading the way: Sustainable Energy

Energy is fundamental to Ireland's economic and social well-being. Renewable energy constitutes a core element of the Government's overarching energy policy built on the 3 pillars of security of supply, environmental sustainability and economic competitiveness⁸³. Ireland's third National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP 3)⁸⁴ reaffirmed Ireland's commitment to delivering a 20% reduction in energy demand across the whole of the economy by 2020, along with a 33% reduction in public sector energy use. Ireland's commitment to 2020 energy efficiency, renewable energy and greenhouse gas reduction targeting its long term goal of decarbonisation by 2050 will have a positive impact in the market for sustainable energy technologies, services and also its tourism offer. Citizens, referred to as 'energy citizens' are now at the centre of Ireland's energy transition underpinned by policy and regulatory stability. The recent White Paper revealed a wide citizen and community desire to be consulted on, and participate in, Ireland's energy transition and the development of energy related projects. The Government has recognized the need to develop mechanisms and instruments to make this happen.

Over the past number of years, Louth has developed a position as a leading centre in the country in respect of sustainable energy technologies. Dundalk was Ireland's first designated Sustainable Energy Zone under the European Commission's Concerto Programme (Holistic) (Dundalk 2020)

and the town's sustainable energy community has achieved a reduction of 4,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per annum through the promotion of energy efficiency products.

Louth has been very effective in securing funding and working in collaboration with other agencies to innovate change: Funding was secured in 2015 via SSEI to support energy projects through partnership between Louth County Council, CASALA (Centre for Affective Solutions for Ambient Living Awareness), Dundalk Institute of Technology, Louth Meath Education Training Board (LMETB), HSE, OPW, Climote (smart heating controls), Kingspan, Bord Gais and REIL to deliver a range of energy upgrade projects for public buildings, community centres, homes, sports clubs and businesses. Previously, Louth County Council secured funding through INTERREG to act as the lead partner in the development of the Low Carbon Business Network aimed at promoting cross-border cooperation in respect of the use of carbon abatement technologies in the East Border Region.

The Louth Energy Pilot Project is the largest social housing Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme of its type to take place in Europe in 2015. It delivered the energy efficiency upgrade to 2,100 of the 4,000 Local Authority homes throughout the county. It is evidence of how technology is changing lives of people, reducing energy costs for homeowners as well as improving the Building Energy Ratings

⁸³ Towards a sustainable energy future for Ireland. Green paper, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

⁸⁴ Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future, Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources.

County Louth

(BER) of the Council's housing stock. Climote, a local company from Dundalk, has played an important role in helping Louth County Council achieve its goals. An added and unintentional benefit has been the impact on job creation in the Louth area arising from this project. From a Government perspective the project is a tangible connection between energy policy and real improvements in citizen's quality of life. It provides a prototype for other local authorities, when it comes to achieving Ireland's national energy policy objectives and it will inform the public sector Energy Efficiency Action Plan which is due for publication in 2016.

Sustainable Energy Action Ireland (SEAI) has played a catalytic role in the development of Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) and there are over 100 SECs nationwide. Pioneered in 2005 with Dundalk 2020, an EU Concerto project, SEAI is committed to promoting the continued growth of SEC activity in Louth through supporting the Sustainable Energy Community network which has focused on developing tailored supports for SECs engaging in their 3 year partnership programme; developing new funding streams, and raising the visibility of the benefits of SECs amongst citizens and stakeholders; in particular their capacity to promote integrated sustainable development goals.

SEAI is represented on the Louth Economic Forum (LEF)

and its ambitions address many of the Louth LECP themes regarding the green economy, working with communities and the principle of collaboration. However in policy terms, there is a desire that the LECP undertakes an Energy Master Plan to identify inefficiencies and to create a Sustainable Energy Action Plan identifying opportunities for energy efficiency initiatives and collaborations, as well as working with stakeholders to develop a Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES).

Louth Co Council's Sustainable Energy Unit is another important stakeholder and continues to deliver bespoke projects, and seek funding opportunities to improve energy performance as they arise. Equally important is its strategic activity which includes developing a S.M.A.R.T. Action Plan to complement the government's recently launched White Paper, Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future, 2015-2030 and the upcoming public sector Energy Efficiency Action Plan. It will be continuing its engagement with the EU INDICATE project; the development of an energy planning tool and working towards the development of an "INDICATE II" project. It also seeks to take advantage of Louth's strategic position to develop a Green International Services corridor with Green IFSC, Dublin Airport, East Coast and Northern Irish partners.

8.6.7 Louth's Infrastructure: Planning for the future

Louth County Development Plan (2015-2021) seeks to achieve and support the aims of national transport policy including:

- maximizing the efficient use of the transport network;
- reducing reliance on fossil fuels;
- reducing transport emissions;
- improving accessibility to transport; adopting a hierarchy of transport users with pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users at the top of the hierarchy and considering land use planning and transport planning together.

The availability of a range of transport options has dramatically improved during the course of the 2009 – 2015 County Development Plan with sustainable transport modes increasingly being promoted in the form of improved public transport services, improved cycling and walking facilities, and infrastructure aimed at supporting the use of electric vehicles. Affecting an increased modal shift away from the dominance of the private car as the main mode of transport in the County is a key objective. However, private road transport is likely to remain dominant for the foreseeable future. Over dependency on the car as the primary means of personal transportation is unsustainable in the long term, having regard to the finite nature of fossil fuel resources and their impact in contributing to global warming. The

most recent County Development Plan seeks to promote alternative sustainable modes of transport.

There is an intrinsic link between land use and transportation and therefore the settlement strategy and policies contained in the Plan seek to locate the majority of new development within existing towns and other settlements, where car dependency can be reduced and public transport can more economically and sustainably be provided. The adoption of the core strategies for Dundalk, Drogheda and the remainder of the county, seek to proactively address the links between land use planning and transportation by directing new development into more compact urban forms that reduce the need for travel. These strategies have also been influenced by the availability of public transport.

8.6.8 Roads and cycling networks: Promoting alternatives

Louth has benefited from very significant investment which has taken place in Ireland's national road network. Regional and local roads form the life lines of transportation needs across the County. It is via these roads that the vast majority of smaller towns, villages and dispersed rural communities and services are accessed. During the previous plan period, the most notable road projects completed in the County have been the N51 and N53 regional road improvement schemes and the R178 Red Bog project. The Council's road improvement programme will be implemented by the Council and the National Transport Authority (NTA) over the period of the plan. The east-west link will link Dundalk to Sligo via Cavan.

The Smarter Travel Programme operated by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport Sustainable Transport Division (DTTS) has supported the development of an extensive walking and cycling network in Dundalk, together with the construction of a rural cycling and walking Greenway skirting Carlingford Lough and walking and cycling strategies for Drogheda and Ardee.

Public transport accessibility, especially in Dundalk town, has produced a positive result. There is a relatively positive perception of public transport that is encouraging and suggests that opportunities to widen modal choices to include more sustainable options will be well received. In recent years, supported by the national Smarter Travel

Programme, there has been a substantial investment in cycling lanes and general improvements to facilitate both cyclists and pedestrians in Dundalk. Most recently, a 'Safer Routes' for walking and cycling to school initiative was launched under the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, with Dundalk participating as a pilot town. Looking to the future, the Council will seek to complete the Greenway and seek further funding towards developing a wider urban and rural network of cycle infrastructure, including the development of the National Cycle Network which is proposed to pass through the county in the form of Corridor 5, Dundalk to Wexford and at local level, the Boyne Trail. Good quality and safe cycling and walking facilities and their use, particularly in urban areas, can make a valuable contribution to the reduction in traffic congestion and the encouragement of significant modal shifts away from dependency on the use of the private motor car.

Existing programmes such as the Smarter Travel Workplaces and Smarter Travel Campus encourage employers and third level institutions to implement voluntary workplace and campus travel plans or actions to encourage and support staff and students to walk, cycle, take public transport or car share on their commute. More than 6,000 people use the DkIT campus on a daily basis, and the College is focusing on creating new ways to transport which embraces environmental, social and economic sustainability.

8.6.9 Rural transport: Achieving more connectivity

There are good quality public transport services between Dundalk and Drogheda. Gaps and inadequacies in public transport services are notable in many parts of the county, especially in dispersed rural areas. This affects primarily older people, the young, people with limited mobility and those on low incomes. The main types of journey for which provision is required include work, shopping, education and health journeys and this was raised at a consultation for the LECP and also noted in the LECP actions. However, rural and commuter services have also seen some enhancement and this trend is moving apace with the input of the National Transport Authority. This has been most notable in services passing through Drogheda where long distance services have seen improved frequencies and have been routed to

serve major destinations e.g. Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda.

In 2013, the National Transport Authority published 'Strengthening the Connections in Rural Ireland, Plans for Restructuring the Rural Transport Programme'. Under this plan, the existing 33 Rural Transport Groups were rationalised into 18 Transport Co-ordination Units (TCUs) which will be brought under the remit of local authorities. County Louth has been grouped with Meath and north Fingal. Already, there have been some significant improvements in 2015 with the purchase of a community car, and additional routes on the network.

8.6.10 Broadband: Pioneering new technology

Achieving universal access to high speed broadband is a key target under the EU Digital Agenda for Europe which envisages that by 2020 all EU citizens will have access to speeds of 30Mbps, and that 50% of citizens will be

subscribing to speeds of 100Mbps. This LEF Broadband vision is to ensure that all businesses have access to high speed broadband, while working to reduce the cost of accessing these services, regardless of location and that communities

are connected as part of the National Broadband Plan and National Digital Strategy. In particular, the plan aims to position Louth as a leader in the provision of world class high speed broadband for foreign direct investment, indigenous enterprises and start up entrepreneurial companies. Of particular importance is the desire to progress broadband connectivity to rural areas of County Louth, and especially to those areas where the market will not deliver, in accordance with the National Broadband Plan Maps.

Significant advancements have been made by eir and SIRO. This means that Louth is expected to have over 85% of premises with broadband speeds in excess of 50Mbps during 2016, while pioneering technology in relation to electricity cables started rolling out 1000Mb FTTP in Dundalk. These advances mean that Louth will be one of Ireland's most connected counties in 2016 and places it in an enviable position to sustain and develop business in the county. A further state intervention is aimed at connecting those communities as part of the National Broadband Plan (NBP) where the commercial operators have not been prepared, on commercial grounds, to make the necessary investment. Approximately 15% of the premises in County Louth would depend on the roll out of the NBP to achieve

high speed broadband.

The successful delivery of the Broadband Action plan will require a sustained and coherent approach to its implementation and the formation of a committed and dedicated team. The intention is to develop an Implementation Steering Group (ISG) to oversee the plan, reporting to the Local Enterprise Office (LEO). Given the objective of the LEF to make Louth the best county in which to do business, the ISG will pay special attention to the early implementation ensuring user friendly procedures for companies investing in broadband related infrastructure in the County.

Other critical aspects are the need to work with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, to ensure that those areas of County Louth (15%) where the market will not deliver, will feature prominently in the Government's intervention strategy being developed under the National Broadband Plan. The LEF in particular will seek ways of achieving high speed broadband availability in the Cooley Peninsula, due to its economic potential in dialogue with the providers, and where appropriate the DCENR.

8.6.11 Tourism: Broadening our horizon

Tourism, an important future-focused indigenous sector will play a critical role in contributing to Louth's economic development. The county is well placed to capitalise on Fáilte Ireland's tourism growth projections estimated at 10 million visitors in 2010. Recent research has shown that cultural tourism constitutes one of the central planks of the Irish tourism industry and is one of the fastest growing areas of tourism internationally. Louth has a rich array of cultural and heritage attractions to offer visitors.

Three of Fáilte Ireland's top tourism destinations are located in Louth: Ireland's Ancient East, the Boyne Valley and the Cooley Mourne Gullion Region. The Táin Trail is a very accessible circular walking route of quiet roads, forestry tracks, and open mountain paths that loop around Slieve Foy Mountain and its western outliers is fast becoming a destination. It is also an area of growing geo-tourism, and rocks exposed in the Mourne Cooley Gullion region represent over 400 million years of geological history; and ripe for development as an environmental tourism asset. Additionally, Louth has an ever evolving dynamic arts, food, festivals and cultural events programme with a growing international reach and its "Land of Legends, full of life" brand continues to differentiate it with visitors to the county.

Louth LEADER and Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) strategic reviews highlight that Louth's coastal and rural tourism product underperforms relative to the opportunities that exist. With the economically significant ports of Drogheda, Greenore, Dundalk and Clogherhead its coastline is of high visual and environmental amenity value. Some rural areas are impacted by poor IT penetration and broadband quality; there are limited recreational and visitor infrastructure beyond the established honey pots and there is limited capacity to leverage the Dublin-Belfast Corridor since the

majority of journeys pass through the county.

Despite these challenges, Louth has all the critical elements to develop a world class tourism proposition for the domestic and international market. The vision for Louth tourism is to increase the number of visitors to the region by working in partnership to develop a world-class sustainable tourism experience under three strategic pillars of Heritage and Culture, Recreation and Leisure and the Arts, Food and Festivals. At the heart of the LEF Tourism and Heritage Action plan is a growth strategy that will ultimately generate this increased revenue and create additional sustainable local jobs county wide. LEADER is particularly suited to revitalising rural towns through coordinating an integrated approach that builds on the economic strengths and infrastructure of the area whilst addressing the key challenges for business, community and recreation.

The Tourism and Heritage Action Plan acknowledges that some of the major local tourist attractions are shared with other counties, such as The Boyne Valley which straddles Louth and Meath, and some outside the state, such as the Mourne Cooley Gullion Region. These challenges need to be addressed in order for the County to fully realise its development potential.

Capitalising upon the county's assets and telling Louth's story will require an integrated cohesive strategy across disparate stakeholders with varied interests. Working collaboratively will require stakeholders to focus on the common goal that unites them all, one that is underpinned by an integrated branding and digital strategy. Investment in branding, digital marketing, technology and metrics is essential for Louth to achieve its growth strategy.

8.6.12 Celebrating our arts and culture

The arts are an inextricable part of social and cultural change; they are central to civic life, and a badge of our national and local identity. Louth County Council Arts Service recognises that involvement in the arts is beneficial to the individual, to communities, and to society as a whole. In its latest strategy, Making Great Art Work 2016-2025, the Arts Council reinforces its commitment to artists and to making the arts accessible to as wide a range of communities as possible. This is particularly apparent in County Louth where the arts are valued and supported. Louth is home to a vibrant dynamic arts life; thanks to the many practising artists across all disciplines who live and work there. Participation in the arts allows each citizen to choose, explore, and pursue different means of self-expression. Conversely, in a society where the arts are undervalued and less well supported, opportunities for personal growth are blocked, access to the creative wealth of the world is inhibited, and means of strengthening self-identity are restricted. Running in parallel with the beneficial impact of the arts on the individual is the potential of the arts to underpin community life.

Louth Arts Service is an exemplar of good practice and functions as a driver to support arts activity in the county. Its wide variety of high calibre arts festivals explore areas of niche excellence and attracts audiences from within and outside the county in theatre; baroque, classical and contemporary music; dance and visual arts and the

traditional arts. It has a particularly strong youth theatre movement which provides valuable creative space for young people to stimulate and nurture expression of thought, and enabling them to express themselves in a safe and supportive environment, across a range of issues. Music Generation and Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann are also active in the county and are supporting the music education of many of Louth's young people. Group participation in the arts creates and reinforces bonds across social strata, age groups and gender. The arts can act as a catalyst for encouraging tolerance and understanding between culturally diverse people; and this has been witnessed right across Louth in the past ten years through projects undertaken by the Peace and Reconciliation Partnership.

Within the EU, the Cultural and Creative Industries are estimated to be responsible for over 3% of the EU's gross domestic product, with an expectation that this will grow strongly within the next five years. Louth has already positioned itself to be a leader in this growth with the establishment of Creative Spark in Dundalk. It acts as a hub for artists and creative thinkers/innovators. In its submission to the LECP, Creative Spark notes that they in particular, have a role in developing and sustaining arts, culture and heritage which will underpin the quality of life for individuals and communities.

8.6.13 Sharing our heritage

Heritage is intertwined with a sense of identity, and historic, cultural and natural inheritance. This kind of inheritance has the ability to enhance and enrich the lives of those living in Louth and to attract visitors from farther afield. Successive governments have worked to ensure the protection of our national heritage and to promote its enjoyment by all. Sustainable development underpins every action in the National Heritage Plan i.e. that the needs of the present generation must be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Louth's built and natural heritage and landscapes are vital assets that make the county an attractive place to live and work, and a place to promote sustainable tourism and attract inward investors. The National Heritage Plan asserts that proud, well-grounded people make better citizens than the disengaged, transient and disconnected, and heritage can be mobilised as a source of local pride and as a support for sustainable community development.

The 2003 UN Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage recognises the vital role of language in the expression and transmission of living heritage. It notes that all intangible cultural heritage depends on language for its day-to-day vitality, and for being passed on to the next generation. In relation to oral traditions, whether it be song, poetry or folklore, language is not only the vehicle that contains the cultural heritage; it is its essence. Louth has a rich language and literary tradition.

The Oriel Irish dialect continued to be spoken in Omeath until just after the middle of the 20th century. In recognition of this, and the increasing numbers of Irish language speakers setting up home in the area, the Omeath branch of Conradh na Gaeilge was set-up in July 2014 to promote the Irish language in Omeath and its surrounding area. The branch has established a language and cultural centre called Áras na nGael in the heart of Omeath, which is being used as a base to promote the Irish language and culture. The LECP recognizes the importance of language and its relationship to self-esteem and pride of place, and this is reflected in an action in the plan to develop an Irish language policy for Louth.

Louth's built heritage⁸⁵ comes under three areas: its architectural heritage (there are 1,400 Protected Structures in Louth); its archaeological heritage (there are 1,546 Recorded Monuments listed for protection) and its Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). Some of these areas are very extensive, for example, Drogheda; Ireland's largest walled town.



⁸⁵ Draft Heritage Plan 2015-2020

Louth is also very rich in terms of natural heritage. Louth has 11 Natura sites, designated under the European Union's Habitats and Birds Directives (six Special Areas of Conservation and five Special Protection Areas). One of these, Dundalk Bay, is the State's top site for overwintering birds. In addition, Louth has 24 Natural Heritage Areas proposed for nature conservation under the Wildlife Act and 34 sites proposed for designation as geological and geomorphological NHAs by the Geological Survey of Ireland. There are also many other undesignated areas of local, national and even international significance for wildlife.

Louth's Heritage Plan aims 'to coordinate the conservation, management and sympathetic development of the county's heritage and to encourage community pride in, and responsibility for, the implementation of the Plan'. Its three

key objectives include:

- Finding out about and protecting and conserving what we have;
- Interpreting and promoting ('selling') the heritage to our people;
- Managing and safeguarding the county's heritage.

The draft Louth Heritage Plan 2016-2020 seeks to make people aware of the value of their heritage and getting them to care about it. Many of the issues raised in relation to this objective in the draft plan mirror Louth's tourism needs; i.e. develop strategic planned approaches to interpreting and promoting Louth's heritage, and maximise digital marketing and technology appropriately so that it can be appreciated and enjoyed locally and by visitors to the region.

8.6.14 Louth Tidy Towns Together

Louth is one of only four counties in Ireland to hold four gold medals in the Tidy Towns competition and it has represented Ireland on three occasions in the European Entente Florale competition, on each occasion, winning awards. Next to the GAA, Tidy Towns is the biggest community organisation in the country and Louth's 24 groups comprise of 450 volunteers who give around 450,000 hours on an annual basis. Partnership with local community groups and the voluntary sector with local government are an integral element of improving and enhancing local environments. The strength of the Tidy Towns Together Network and its many constituent parts continues to impact positively in every corner of County Louth; 24 centres in the county increased their performance in the Tidy Towns competition in 2015. The Local Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership Fund also continues to be availed by local groups with good success.

Apart from its involvement in community life, the contribution of initiatives like Tidy Towns cannot be underestimated in its contribution to a perception of safety for citizens and businesses. This was reiterated during the LECP consultation process and also during the Public Participation Network consultation. Tidy Towns Together also noted in a submission to the LECP

that it would be important that any rural development programme should prioritise village enhancement works to include funding for development of public parks, heritage parks, biodiversity gardens, sculptures, paving projects, decorative lighting standards and playgrounds. The Community Safety Strategy survey conducted in 2014 identified good community spirit, attractive well maintained spaces, programmes like Tidy Towns, facilities for young people and a Garda presence as critical factors to increasing local communities sense of safety. Well-designed and efficiently maintained local environments lead to self-esteem and pride of place in local communities and they encourage volunteerism at local level together with enhanced feelings of personal safety.



9.0 LOCAL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

A PLAN FOR THE PROMOTION OF ECONOMIC
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN COUNTY LOUTH



9.1 Louth LECP Economic Goals



ECONOMIC GOAL 1: Foreign Direct Investment

Promote and develop Louth as a key investment location on the Eastern Economic Corridor.



ECONOMIC GOAL 2: Sustainable Development

Promote the growth of new and existing business and communities in Louth in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.



ECONOMIC GOAL 3: Education and Training

Advance economic and social development by providing a targeted continuum of lifelong learning and skills development.



ECONOMIC GOAL 4: Future Focused Innovation

Ensure that Louth will be a leader in business development, creating new models of flexible value and enterprise.



ECONOMIC GOAL 5: Indigenous Industry

Deliver viable local economies underpinned by innovation and entrepreneurship.



ECONOMIC GOAL 6: Tourism and Heritage

Ensure that Louth's unique Tourism offering positions it as a market leader of national significance.



ECONOMIC GOAL 7: Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

Establish Louth as a premier producer in the Agri-Farming, Food and Fisheries sector.



ECONOMIC GOAL 8: Broadband Connectivity and Transport

Ensure availability of high speed broadband connectivity county-wide to develop and sustain business and connect our communities.

9.2 Economic objectives at a glance

[Lead Goal delivery highlighted]

		ECONOMIC Goal 1: Foreign Direct Investment	ECONOMIC Goal 2: Sustainable Development	ECONOMIC Goal 3: Education & Training	ECONOMIC Goal 4: Future Focused Innovation	ECONOMIC Goal 5: Indigenous Industry	ECONOMIC Goal 6: Tourism & Heritage	ECONOMIC Goal 7: Agriculture, Food & Fisheries	ECONOMIC Goal 8: Broadband Connectivity & Transport
001	Focus inward investment to Dundalk, Drogheda, Ardee and the Eastern Economic Corridor first.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
002	Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the Regional Action Plan for Jobs.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
003	Create a Louth Brand to attract and promote business and quality of life.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
004	Work collaboratively with interregional agencies to promote cross border and transboundary business and investment initiatives.	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
005	Position Louth as Ireland's foremost Smart Green County promoting a sustainable energy and circular economy future.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
006	Develop leadership and competency in Smart Energy Technologies.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
007	Replicate the Dundalk 2020 approach in Drogheda and Ardee		✓				✓		
008	Aid in the identification and development of renewable energy projects and technologies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
009	Improve county sustainability indices as part of Brand Louth		✓				✓	✓	
010	Establish an Education, Training and Business task group with an implementation and monitoring working group	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
011	Match skills development with Louth Economic Goals	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
012	Advance the formation and promotion of strategic educational alliances in an enhanced environment			✓		✓			
013	Support inclusive and flexible 'work ready' Education and Skills Development programmes	✓		✓	✓	✓			
014	Form and strengthen alliances between Primary and Secondary Schools, DkIT, the LEF and industry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
015	Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
016	Lead age-friendly business development, creating new models of flexible value and enterprise.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
017	Drive an increase in competitiveness and promote the development of indigenous industry sectors and Irish bred internationally traded services		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
018	Resource, support and promote existence and capabilities of LEO, CECs and expert panel mentoring network	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
019	Promote the growth of the Retail sector	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
020	Identify and maintain business, enterprise, R&D and innovation funding streams.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
021	Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of Brand Louth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
022	Support an increased awareness and knowledge of Louth's heritage and culture		✓	✓			✓		✓
023	Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
024	Support the delivery of appropriate well planned and managed supporting infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

9.3 Louth LECP Economic Actions

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 001 FOCUS INWARD INVESTMENT TO DUNDALK, DROGHEDA, ARDEE AND THE EASTERN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR FIRST.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
001	Louth will facilitate and encourage IDA executives based overseas to visit relevant companies in Louth to enhance IDA employees knowledge of the county and regions to aid in IDA marketing their potential to inward investors.	Lead IDA Ireland Support LCC, LEO, LEF, Louth companies	Ongoing	Annually record and report number of IDA overseas executives visits to Louth.
002	Louth as a county holding the Dundalk Gateway will maintain a presence on the Northern and Western Regional Assembly in regard to securing Gateway ERDF Fund.	Lead LCC Support Northern & Western Regional Assembly	Ongoing	Nominate LCC representative to monitor & report Gateway ERDF Fund opportunities of Louth
003	IDA to plan, develop and construct new Advanced Building Solution in Dundalk.	Lead IDA Ireland Support LCC	To 2020	New Advanced Building Solution at Dundalk.
004	IDA, EI and industry will explore the potential for a Digital Payments Cluster along M1 Corridor developing areas of expertise, creation of expanded clusters, building on existing strengths and identifying second site solutions. Louth will support and actively participate in promoting the creation of this digital hub.	Lead IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland Support LCC, DkIT, DCU, in collaboration with enterprise within the region	2016	Monitor and report on IDA and Enterprise Ireland progress on creation of Digital Hub.
005	Louth will promote the identification of 2 no. preferred sites in Drogheda for inward investment.	Lead LEO, LCC Support IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, LEF, Chamber of Commerce	To 2022	Monitor and report on occurrence of new companies on 2 no. sites.

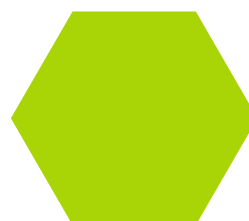
ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 002 PLAY ACTIVE SUPPORTING AND FACILITATOR ROLE ALONGSIDE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO IMPLEMENT THE REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
006	IDA will target a minimum of 61 new investments for the North East/ North West over the period 2015 – 2019; an increase of 30 to 40% on the strategy for 2010 – 2014. Louth to secure proportional level of investments.	Lead IDA Ireland Support LCC, LEO	To 2019	Annual new investments by IDA in County Louth.
007	Louth will identify those companies based in Louth and engaged with IDA Ireland Transformation program	Lead LEO Support IDA Ireland	2016	Compile list of companies engaged with IDA Ireland Transformation programme
008	IDA will continue to collaborate with their existing clients under the Transformation program, encouraging them to invest in new activities, innovation and to win new mandates.	Lead IDA Ireland Support LCC, LEO	To 2019	Annual engagement statics request to IDA Ireland from Louth County Council.
009	Louth will work with the IDA in creating their value proposition for North East and North West Regions aimed at securing potential “second site” investments from companies with large scale existing operations in Dublin.	Lead IDA Ireland Support LCC, LEO	To 2019	Annually report information supplied.
010	Nominate a LCC officer with responsibility to aid in the creation of the Regional Connect Ireland Plan	Lead LCC Support Connect Ireland	By 2016	Nominated LCC officer to report to Connect Ireland.

011	Louth will aid in the creation of a Regional Connect Ireland Plan intended to be integrated with the LCC enterprise development and job-creation activities.	Lead Connect Ireland Support Nominated LCC officer, Northern & Western and East & Midland Regional Assemblies	2016	Increased number of connections recorded for Louth under the Regional Connect Ireland Plan.
012	Connect Ireland is to announce and run a Connectivation competition, inviting third level students to share their ideas for the future development of the Succeed in Ireland initiative. Louth County Council will support entrants from any third level institution to this competition.	Lead Nominated LCC officer Support DkIT, HEI's	2016	Number of entrants from Louth to competition.
013	Enterprise Ireland and IDA will run an information/networking event across the North East and North West Regions for their clients.	Lead IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland	2016	Networking Event occurrence.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 003**CREATE A LOUTH BRAND TO ATTRACT AND PROMOTE BUSINESS AND QUALITY OF LIFE.**

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
014	Louth will create Brand Louth as a unique and desirable county to live, work and play in supported by sustainable industry, energy and hard and soft infrastructural connectivity.	Lead LCC Support SPC, LCDC, LEO, LEF, IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Teagasc, Bord Bia, Bord Iascaigh Mhara, SEAI, Age Alliance, Louth Sports Partnership, DkIT, SMEs, Fáilte Ireland, multinationals, schools, PPN	2017	Creation of Brand Louth.
015	Promotion of Brand Louth.	Lead LCC Support As identified under Brand Louth	From 2017	Continuous update of Brand interface for county residents, visitors, investors.
016	Louth will provide information to IDA Ireland to proactively update its online marketing "Invest in" series for County Louth.	Lead IDA Ireland Support LCC, LEO	To 2019	Annually report information supplied.
017	Engage in the development of a Marketing Strategy / Integrated Awareness Campaign (internal & external) to promote the whole of the North East/ North West as a great region to live, work & play as indicated in the North East /North West Action Plan for Jobs 2015 -2017.	Nominated LCC, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Private businesses, LEOs, IDA, EI, Connect Ireland, LCC	To 2017	
018	LEO will work with representatives of Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland to ensure a co-ordinated and effective approach to promotion and marketing of the county with a view to attracting external investment.	Lead LEO Support IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland.	2016	Annual number of new jobs attributable to Enterprise Ireland and / or IDA supported businesses in Louth.



ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 004 WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH INTERREGIONAL AGENCIES TO PROMOTE CROSS BORDER & TRANSBOUNDARY BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT INITIATIVES.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
019	Louth will carry out a scoping and review exercise of adopted LECPs on the North West and North East Regions to identify similar actions and therefore opportunities for collaboration with other counties in the region	Lead LCC. Support SPC	2016	Prepare document identifying similar LECPC actions and circulate to the Northern & Western and the Eastern & Midland Regional Assemblies.
020	Louth businesses will attend the Going North workshop hosted by InterTradeIreland to support local business and create awareness of opportunities that exist with this workshop.	Lead InterTrade Ireland, Support LEO, LCC	2017	Number of Louth companies to participate in each InterTradeIreland workshop
021	Through the INTERREG VA Programme SEUPB will support cross-border business investment in Research & Innovation with an allocation of €15.9m. The key outputs will focus on SMEs with 1,408 receiving a range of support including: collaboration with research institutions; innovation advice; collaborative research projects. Louth to secure proportional level of investment.	Lead Special EU Programmes Body Support LCC, LEO	2016 - 2020	Number of INTERREG VA funded cross-border R&D Innovation projects with Louth
022	InterTradeIreland aim to help companies to identify and break down barriers to trade with Northern Ireland through the Trade Accelerator Voucher scheme. Louth will support this scheme	Lead InterTradeIreland Support LEO, LCC	To 2016	Number of Trade Accelerator Voucher Scheme recipients in Louth.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 005 POSITION LOUTH AS IRELAND'S FOREMOST SMART GREEN COUNTY PROMOTING A SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY FUTURE.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
023	Louth will support the maintenance of and proposals to strengthen the electricity transmission grid where feasible and necessary to enable maximum investment by industries that rely on large energy consumption	Lead Eirgrid Support LCC	Ongoing	Annual Number of planning applications / applications to An Bord Pleanála by Electricity providers in Louth
024	Louth will encourage cost savings in businesses through promotion of energy efficiency audits, programmes and training.	Lead SEAI, LCC Support LEO, Louth Energy Officer, SEAI, IWEA	Ongoing	Annual SEAI training and programme participants from Louth. Annual number of energy audits signposted by LEO

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 006 DEVELOP LEADERSHIP AND COMPETENCY IN SMART ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
025	Through the INTERREG VA Programme, the Special EU Programmes Body will increase business industry-relevant Research and Innovation capacity across the North West and North East region within two sectors; 'Health & Life Sciences' and 'Renewable Energy', with an ERDF allocation of €45m. Louth to secure proportional level of investment.	Lead SEUPB Support LCC, LEO, SPC, LCDC, LMETB, SEAI	To 2023	Annual level of funding sought/ secured by Louth companies/ projects.



ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 007

REPLICATE THE DUNDALK 2020 APPROACH IN DROGHEDA AND ARDEE.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
026	Louth will work with SEAI to identify suitable Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC) model location(s) in the County to act as exemplars.	Lead SEAI Support Louth Energy Officer	To 2017	Number of suitable locations identified by 2017 in both Drogheda & Ardee.
027	Louth with the support of SEAI will select a preferred SEC location.	Lead SEAI Support Louth Energy Officer	2017	Identification of preferred SEC locations in both Drogheda & Ardee.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 008

AID IN THE IDENTIFICATION & DEVELOPMENT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS & TECHNOLOGIES.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
028	Inward investment in wind energy and renewable energies to Louth will be encouraged in accordance with Development Plan policy and objectives.	Lead LCC Support Enterprise Ireland, LEO, private sector representatives, IWEA,	Ongoing	Annual number of planning applications, Section 5 applications for renewable energy.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 009

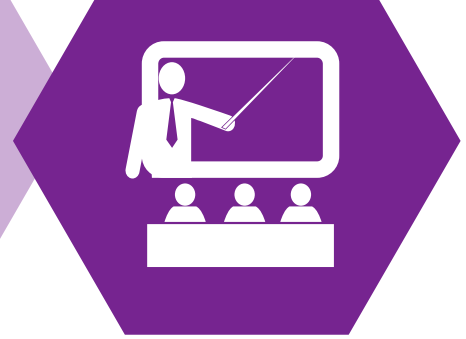
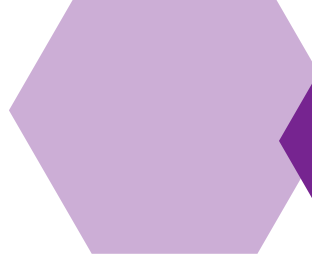
IMPROVE COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY INDICES AS PART OF BRAND LOUTH.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
029	Implement LECP.	Lead LECP Steering Committee Support SPC, LCDC	To 2022	Annual review will measure performance of Louth.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 010

ESTABLISH AN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND BUSINESS TASK GROUP WITH AN IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING WORKING GROUP.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
030	Public agencies responsible for business start ups and employment in Louth are to meet quarterly.	Lead SPC Support LEF, LCDC, LDS, LEO, LMETB, DSP, Dept. of Jobs Enterprise & Employment, Regional Assembly member, Enterprise Ireland, InterTrade Ireland, SEAI	Ongoing	Quarterly Agendas and Minutes published.
031	Louth Economic Forum will pilot an initiative to evaluate the coherence of the various start-up supports at County level, to create a road map for users and to consider ways through which they can be promoted to ensure a joined-up, comprehensive, yet easily accessible, information and guidance service to potential entrepreneurs.	Lead Louth Economic Forum Support SPC, LEO, LCC	2016	Road map for users of county start up services made.



ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 011 MATCH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT WITH LOUTH ECONOMIC GOALS.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
032	Work with InterTradelreland to ensure that companies in Louth have access to the "Funding for Growth" workshops and equity awareness events proposed for the North East and North West Region.	Lead InterTradelreland, Support LEO, LCC	2016	Number of Louth companies to attend InterTradelreland workshops & events.
033	Louth businesses will attend the "Get ready to Export" seminar that Enterprise Ireland will run for the North East/ North West in 2016.	Lead EI Support LEO, LCC	2016	Number of Louth companies to attend seminar.
034	Ensure that businesses in Louth have access to the "Export Workshop" to be run by Enterprise Ireland in the North East/ North West in 2016.	Lead EI Support LEO, LCC	2016	Number of Louth companies to attend workshop.
035	InterTradelreland will promote its "Acumen" and "Elevate" programmes in the North West & North East Regions.	Lead EI Support LEO, LCC	2016	Number of Louth companies to participate in each Acumen and Elevate programmes
036	Louth will work with InterTradelreland to ensure that SMEs in Louth have access to the public tendering workshops proposed for the North East and North West Region.	Lead InterTradelreland, Support LEO, LCC	2017	Number of Louth companies to attend public tendering workshops.
037	LEO will run 1 Public Sector Procurement Workshop.	Lead LEO	2016	Workshop held.
038	Louth will work with InterTradelreland to aid companies in Louth to have access to public tender opportunities; including cross border public sector opportunities, consortia building for larger contracts and below threshold contracts.	Lead InterTradelreland, Support LEO, LCC	2016	Number of cross border tenders submitted.
039	LEO will maintain and improve Public Sector Procurement skills development.	Lead LEO	2017 Onward	Public Procurement skills development supports identified and participation rates monitored.
040	LEO will provide training and mentoring for 250 women across its programs.	Lead LEO	2016	Action complete
041	LEO will increase the number of women participants year on year on their programmes and in mentoring, including directing them to Enterprise Ireland (Start Your Own Business, Accelerate, Hi Start, Export Awareness, Lean, Mentoring).	Lead LEO Support Enterprise Ireland	2017 Onward	Annual number of women participants increased across all LEO Services at least in line with APJ target of 670 for the North East from 2015-2018.
042	LEO will run 5 Female Entrepreneur Networking: Formal Women in Business Network Events with a total of 300 participants.	Lead LEO	2016	Action complete.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 012 ADVANCE THE FORMATION AND PROMOTION OF STRATEGIC EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCES IN AN ENHANCED ENVIRONMENT.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
043	Engage in North West and North East Regional Skills Fora to foster better engagement between education providers, employers and other regional stakeholders, on an ongoing basis, to collaborate in building the skills of people and businesses in County Louth.	Lead DES Support DkIT, LMETB, IDA, EI, LEOs, Ibec, Chambers, industry/SMEs	Ongoing	Number of Louth members of Regional Skills Fora Number of Louth attendees at Regional Skills Fora
044	The Technology Gateway National Network will continue to carry out industry research. Ensure that DkIT and businesses in Louth are aware of, and have access to the findings and research of this network.	Lead DkIT Support LCC, LMETB, EI, LEO, Technology Gateway Network	To 2017	Nominate a Louth official to attend and report on the LyIT - WISAR Technology Gateway annual open day. Attend open days of other Technology Gateways.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 013 SUPPORT INCLUSIVE & FLEXIBLE 'WORK READY' EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
045	Louth will encourage the meeting of skills shortages in process technician roles in Medtech, Plastics and Engineering sector identified in the North East and North West Regions by providing training conversion programmes at level 6.	Lead LMETB Support IMDA Skillnet, Ibec	Ongoing	Number of Medtech, Plastics and Engineering (at level 6 and above) training places occupied by Louth participants
046	Develop and roll out the new range of national apprenticeship programmes across Louth.	Lead LMETB Support Education & Skills Providers, DkIT, EI, IDA	Ongoing	Annual number of apprenticeship places taken up by Louth residents. Annual number of apprenticeships completed by Louth residents.
047	LEO will run 9 Start Your Own Business programmes with a total of 150 participants.	Lead LEO	2016	Action complete
048	LEO will increase the number of participants year on year on the Start Your Own Business programmes.	Lead LEO	2017 Onward	Annual number of participants increased.
049	LEO will run 1 Start Your Own Food Business Course with 8 participants.	Lead LEO	2016	Action complete
050	LEO will run 2 Start Your Own Online Business courses.	Lead LEO	2016	Action complete
051	InterTradeIreland will promote the Fusion Programme for the placement of high calibre science, engineering or technology graduates with SMEs in partnership with DkIT. A target of at least 18 placements has been set for the North East and North West region. Louth to secure proportional level of investment.	Lead InterTradeIreland, LEF, Support DkIT, LMETB, educational providers, SMEs, LEF	2016	Number of Fusion approvals arising per sector from Louth. Number of diaspora events held.
052	The North West and North East region has actioned one to one support to long term unemployed clients before they approach employment or training.	Lead DSP Support LMETB	Ongoing	Record number of one to one meetings pre-employment or training.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 014 FORM AND STRENGTHEN ALLIANCES BETWEEN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS, DKIT, THE LEF AND INDUSTRY.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
053	Louth will foster connections between companies and young people and heighten awareness of skill set shortages through engagement with second and third level students.	Lead LMETB, LEO Support Education & Skills Providers, Secondary Schools, DkIT,	2017	Present to all second level schools the business profile of Louth and national skillnet shortages. Use Student Enterprise Awards to do this. Identify, maintain & grow LMETB and Louth County Council informal and formal partnerships with DkIT.
054	The North East and North West Regional Action Plan for Jobs has actioned cross border higher education Networks (Letterkenny/Derry and Dundalk /Belfast) to enhance enterprise and economic development in Louth and across the region.	Lead LMETB, DkIT Support relevant bodies in Northern Ireland	2016-2017	Louth participation in cross border Dundalk / Belfast education Network.
055	Louth will work with Enterprise Ireland and promote their Graduate Placement Programme.	Lead Enterprise Ireland Support LEO, LCC, LMETB	Ongoing	Annual number of Louth graduates on placement programme.
056	LEO will roll out Student Enterprise Awards programme in all second level schools across the county.	Lead LEO Support Enterprise Ireland, LCC	2016	All second level schools be invited to enter Student Enterprise Awards
057	LEO will run the Student Enterprise Programme and Awards with 400 participants.	Lead LEO Support Enterprise Ireland, LCC	2016	Action complete
058	The North East Region aims that 1,700 students and 60 schools are to be engaged in Student Enterprise Programmes from 2015 -2018. Louth to secure proportional level of participation.	Lead LEO Support Enterprise Ireland, LCC	To 2018	Annual number of participants and schools participating in programmes increases.
059	Louth will support Enterprise Ireland's promotion of outreach activities to industry, through the Technology Transfer Office at Dublin City University and Dundalk Institute of Technology.	Lead Technology Transfer Offices	Ongoing	Number of outreach events per year.
060	Based on the review of the Regional Innovation Fora in Galway and Cork, Enterprise Ireland will facilitate a Regional Innovation Forum to encourage peer to peer interactions and SME higher education institutions linkages to encourage innovation in the North East and North West region.	Lead Enterprise Ireland Support DkIT, LMETB, educational providers, SMEs	2017	Number of Louth attendees at forum.
061	Louth will support a Regional Student Enterprise Network to support Student Entrepreneurship who will be welcome to use business resources of the authority.	Lead Higher Education Institutions Support LCC, LEO	To 2017	Regional Student Enterprise Network established.



ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 015

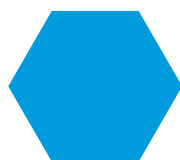
ADVANCE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS INNOVATION IN PRODUCTS, SERVICES, ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR AND WAYS OF WORKING.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
062	Louth will encourage local companies in Louth to take part in the annual Seedcorn Competition which is run by InterTrade Ireland.	Lead InterTrade Ireland Support LCC, LEO	To 2019	Number of Louth companies entering Seedcorn Competition
063	IDA will continue to roll out its Research, Development & Innovation Program to incentivise client companies in County Louth to develop new processes and products.	Lead IDA Ireland Support LCC, LEO	Ongoing	Annual productivity results of IDA client companies.
064	Explore the potential to establish a Business & Innovation Centre (BIC) in County Louth along the lines of WestBIC in Galway.	Lead The Mill (Drogheda Enterprise Hub) with DKIT Support Enterprise Ireland, LEO	2016	Report on potential for BIC at The Mill including resources and timeframes to delivery.
065	LEO will provide €100,000 across 40 clients through On-line trading vouchers approved.	Lead LEO	2016	Level of assistance and number of businesses assisted in setting up e-commerce websites.
066	The North East Region over 2015 -2018 is to provide 60 online trading vouchers. Louth to secure proportional level of investments.	Lead LEO Support Enterprise Ireland	To 2018	Annual number of online trading vouchers dispensed.
067	The North East and North West region will build on the global sourcing and collaboration trend and provide opportunities for Irish Companies to engage with IDA companies.	Lead LEO Support Enterprise Ireland, LCC, IDA	Ongoing	Monitor and engage in any initiative arising from Action Plan for Jobs, Action 36.
068	LEO will provide a progression pathway for high potential start-ups and high growth companies to Enterprise Ireland's supports and programmes including their Potential Exporters Division, and High Potential Start-up Division.	Lead LEO Support Enterprise Ireland	Ongoing	Number of startup clients progressed to Enterprise Ireland per year.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 016

LEAD AGE-FRIENDLY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CREATING NEW MODELS OF FLEXIBLE VALUE AND ENTERPRISE

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
069	Develop an Age-Friendly Business Charter for Louth.	Lead Age Friendly LEF Support LCC, SPC	2016	Making of Charter.
070	Promote the Enterprise Awards Scheme (BTWEAS) for people who return to work on the enterprise allowance scheme.	Lead LCDCs Support LCC, DSP	Ongoing	Number of Louth entrants to the BTWEAS



ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 017

DRIVE AN INCREASE IN COMPETITIVENESS AND PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS INDUSTRY SECTORS & IRISH BRED INTERNATIONALLY TRADED SERVICES.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
071	Louth will work with Enterprise Ireland to target manufacturing companies in County Louth as a part of its Regions to Scale, innovate and develop international markets for those companies.	Lead Enterprise Ireland Support LEO, LCC	Ongoing	LEO annual report of Enterprise Ireland supported companies.
072	Continue to host Human Resource forums through Ibec's regional offices in Louth for Ibec members.	Lead Ibec	Ongoing	Meetings to be held for Ibec members.
073	Ibec are to hold a Regional Business Roadshow and a Regional Business Summit for Ibec members.	Lead Ibec	2016	Attendance at Roadshow and Ibec member attendance at Summit.
074	Increase the number of entrepreneurs and start ups in Louth via the Enterprise Start workshops, the New Frontiers Entrepreneurial Development Programmes.	Lead Enterprise Ireland Support LEO, LCC	Ongoing	Number of Louth participants annually.
075	Enterprise Ireland will first evaluate then support and monitor successful applicants under the €5 million Community Enterprise Initiative Scheme launched in 2015.	Lead Enterprise Ireland Support Community Enterprise Initiative candidates	To 2016	Number of successful applicants to the Community Enterprise Initiative Scheme from Louth. Monitoring findings of Enterprise Ireland.
076	Enterprise Ireland will evaluate proposals under the National €5 million Competitive LEO fund that supports micro-enterprise locally.	Lead Enterprise Ireland, LEO	To 2016	Number of successful proposals for Competitive LEO fund from Louth.
077	Louth will encourage the uptake of InterTradelreland's Challenge Programme, an intensive mentoring and support programme for growing businesses, to SMEs in County Louth.	Lead InterTradelreland Support LEO, LCC	To 2016	Number of Challenge Programme users from Louth
078	LEO will promote and encourage client participation in the 1. National Enterprise Awards; 2. the Irelands Best Young Entrepreneur (IBYE) competition 3. the Exporter of the Year Awards and 4. Dundalk and Drogheda Chamber Business & Tourism Awards.	Lead LEO Support LEO clients, connections	2016	Number of Louth entrants into each national competition (1, 2 & 3). Monitor total number of entrants to Chamber of Commerce awards (no. 4) year on year.
079	LEO is part of a National Co-Ordinating Committee for the Local Enterprise Village in September at the National Ploughing Championships. The Village will feature 71 clients selected from all 31 LEOs nationwide and clients from Louth will form part of this village.	Lead LEO Support LEO Clients, Local Enterprise Village	2016	Attend ploughing event with at least 2 Louth companies.
080	LEO Louth is one of seven regional LEO hubs promoting and participating in the Enterprise Europe Network Programme.	Lead LEO Support LCC, SPC, Enterprise Europe Network,	2016	LEO to regularly publish regional hub meeting outcomes.
081	LEO Louth is a partner in the development and roll out of a new East Border Region PLATO Network.	Lead LEO Support LCC, Eastern Region PLATO partners	Ongoing	Number of Louth members in PLATO network.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 018**RESOURCE, SUPPORT & PROMOTE EXISTENCE AND CAPABILITIES OF LEO, CECS AND EXPERT PANEL MENTORING NETWORK.**

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
082	Enterprise Ireland will agree and implement Service Level Agreements with all Business Innovation Centres (a.k.a. CECs) in County Louth.	Lead Enterprise Ireland Support LEO, LCC	2016	5 no. Service Level Agreements made.
083	LEO will continue to provide appropriate support to the Community Enterprise Centres (The Mill, Millmount, Creative Spark Ltd., Ardee Community Development Co. Ltd. and Dundalk Enterprise Development Company Ltd.).	Lead LEO, CECS Support Enterprise Ireland, LCC	Ongoing	Number of new enterprises availing of CEC supports.
084	LEO will deliver the Innovation Alliance Programme in Louth for the effective transfer and implementation of innovation between Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) through the 8 SHIP partnerships.	Lead LEO Support SHIP partnerships	Ongoing	Number of Horizon 2020 ready SMEs in Louth.
085	LEO will provide 150 one-to-one Mentoring Sessions (approx 50 assignments) to micro/small businesses.	Lead LEO Support Mentoring Network	2016	Action complete.
086	LEO will increase year on year the number of mentoring sessions and assignments.	Lead LEO Support Mentoring Network	2017 Onward	Annual number of mentoring sessions and assignments increased.
087	Louth will support the identification of a set of volunteer business mentors to support Louth businesses and entrepreneurs.	Lead LCC, LEO Support Louth Economic Forum (LEF), Age Alliance, PLATO EBR, Chambers of Commerce, Ibec	2016	List of volunteer mentors and skillsets compiled.
088	Louth will use the identified set of volunteer business mentors to support Louth businesses and entrepreneurs on a case by case basis.	Lead LCC, LEO Support LEF, Age Alliance, PLATO, EBR, Chambers of Commerce, Ibec	2017	Review existing business clients, course participants to invite expressions of interest for volunteer mentors. Match volunteer mentor skillsets and time resources with businesses & individuals wishing to avail of service.
089	LEO will ensure that the best-fit member of staff is assigned to each client and that 500 one to one client meetings, across 50 companies, occur each year.	Lead LEO	Ongoing	Annual number of client meetings. Annual number of clients.
090	LEO will work to ensure the availability of incubation space and supports in CECs across Louth.	Lead LEO Support CECs	Ongoing	Number of clients referred to each CEC per year by LEO.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 019 PROMOTE THE GROWTH OF THE RETAIL SECTOR.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
091	Creating incentives for the sequential development of existing and new retail and retail services businesses in accordance with the Louth Retail Hierarchy.	Lead SMEs, national retailers, international retailers Support LCC	Ongoing	Annual number of permissions granted / retail space for retail development.
092	Louth will provide support and assistance to pop up shops and markets in Louth's principal towns enabling artisan food producers, artists and craft makers to showcase and sell their products.	Lead LCC Support Chambers of Commerce, Retail Bodies, Local Businesses	To 2017	Record number, location, type and frequency of markets in Louth including occasional pop up events. Monitor growth /decrease in markets / events to inform improved services.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 020 IDENTIFY AND MAINTAIN BUSINESS, ENTERPRISE, R&D AND INNOVATION FUNDING STREAMS.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
093	Maintain list of EU, National, Regional and local grant aids.	Lead LEO Support LCC, government departments, government agencies.	Ongoing	List held and regularly updated
094	Monitor and explore the potential of all potential sources of funding, co-financing and financing particularly regional and interregional lending opportunities.	Lead SPC Support LEO, LCC, LEF, LCDC	Ongoing	Number of new financing sources identified and explored per year.
095	Maintain list of finance for business sources.	Lead LEO Support LCC, government departments, government agencies.	Ongoing	List held and regularly updated
096	Louth will continue to work with the Northern and Western Regional Assembly in parallel with their membership of the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly in order to secure EU funding for relevant projects in the County. NOTE: The Northern and Western Regional Assembly also acts as the national contact point for three EU Interreg Programmes for the 2014-2020 period i.e. Northern Periphery and Arctic (€56 m), Atlantic Area (€140m) and Interreg Europe (€359 m – jointly with the Southern Assembly).	Lead Northern & Western Regional Assembly Support LCC, LCDC, SPC, LEO	To 2020	LDS monitoring reports
097	The North East Region is to be provided €1.1 million in grant assistance under the Action Plan for Jobs and enterprise development supports. Louth to secure proportional level of investments.	Lead Dept. of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation Support LEOs, LCC, Enterprise Ireland	To 2018	Annually review level of funding supports to Louth relative to regional partner counties.
098	The North East Region over 2015 -2018 is to make 20 microfinance applications. Louth to secure at least proportional level of applications.	Lead LEO Support LCC, Enterprise Ireland	To 2018	Number of microfinance Ireland applications annually. Number of successful microfinance Ireland applications annually.
099	LEO will provide €100,000 across 10 clients through Microfinance Applications submitted.	Lead LEO Support LCC, Enterprise Ireland	2016	Number of successful microfinance Ireland applications.
100	LEO will prepare applications for relevant EU Programmes including INTERREG V and PEACE IV.	Lead LEO	2016	Number of applications for EU funding prepared by LEO for clients.
101	LEO will provide Grant Aid Approvals totalling €300,000 across 25 projects in Priming, Business Expansion and Feasibility Study Grants.	Lead LEO	2016	Level of grant aid approval in monetary amount and number of clients.
102	LEO will provide 44 jobs through the grants approved in 2016.	Lead LEO	2016	Number of jobs created through grant approvals.
103	LEO will provide a net increase of 60 jobs in financially supported businesses during 2016.	Lead LEO	2016	Increased employment in Financially supported businesses.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 021 DEVELOP A TOURISM & VISITOR MARKETING PROGRAMME AS PART OF BRAND LOUTH.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
104	Louth will support the development of their town centres in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plans.	Lead LCC Support Chambers of Commerce, Retail Bodies, Local Businesses	Ongoing	Interim reports on the Development Plans. Provision and publication of local level guidance for town centre users. Number of Derelict site in Town Centres. Number of Dangerous Buildings in Town Centres.
105	The North East and North West region have stated that Fáilte Ireland will examine, as part of the Wild Atlantic Way strategy for 2015-2019, the development of a series of loops off the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East to encourage greater spread of visitors, alleviate pressure from high traffic areas and present complementary visitor experiences.	Lead Fáilte Ireland Support LCC, SPC, LCDC, LEF	To 2019	Loops off Ireland's Ancient East mapped and published.
106	Faillte Ireland and Tourism Ireland to market the Ireland's Ancient East as a tourism destination and Failte Ireland to identify any gaps in the Tourism Sector in the North West and North East region.	Lead Fáilte Ireland Support LCC, SPC, LCDC, LEF	2016-2019	Regional gap assessment by Failte Ireland and Tourism Ireland prepared.
107	Louth will review Failte Ireland and Tourism Ireland assessment of North West and North East region to close gaps identified.	Lead LEF Support Fáilte Ireland, SPC, LCDC, LCC	2016-2019	Prepare gap report for Louth. Close Gaps.
108	The North East and North West region have actioned the development of tourism related maritime projects such as sailing/ cruise ships/ festivals in the region and particularly Drogheda.	Lead LCC Support Drogheda Port Company, SPC, LCDC, LEF, Failte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, clubs/ societies (Inver Colpa Rowing Club)	Ongoing	Number, location, type of maritime / river related events recorded annually
109	Identify and develop greenway / blueway networks in the County.	Lead LCC Support DPC, LCDC, LEF, Waterways Ireland, NPWS, leisure clubs: rowing/ sailing/canoeing /walking / cycling .	Ongoing	Publish electronic map of blue and greenways county 2017. Signpost routes after 2017. Monitor blue/ greenway route map for additions/deletions.
110	Louth will promote and raise awareness of Fáilte Ireland's new international accreditation for alternative accommodation ('Welcome Standard').	Lead Fáilte Ireland Support LCC, LEO, LCDC, SPC, LEF	Ongoing	Annual number of Louth Facilities accredited with the Welcome Standard.
111	The North East and North West region have actioned the development of cross border Activity Tourism.	Lead LCC Support LEO, LCDC, SPC, LEF, Down and Armagh equivalent local authorities, Regional Assembly	Ongoing	Identify and agree a schedule of cross border, county and transboundary Activity Tourism Opportunities.
112	The North East and North West region have actioned the establishment of a cross border historic literary trail building on the North East/ North West region's literary heritage (including Yeats, McGahern, Kavanagh, Heaney, Mc Gill and Friel).	Lead LCC Support LEO, LCDC, SPC, LEF, North West & North East local authorities, Down, Armagh, Fermanagh and Tyrone equivalent local authorities, Regional Assembly	2017	Identify potential cross border literary trail(s) in Louth.
113	Louth will promote its attractions in an integrated Tourism & Visitor Marketing Strategy to be part of Brand Louth. Key features identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage and Culture • Recreation and Leisure • Arts, Festivals and Food 	Lead LCC Support LEF, LEO, LCDC, SPC, LDS, Regional Assemblies, The North East Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG), Bord Fáilte	2016	Update Louth Tourism and Heritage Action Plan 2011
			By 2022	Dedicate human and financial resource to strategy formulation.



ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 022 SUPPORT AN INCREASE AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF LOUTH'S HERITAGE AND CULTURE.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
114	Map creative industries including digital content within County Louth and examine the potential for development of the sector within the County.	Lead LCC Support Enterprise Ireland, LEO, Design Crafts Council of Ireland, Dept. of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Higher Educational Institutions	2016	Digital Map of creative industries in Louth inc. names of business, product listings, no. of employees.
115	The North West and North East region has actioned the exploitation of the potential to develop crafts hubs for the County similar to Drumshambo food hub. They also highlight the creative sector by bringing individuals together in "Creative Hubs" to promote design skills, help tourism, attract creative people into Louth and improve quality of life.	Lead LCC Support Enterprise Ireland, LEO, Design Crafts Council of Ireland, Dept. of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Higher Educational Institutions	2017	Prepare statement on preferred location of craft or creative hubs in the County.
116	Louth will monitor the Acorns programme the national pilot competitive entrepreneurial development programme that targeted 48 female entrepreneurs based outside of urban centres in the North West and North East Regions.	Lead Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Support LCC	2015	Review findings of Acorns project to replicate success indicators in Louth
117	Support designation of Monasterboice as UNESCO site	Lead World Heritage Ireland Support LCC	Ongoing	UNESCO Designation
118	Support the fishing heritage and tourism potential of Clogherhead primarily through its Coastal Heritage Trail.	Lead Clogherhead Development Group (CDG) Support The North East Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG), LCC,	Ongoing	2016 LCC to invite CDG to input to Louth Heritage & Tourism Plan update.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 023 IMPLEMENT PRIORITY RURAL DEVELOPMENT & LEADER PROJECTS.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
119	Support the Local Development Strategy (LDS) for Louth under the LEADER programme.	Lead LCDC Support As assigned	To 2020	LDS monitoring reports
120	The North West and North East region have formally committed Bord Bia to work with Retailers to assist food and drink companies to increase shelf space for local produce.	Lead Bord Bia Support LCC, SPC, LEO, LEF	Ongoing	Monitor Bord Bia reporting on increased local produce retail profile for Louth.
121	Support the uptake and increase the numbers of Louth food producers attaining Origin Green status	Lead Bord Bia (Origin Green Initiative) Support LCC, SPC, LEO, LEF, Oriel Food Group	Ongoing	Track annually numbers of Origin Green approved producers



122	Secure resources through LEADER/REDZ/ Village and Town Renewal Schemes to invest in towns and villages in the County to enhance their attractiveness as leisure and retail destinations.	Lead LCC Support LCDC, SPC, LEF	To 2020	Implementation of the LDS. Monitor announcements of and apply for the Village Improvement Scheme grants from central government.
123	Teagasc will deliver product development workshops in the North West & North East region targeting the development of 20 new food enterprises. Louth to work with Teagasc to ensure that companies from Louth take advantage of these workshops.	Lead Teagasc, LEO Support LCC, Bord	2016-2017	Number of Louth participants at Teagasc workshops.
124	Teagasc will support the development of an artisan food hub pilot project in the region based on international best practice of such hubs. In Louth Ardee has been identified as a potential Food hub including existing kitchen facilities at county level.	Lead Teagasc, LCC Support LEO/Enterprise Ireland, LCDC, SPC, CECs, LEF, SMEs	2016-2017	Location of artisan food hub in Louth.
125	Louth will support the growth of membership of the Oriel Food Group	Lead Oriel Food Group Support LEO, LCC, LDS, LEF	2016	LCC and Oriel food group to agree supports to be provided to Oriel Food Group and mentoring/network opportunities committed to the Council to the end of the LECP 2022
126	Louth will expand the Taste of Louth Festival.	Lead LCC Support Teagasc, BIM, Bord Bia, LEO/Enterprise Ireland, LCDC, SPC, CECs, LEF, SMEs,	Ongoing	Engage with Taste of Cavan organisers and Taste of Festivals Ltd. Prepare roadmap to festival
127	Louth will support and promote The Irish Food Awards Blas na hÉireann through successful participation.	Lead LCC Support Bord Bia, LEO, LCDC, SPC, CECs, LEF, SMEs	Ongoing	Record number of entries to Irish food Awards annually.
128	Louth will take part in the pre Food Works clinics to occur in the North East and North West region in 2017.	Lead Enterprise Ireland Support LEO, Bord Bia, Teagasc	2017	Louth SMEs to attend pre Food Works clinics.
129	Louth will increase the number of participants on the Food Academy Programme and Food Academy Advance.	Lead Bord Bia Support LEO	Ongoing	Annually record number of Louth participants in the Food Academy Programme. Annually record number of Louth participants in the Food Academy Advance.
130	Louth will work with Teagasc to continue to support and increase the level of farm diversification in the county through their Option programme and their pilot Opt-In web portal.	Lead Teagasc Support LCDC, LCC, LEO, IFA, Macra Na Feirme	Ongoing	Annually record number of Louth participants in the Option Programme. Annually record number of Louth members registered on the Option Opt-In web portal.

131	Louth will promote Innovation Vouchers specifically targeting small food companies.	Lead Enterprise Ireland Support LEO	Ongoing	Record number and level of Innovation Vouchers issued to Louth food companies.
132	InterTradelreland will use its Fusion initiative (connecting HEIs in the region/nationally with innovative SMEs) to further develop innovation in agri-technology firms.	Lead InterTradelreland Support DkIT, LMETB, educational providers, SMEs	To 2016	Number of fusion approvals for agri-technology sector arising from Louth.
133	Louth will support the exploration of the potential for adding value to forestry raw materials for job creation and the potential for training local harvester and manufacturers of wood related products.	Lead Coillte Support LCC, LMETB, LEO, foresters, wood product manufacturers	To 2017	Monitor and input to Collte and Skillnet initiatives and reports as they arise.
134	Louth will support and encourage Teagasc provision of skills training and upskilling initiatives for the County's farmers in accounting services, health & safety.	Lead Teagasc Support LMETB, HSA, farmers	Ongoing	Annual number of Louth Farmers participating in Teagasc and Teagasc identified training and upskilling courses.
135	Louth will support the growth of commercial fisheries, fishing and seafood production, including shellfish	Lead LEO Support Bord lascaigh Mhara (BIM), Dept. of Agriculture Food and the Marine, Bord Bia	Ongoing	Track and increase the number of persons attending LEO delivered programmes engaged in the production of river/sea food

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE 024 SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF APPROPRIATE WELL-PLANNED & MANAGED SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
136	Louth will continue to support a reduced contributions and commercial rates incentives in designated areas as Business Incentive Schemes/ to support retail and attract business into town centres.	Lead LCC Support SPC, LEF	Ongoing	Annually review efficacy of contributions and rates incentives.
137	Louth will compile a database with map of vacant office and enterprise lands.	Lead LCC Support SPC, LEF	2017	Database made
138	Louth will support SIRO broadband delivery in Dundalk	Lead SIRO Support LCC	2016	Dundalk 100% high speed coverage
139	Louth will support the EIR plan to supply high speed broadband to 57,000 premises by mid 2016	Lead EIR Support LCC, SPC, LEF	2016	Number of premises with high speed broadband coverage
140	Louth will support private providers of high speed broadband to make Louth the most connected county	Lead Broadband providers Support LCC, SPC, LEF, LDS	By 2018	Drogheda 100% high speed coverage
141	Complete Phase 2 of The Mill, Drogheda	Lead The Mill CEC Support LCC, Enterprise Ireland, LEF, REDZ	2016	Phase 2 completed

9.4 Louth LECP Community Goals



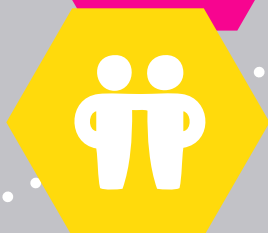
COMMUNITY GOAL 1: **Strong, safe and flourishing communities**

Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.



COMMUNITY GOAL 2: **Access to education**

Goal 2: Ensure that everyone can access and participate in education, skills development and life long learning.



COMMUNITY GOAL 3: **Prosperous, inclusive communities and places**

Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.



COMMUNITY GOAL 4: **Health and wellbeing**

Goal 4: Provide environments and conditions that support healthy, self-directed, fulfilled and purposeful lives.



COMMUNITY GOAL 5: **Nurturing children and young people**

Goal 5: Nurture and develop our children and young people from early childhood to young adulthood.



COMMUNITY GOAL 6: **An age-friendly society**

Goal 6: Embrace and foster the rich contribution our older people make to our communities.



COMMUNITY GOAL 7: **Entrepreneurship, innovation and enterprise**

Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.



COMMUNITY GOAL 8: **A valued environment**

Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.

9.5 Louth LECP Community Objectives and Actions

GOAL 1: ENABLE WELLBEING AND QUALITY OF LIFE TO SUPPORT SAFE, RESILIENT, INDEPENDENT AND ENGAGED COMMUNITIES.

OBJECTIVE 1: BUILD COMMUNITY CAPITAL AND COLLABORATION IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTY.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
1.1	Carry out a mapping exercise of community services and programmes in Louth to identify gaps/duplication of services and implement mechanisms to address and better co-ordinate funding, planning and delivery of community services.	Lead PPN Support LCDC Louth Volunteer Centre LLP Churches and other Faith Groups	2017	Community services mapping exercise completed. Mechanisms in place to improve coordination of services and delivery.
1.2	Support programmes that involve knowledge sharing and collaboration amongst community groups and service providers.	Lead LCDC Support PPN Louth Volunteer Centre LLP Louth Age Friendly Alliance Comhairle Na nÓg Louth Library Service	2017	Research undertaken to identify level of co-operation and sharing of information across community groups and service providers. Number of knowledge sharing initiatives delivered. Number of collaboration contracts implemented.
1.3	Expand the existing community directory to ensure that it is accessible, accurate and widely used by the public.	Lead LCC Support Louth Volunteer Centre LLP PPN	2016/ 2017	Community directory expanded and updated
1.4	Develop an arts strategy and programme that supports our artists, improves access to the Arts, enables opportunities for community participation and increases levels of public engagement.	Lead LCC (Arts Service) Support Droichead Arts Centre Highlanes Gallery An Táin Arts Centre Creative Spark Music Generation Louth DkIT Youth theatres in Louth Calipo Picture and Theatre company Upstate Theatre Company, Arts Festivals in Louth, Voluntary arts sector in Louth, Louth Volunteer Centre Louth Library Service	Q4 2016	Nos of artists supported by Louth Co Council. Nos of festivals and arts events funded. No. of return visits to local venues. Nos of artists residencies. No of volunteer opportunities in arts and culture organisations. Nos of volunteers and volunteer hours in arts and culture Organisations. Nos of cross sector partnerships e.g local libraries.
1.5	Ensure that libraries create opportunities to improve literacy levels, enhance community life and support employment opportunities.	Lead LCC Library Service Support PPN LMETB Louth Volunteer Centre LLP	2016 and ongoing	Nos of partnerships established to improve literacy levels in the community. Nos of initiatives undertaken by Library network to facilitate participation and support training and employment initiatives. Increased nos of 'Right to Read' initiatives in Libraries.

1.6	Work with Tidy Towns, Chambers of Commerce and local residents groups to promote clean, safe and accessible open spaces, parks and playgrounds underpinned by pride of place and community ownership.	Lead Louth Tidy Towns Together Support LCDC LLP Local Chambers of Commerce IPB Pride of Place Awards PPN Louth Volunteer Centre	2016 and ongoing	Nos participating in national Tidy Towns and local Pride of Place competitions. Nos of successful projects.
1.7	Create 'activity friendly' environments - using a participatory planning approach and the principles of universal design.	Lead LCC Sports Partnership Support HSE LLP Age Friendly Alliance	2016 and ongoing	Nos of play grounds, appropriate facilities/equipment and recreational spaces in place.
1.8	Provide safe, recreational facilities/shared spaces where children and young people can gather in an inclusive confident way. ⁸⁶	Lead LCC Support LLP An Garda Síochána Community and youth groups Comhairle na nÓg Louth Library Service	2016	Youth Cafes developed in Dundalk, Ardee and Dunleer based on Drogheda model. Nos of events in local libraries for young people
1.9	Promote intergenerational programmes in communities, youth programmes and schools to build more positive inter-community relationships. ⁸⁷	Lead LCC Support LLP Age-Friendly alliance Libraries, Schools Youth Clubs Retirement Homes and Villages Community groups DDS4OP The Netwell Centre	2016	Nos of programmes in place. Nos of intergenerational programmes facilitated by Louth Library Service
1.10	Facilitate the development of community 'hubs'/centres of shared learning in Drogheda, Dundalk and Ardee to support community groups and organisations. that involve volunteers in their work.	Lead LCC Support Louth Volunteer Centre LLP Municipal PPN Louth Library Service Citizen Information Centres LCDC	2016 - 2022	Nos of organisations involved in alliances and partnerships. No of participants attending workshops, training and fora. Nos of community organisations compliant with Governance Code and registered with Charities Regulatory Authority. Research and feasibility study completed on how existing facilities/knowledge/skills can be shared.
1.11	Review the current sports strategy and ensure participation in sports and physical activities by individuals and communities ⁸⁸ .	Lead LCC, Sports Partnership Support Local Sports Clubs Youth Clubs Schools	2016	Sports strategy developed Increase in nos of people participating.

⁸⁶ Goal 5⁸⁷ Goal 6⁸⁸ Goal 4

OBJECTIVE 2: PROMOTE AND SUPPORT VOLUNTEERING AND PARTICIPATION WITHIN LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO ENABLE A VIBRANT, CIVIL AND ACTIVE SOCIETY.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
2.1	Facilitate cross-community representation on the LCDC, PPN, Joint Policing Committee structures and other structures	Lead LCC Support LLP HSE NDTRF An Garda Síochána	2016	Representation in place and structures operating effectively.
2.2	Develop a volunteer strategy for Louth to address the barriers to volunteering, whilst promoting and supporting the value of volunteering to the individual and its positive impact on local communities.	Lead Louth Volunteer Centre Support LCDC LLP DKIT LMETB PPN LCC Local Employment Agencies HSE Schools Comhairle na nÓg Age Friendly Alliance	Q1 2017	Increased numbers of people volunteering especially amongst the unemployed, young, active retired and groups at more risk of social exclusion. Increased awareness of benefits from volunteering and local Volunteer Centre. Research and monitor the motivations, gaps in volunteer causes/activities and volunteering levels and types in Louth. Increased numbers of organisations participating in Volunteer Manager Forums and training.
2.3	Develop credits and recognition system for DkIT students and students of local schools who volunteer in local communities.	Lead Louth Volunteer Centre Support Educational institutions DKIT Muirhevnamor Community Groups LLP	Q4 2016	No of student volunteer hours. No of Presidents Award recipients. Nos of community organisations. Nos of opportunities that involve DkIT students. Recognition and reward schemes established.
2.4	Develop Louth community group volunteer recognition and reward initiatives and encourage more participation in national awards.	Lead Louth Volunteer Centre Support PPN LCC Chambers of Commerce IPB Pride of Place awards LLP	Q4 2017	Recognition and reward schemes developed.
2.5	Develop Quality Standard for effectively managing volunteers within community organisations in Louth.	Lead Louth Volunteer Centre Support Volunteer Ireland DKIT LLP LCC PPN	Q3 2017	Quality Standard developed. No of organisations participating. No of organisations with Quality Standard.
2.6	Promote, broker, facilitate and recognise strong corporate social responsibility initiatives among businesses to build and enhance community capacity.	Lead Louth Volunteer Centre Support LCC LEO Chambers of Commerce LCDC LEF	Q1 2018	Nos of productive relationships brokered. System developed to monitor levels of corporate social responsibility activity. No of corporate social responsibility projects. No of employee volunteer hours.
2.7	Devise a communications plan for Public Participation Network to enable effective decision making, delivery of work plans and engagement among secretariat and PPN members.	Lead PPN Support LCC	2016	Increased number of community organisations registered with PPN. Communications plan in place, monitored and regularly reviewed.

OBJECTIVE 3: ENSURE THAT EVERYBODY IN CO LOUTH CAN EXPERIENCE SAFE AND PEACEFUL LIVES FREE OF CRIME, INTIMIDATION, OR ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
3.1	Implement the Louth Community Safety Strategy in all JPC areas	Lead Joint Policing Committees Support LCC An Garda Síochána	2016 and ongoing	Nos of local area targets achieved via local policing fora % reduction in levels of crime and antisocial behaviour.
3.2	Implement the Garda community text alert system county wide	Lead An Garda Síochána Support LCC PPN LLP	2016 and ongoing	Community text alert scheme operating county wide.
3.3	Enforce local bye-laws to create safer local areas and shared public spaces, free from the impact of anti-social behaviour, alcohol and substance misuse.	Lead An Garda Síochána Support LCC	2016 and ongoing	Priorities agreed at local level increased number of Garda operations Bye-Laws enforced at local level Reduction in Public Order Offences
3.4	Continue to enforce legislation in relation to underage selling, secondary purchasing, serving intoxicated customers and drink/drugs driving.	Lead An Garda Síochána LAA Local publicans and off-licenses	2016 and ongoing	Alcohol test- purchasing scheme in place Responsible server training delivered in Drogheda, Dundalk and Ardee.
3.5	Establish a multi-agency Drugs and Alcohol Forum in Louth to devise a drugs and alcohol strategy, reduce the incidence of addiction and to plan and deliver effective services for people with addiction issues to enable sustainable recovery. ⁸⁹	Lead LCC Support NERDTF An Garda Síochána TURAS Counselling Services The Red Door Project	2016 2016-2021	Forum established. Strategy devised. Nos of individuals and families who are accessing support. Reduction in numbers on waiting list for addiction support services. Number of people progressing to treatment services. Drug and Alcohol networks established in areas most affected by substance addiction issues.
3.6	Ensure that crime victims and victims of sexual offences, domestic violence are supported, and safeguard the welfare of individuals and families at risk.	Lead An Garda Síochána Support LCC HSE TUSLA	2016 and ongoing	Recent victim-focused policy and legislation implemented at local level. Nos of interventions supporting victims of crime made Nos of cases before the Courts.
3.7	Implement the Louth County Council community fire safety strategy.	Lead LCC Support An Garda Síochána HSE PPN Louth County Fire Service	2016 and ongoing	Reduction in number of fire fatalities in the home.
3.8	Develop major emergency management structures within the county.	Lead LCC, HSE, An Garda Síochána Support Civil Defence Louth County Fire Service	2016	Nos of interagency major emergency exercises conducted inline with national major emergency framework.
3.9	Support local road and farm safety.	Lead LCC Support HSE(HI) LCDC LCC Fire Service National Road Safety Authority IFA An Garda Síochána	2016 and ongoing	Nos of community initiatives promoting road safety. Nos of initiatives focusing on farm safety. Reduced incidents of road accidents and farm accidents in local areas.

⁸⁹ Goal 4

GOAL 2:**ENSURE THAT EVERYONE CAN ACCESS AND PARTICIPATE IN EDUCATION, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND LIFELONG LEARNING.****OBJECTIVE 1: FACILITATE IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT LEVELS, UP SKILLING IN KEY COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS ACQUISITION**

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
1.1	Implement LMETB service innovation initiatives in further education and training across the county.	Lead LMETB Support DSP LCC LLP	Q4 2017 Q4 2017	Nos of initiatives implemented. Introduction of new Apprenticeship Programmes. Enhanced provision within existing Apprenticeship programmes. Enhanced delivery of 'Integrated Literacy and Numeracy/ICT Strategy'. New traineeships piloted to meet needs of economy. ⁹⁰ Continued enhancement and development of partnership between FE and HE in Louth NEFHEA (North East Further Higher Education Alliance).
1.2	Build capacity of local communities by providing educational/training opportunities in a variety of locations across the ETB region.	Lead LMETB Support DSP LCC LLP	Q4 2016/ Q4 2017 Q4 2017 2018 Q4 2017 2018 2016 2017 2017	Increased capacity in Drogheda College of Further Education catering for identified demand areas. New LMETB Head Office in Rathmullan, Drogheda. Increase in student numbers in Ó Fiaich College of further Education Dundalk via building extension catering for identified demand areas. Site acquisition for Coláiste Chú Chulainn Post- Primary School Dundalk catering for 1000 pupils. Community Park developed as part of site development. New FET centre developed in Ardee reflecting the needs of the community and its hinterland. Youthreach facility developed in Ardee to address numbers of NEETS ⁹¹ clients. Extension to Scoil Uí Mhuirí Primary School Dunleer and an all-weather track developed as part of a linked project. Planned extension for Bush Post Primary School with a Special Needs Unit to be developed on School Grounds. ⁹²
1.3	Ensure that appropriate programmes are available at all levels on the National Framework of Qualifications to facilitate improved educational levels, upskilling in key competencies and lifelong learning.	Lead LMETB DKIT Support LLP Drogheda Education & Training Network (DETN)	2016	Increased participation of Citizens participating in programmes from qualifications 1-10. Programmes in place to meet changing economic needs and those of programme target groups.

⁹⁰ ICT, Engineering, Renewable Energies, Food Science, Culinary Arts, Animal care, Sales and marketing, Childcare, Healthcare, Laboratory Science, Sports and Recreation.

⁹¹ NEETS: Not in Education, Employment or Training.

⁹² Subject to Government sanction

OBJECTIVE 2: FACILITATE AND ENCOURAGE GREATER PARTICIPATION IN ACCREDITED AND UNACCREDITED EDUCATION / TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
2.1	Provide effective information to include advertising and recruitment campaigns.	Lead LMETB Support LCDC DKIT LLP DETN	2016 and ongoing	Nos of campaigns conducted. Increased uptake in further education and training provision.
2.2	Ensure appropriate and supported entry criterion.	Lead LMETB Support LAEGIS DES DKIT	Q4 2017	Increase in retention and completion rates in FET.
2.3	Ensure early identification of learner needs to provide appropriate supports	Lead LMETB Support DES DEIS schools	2016 and ongoing	Needs identified, planned courses/skills provision to meet needs and career guidance counsellor services available in various locations. Increase in retention and completion rates.
2.4	Enable and support the identification and provision of educational and training needs of local communities in Louth through services of community education facilitators	Lead LMETB Support LAEGIS Chambers of Commerce DETN	Q4 2016 and ongoing	Increased participation in education/training provision in communities in Louth.
2.5	Clearly establish transfer and progression routes from course/programmes with appropriate supports where funding is available. ⁹³	Lead LMETB Support NEFHEA IGC North East DKIT DETN	Q4 2017	Transfers established and progression routes, together with appropriate supports in place, within FET and between FET and H.E. (Higher Education).
2.6	Support and provide a range of training opportunities for the wind and renewable energy sector at local level.	Lead IWEA Support DkIT LMETB DSP LLP	2018	Wind Skillnets programme delivered Increased possibilities of skills development and local employment in support of local renewable energy projects.

OBJECTIVE 3: ENSURE THAT EDUCATIONAL /TRAINING NEEDS OF PRIORITY PROGRAMME TARGET GROUPS ARE ADDRESSED IN A FOCUSED COHERENT WAY

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
3.1	Enable development and delivery of certified and non-certified education programmes to provide access for existing target groups.	Lead LMETB Support DSP LLP DETN	2016 and ongoing	Nos of accessible certified and non-certified courses developed.
3.2	Retain students in education until at least upper second level and provide second chance education to young people and adults who may not have completed upper second level.	Lead LMETB Support DSP DKIT CYPSC	Q4 2017	Nos of young people and adults engaged in 'second chance' education.
3.3	Support progression of learners into further education/training courses and transitioning to employment	Lead LMETB Support DSP DKIT LLP Upper second level service providers	Q4 2017	Increased rates of transition. PLC colleges, OFI and DIFE, working in partnership with DKIT to provide improved progression opportunities for learners in the region. LES and Jobs Club staff working collaboratively with DSP and LMETB management to ensure that numbers returning to the live register are closely monitored.
3.4	Promote the implementation of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Physical Education programme and the Active Schools Flag initiative in primary, post-primary schools and in Youthreach settings in Louth.	Lead LMETB Support Schools, Youthreach and Community groups Sport Partnership	Q4 2017	Nos of schools and youth organisations participating in SPHE, Active Schools Flag and Yellow Flag programmes.

⁹³ Goal 5



OBJECTIVE 4: WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO SUPPORT DELIVERY OF LMETB OBJECTIVES, EMPLOYER REQUIREMENTS AND COMMUNITY/LEARNER NEEDS

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
4.1	Work with statutory partners and communities to improve employability of unemployed persons by encouraging and enabling participation in courses and programmes.	Lead LMETB Support DSP LCC LLP Local Employment Agencies Volunteer Louth	Q4 2016	Nos of unemployed persons in further education/training programmes Engagement with Youth Guarantee initiatives.
4.2	Engage proactively with multinational and local indigenous business employer-based networks to ensure that courses and programmes provide for areas of skills shortage.	Lead LMETB Support DSP LEO Chambers of Commerce LLP DKIT The Mill	2016 and ongoing	Skills deficits identified. Skills for Work programmes expanded in consultation with employers. Cross agency partnerships further developed. New relationships/networks established.
4.3	Facilitate and support collaboration and planning between local businesses and training/education providers to ensure skills taught meet employers' needs.	Lead LMETB Support LEO, Chambers of Commerce DKIT	2016 and ongoing	Nos of meetings held Skills deficits identified and courses planned. Nos of new courses. Nos of job opportunities.
4.4	Promote sustainable development training programmes across both the formal and informal education sectors.	Lead LMETB Support DKIT, DES, LLP	2016 and ongoing	Increase in nos of community led sustainable development initiatives.
4.5	Increase opportunities to make information available on supports and enterprise skills development available to community groups.	Lead LEO Support LMETB, LLP, The Mill, Creative Spark	2016 and ongoing	Nos of training courses developed. Nos of participants participating transitioning to enterprise and self-employment.
4.6	Work with education providers to promote STEM initiatives and an additional focus on European language skills development in local schools.	Lead DES LMETB Support Local Schools	Q4 2017	Nos of local schools promoting STEM initiative Increased focus on language skills development.
4.7	Work in partnership with local libraries to support and promote literacy development, e learning opportunities, independent lifelong learning and preparation for employment.	Lead LMETB Support LCC Library Service LLP The Mill Creative Spark	Q2 2017	Nos of programmes offered by local libraries Nos attending local library training modules. Community –based adult education programme delivered in collaboration with LLP and NUIM.
4.8	Promote retention in schools and FET programmes through collaborative targeted interventions to increase the proportion of young people who complete full-time education. ⁹⁴	Lead LMETB Support DES DSP	Q4 2018	Nos of young people completing full-time education aligned with national average.
4.9	Promote further education and training to encourage the development of entrepreneurship skills among young people. ⁹⁵	Lead LMETB Support LEO LLP Schools The Mill WALK	Q4 2017	Nos of young entrepreneurs actively engaging. Nos of initiatives delivered by libraries in partnership with LEO

⁹⁴ Goal 5

⁹⁵ Goal 5

GOAL 3: CREATE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING POVERTY, ISOLATION AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION.

OBJECTIVE 1: EMPLOYMENT ENABLE MORE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION IN SOCIETY THROUGH THE PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT, INCOME SUPPORTS AND OTHER SERVICES.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
1.1	Develop and implement an action plan to support youth training, unemployment and entrepreneurship to include a focus on young people with disabilities through a collaborative approach.	Lead DSP Support LCC HSE LLP Youth Work Services Chambers of Commerce WALK Louth Malta Services The Mill	2016 and ongoing	Increased nos of young people with disabilities in training or further education programmes Reduction in percentage of young people, particularly those with disabilities, in unemployment.
1.2	Provide access to work experience, employment, third level education and lifelong learning for those with disabilities and marginalised young people.	Lead DSP (SETEC) Louth Leader LMETB DkIT Support HSE YouthWork Services Contracted providers Specialist Services in fields of disability and/or youth e.g. WALK Louth	2016 and ongoing	Increased nos of young people with disabilities, and marginalised young people in employment education and training.
1.3	Continue to implement joint employment initiatives with local employers and Chambers of Commerce.	Lead DSP Support Chambers of Commerce LEF LEO LLP	2016 and ongoing	Increased nos of employment initiatives. Increased nos of collaborative library initiatives.
1.4	Enable long term unemployed to re-enter the labour market through the provision of training and work experience on a fixed term basis.	Lead LLP Support LMETB DSP	2016 and ongoing	Nos of long term unemployed retrained and available for work. Nos engaging with Job Path
1.5	Provide appropriate education and training supports to encourage entrepreneurship and social enterprise among marginalised priority target groups.	Lead LMETB, LLP Support DJEI, LLP, Social Entrepreneurs Irl, DkIT Regional Development Centre, Community Centres, Youth Clubs in Rapid Areas	2016 and ongoing	Nos of participants participating and retained training courses Nos of social entrepreneurs drawn from priority target groups
1.6	Increase the employment of people with disabilities to avail of education, employment and self-employment.	Lead DSP Support HSE, LMETB, LLP, LEO, Specialist Services, Walk Louth, Malta Services	2016 and ongoing	Increase in percentage of people with disabilities engaging in education, employment and self-employment.
1.7	Continue to offer the Wage Subsidy Scheme and Reasonable Accommodation Fund, Workplace Equipment Adaptation Grant (WEAG).	Lead DSP	2016 and ongoing	Schemes in place and adapted to local needs.
1.8	Extend availability of rural transport scheme to facilitate people living in isolated rural areas and people with disabilities living in isolated areas access employment.	Lead Local Link Support LCDC Bus Éireann National Transport Authority	2016-2018	Increased nos of routes Rural transport scheme extended to all target groups



OBJECTIVE 2: HOUSING

ENSURE MORE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES BY PROVIDING SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION THAT RESPONDS TO THE NEEDS OF ALL, THROUGH A PROCESS OF COMMUNITY PLANNING.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
2.1	Deliver the Social Housing Strategy 2020	Lead LCC Support Approved Housing Bodies	2016 - 2018	Local targets (778 units) achieved.
2.2	Implement the North East Homeless Strategy (2014-2018).	Lead LCC Support HSE Contracted Service providers North East Regional Homeless Forum	Ongoing	% Decrease in numbers of homeless presentations.
2.3	Implement Choice-Based Letting.	Lead LCC	2016	Current refusal rate of Housing Offers reduced.
2.4	Provide person-centred community-based housing solutions via multi-agency approach.	Lead LCC Support HSE An Garda Síochána Approved Housing Bodies North East Regional Homeless Forum	2016 and ongoing	Decrease in anti-social behaviour on LA estates. Appropriate accommodation support in place for persons with disabilities and mental health service users, young adults and for older people. Increased stability in housing provision for mental health service users.
2.5	Support vulnerable households, who may be at risk of losing their tenancy through tenancy sustainment services.	Lead North East Regional Homeless Forum Support LCC	2016 and ongoing	Nos of tenancies supported.
2.6	Review and implement the current anti-social behaviour strategy to include the existing legislation.	Lead LCC Support An Garda Síochána/Joint Policing Committee	2016	Revised anti-social behaviour strategy adopted.
2.7	Review and implement the current Estate Management policy.	Lead LCC	2016	Revised Estate Management Policy adopted Reduction in nos of complaints re anti-social behavior.
2.8	Encourage the use the regulatory functions of the PRTB with regard to anti-social behaviour in the private rented sector.	Lead LCC Support PRTB	2016 and ongoing	Increased number of referrals made to the PRTB for dispute resolution applications.

OBJECTIVE 3: EQUALITY

FACILITATE EQUAL PHYSICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INTEGRATION TO ENCOURAGE PRIDE OF PLACE, ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY WITHIN MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
3.1	Implement the Louth Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018	Lead LCC Support HSE TUSLA Louth LEADER An Garda Síochána Louth Traveller Movement	2016 and ongoing	Programme implemented.
3.2	Re-establish the Traveller Inter-Agency Group to plan and deliver services in Louth that respond to the unique needs of the Traveller Community.	Lead LCC Support All relevant service providers including HSE, TUSLA, Local schools and An Garda Síochána	2016	Group reconstituted with strategy devised.
3.3	Ensure that all new developments including the public buildings, services and LCC housing schemes utilise the principal of universal design.	Lead LCC NDA Support Age Alliance	Ongoing	Planning and all developments meeting legislative requirements.

3.4	Continue to implement the Housing Grants Scheme subject to available funding	Lead LCC	Ongoing	Housing Grants scheme implemented.
3.5	Ensure library and arts services provide opportunities for marginalised communities and people with disabilities to have access to and participate in mainstream arts and cultural activities.	Lead LCC (Library services/Arts service) Support LLP	Ongoing	Increased involvement and engagement with arts and library services.
3.6	Continue to implement the Louth Anti-racism and Diversity Plan and Garda Diversity strategy.	Lead LCC An Garda Síochána Support HSE LLP Citizen's information Louth intercultural group	Ongoing	Decrease of reported anti-racist and sectarian incidents.
3.7	Provide intercultural programmes and integration initiatives in all educational and youth reach settings. ⁹⁶	Lead LMETB Support NAPD Culture Connect e-Dundalk	Ongoing	Nos of schools participating in programmes such as Yellow Flag programme
3.8	Increase provision of shared spaces and services and work to decrease physical barriers between communities.	Lead LCC Support Louth LEADER Community Groups PEACE 4	2016-2022	Nos of shared spaces available Increased community cohesion.
3.9	Devise a 'Welcome to County Louth' pack incorporating an awareness campaign informing new residents of their democratic rights.	Lead LCC Support LLP PPN Citizen's information	Q4 2016	Packs and webpages designed.
3.10	Develop volunteers' programmes focusing on those who self-exclude to engage and participate in activities	Lead Louth Volunteers Support LCC HSE An Garda Síochána	Q4 2016	Increase in nos participating.
3.11	Adapt the Incredible Years Genesis Programme and Cúltaca for marginalised groups	Lead HSE Support Age Friendly Alliance CYPSC	2016-2018	Nos of programmes delivered Nos participating
3.12	Continue to support tenant participation initiatives aimed at both enhancing the physical and social infrastructure on LCC estates.	Lead LCC Support Tenant/Residents Groups	Ongoing	Number of Projects assisted.

OBJECTIVE 4: ACCESS

INCREASE AND IMPROVE CO-ORDINATION, JOINT PLANNING AND DELIVERY BETWEEN SERVICE PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITIES

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
4.1	Provide frameworks and protocols for effective interagency cooperation and responses to the LECP	Lead LCDC Support LCC	Q4 2016	Interagency protocols and framework devised.
4.2	Provide a service delivery, monitoring and review framework of the LECP.	Lead LCDC Support LCC	Q4 2016	Monitoring and review protocol agreed.
4.3	Devise an LCDC communications strategy to liaise with all key stakeholders including the Public Participative Network	Lead LCDC Support LCC Louth LEADER	Q4 2016	Regular effective channels of communication leading to a more participative approach and better service delivery.
4.4	Provide diversity and people first language training to service providers in welfare, LCC, health and education settings.	Lead LMETB Support LCC HSE Special interest groups DSP Citizens' Information Louth Volunteer Centre Louth Library Service	2016 and ongoing	Baseline measure taken regarding satisfaction with and accessibility of service provision in the count. Training developed and delivered Increase in numbers of diverse communities accessing mainstream services Increase in satisfaction with mainstream service delivery.

⁹⁶ Goal 5

4.5	Ensure delivery of disability and mental health awareness training to staff, particularly frontline staff, including through NDA e-learning training module.	Lead NDA Support LCC HSE Special interest groups DSP Citizens' Information Louth Volunteer Centre	2016 and ongoing	Training delivered
4.6	Ensure customer care charters address the needs of marginalised communities and persons with disabilities.	Lead LCDC Support NDA	2016 and ongoing	Charters developed and inclusive
4.7	Ensure that Libraries support social and cultural cohesion and inclusion where people can exercise their democratic right to information, ideas and knowledge.	Lead LCC Library Service Support LMETB LLP Age Friendly Alliance Local Schools Community groups	2016 and ongoing	Library facilities upgraded to include large scale multi-functional buildings with interconnecting supports Nos, variety and accessibility of programmes available in libraries.

GOAL 4: PROVIDE ENVIRONMENTS AND CONDITIONS THAT SUPPORT HEALTHY, SELF-DIRECTED, FULFILLED AND PURPOSEFUL LIVES.

OBJECTIVE 1: WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO SECURE BETTER OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES BY PRIORITISING EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION, REDUCING CHILD POVERTY, AND ADDRESSING THEIR PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES, TO ENABLE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
1.1	Improve well-being and developmental outcomes for children aged pre-birth to 6 years by continuing to implement the Genesis programme and other programmes as appropriate in the targeted areas of Dundalk and Drogheda.	Lead The Genesis Programme Support HSE CYPSC LLP TUSLA ISPCC NEPS Local primary schools Local early years settings Local community groups	2017	Reduction in child poverty levels IY programme embedded in local practice and mainstream delivery Increase in nos of children and families accessing programme. Improvements in children's literacy and numeracy. Increased school readiness Longer participation in the education system. Infant mental health strategy developed in collaboration with North East Mental Health network Overall improvement in children's mental health. Parent fora established in Dundalk and Drogheda Nos of library events for toddlers, and children to 6 years. Collaborative working with Louth CYPSC, LLP and other relevant agencies

OBJECTIVE 2: CREATE CONDITIONS THROUGHOUT THE LIFE COURSE TO ENSURE THAT THE HEALTHY CHOICE IS THE EASY CHOICE.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
2.1	Work with partners to implement the Healthy Ireland strategy.	Lead HSE Support LCDC via Louth LEADER LCC Sports Partnership	2016-2022	Local targets set and fulfilled. Nos of local initiatives Nos of local partnership initiatives promoting healthy lifestyles.

2.2	Develop collaborative plans at local level to promote increased physical activity levels across the life course.	Lead HSE LCC (Sports Partnership) Support LCDC LMETB GAA Schools Local employers	2016 an ongoing	Sports strategy developed 'Parkrun' implemented where possible. Sport Ireland programmes implemented. Nos of water safety training courses being delivered. Communities mobilised, collaborative initiatives operating and meeting targets. More access to cycle paths, public green spaces, playgrounds with all-weather play infrastructure and age friendly exercise equipment, safe secure footpaths and pedestrian connectivity.
2.3	Promote public awareness, educate and communicate the benefits of physical activity throughout the county	Lead Louth Sport Partnership (LSP) Support LLP, HSE local media Louth Library Service	2016 and ongoing	Communications strategy developed. Health and wellbeing promoted via Library services e.g. bibliotherapy programme
2.4	Develop a Recreation policy and a Play policy in line with the National Play policy and National Recreation policy	Lead LSP Support LCC, LCDC	2018	Policies developed and being implemented.
2.5	Develop and promote walking and cycling strategies for the county	Lead LSP Support LCC, DECLG, GIW	2016	Walking and cycling strategies implemented in local communities
2.6	Roll out active communities walking programmes in all LSP areas and support new walking Groups.	Lead LSP Support LCC, SI, Age and Opportunity	2018	Programmes in place numbers of participants taking part
2.7	Implement healthy food policies and Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in primary, post-primary and Youthreach settings in the county, including the physical education programme and the active schools flag initiative.	Lead HSE DES Support Schools LCC Sport Partnership CYPSC School Principals' Network	2016-2022	Nos of schools adopting SPHE programme Junior Cert-Leaving Cert Nos of Youth Groups participating. 'Food Dudes' programme implemented in all schools. Nos of schools in 'Active Flag' initiative.
2.8	Develop programmes to address transitions and drop out from physical activity and sport	Lead LSP Support NGB's, SI, HSE	2017	Increased nos of participants returning to some form of physical and/or sport
2.9	Support, link with and further improve existing partnerships, strategies and initiatives that aim to improve the capacity of parents, carers and families to support healthier choices for their children and themselves, particularly targeting lower income groups.	Lead HSE Support LCDC LCC CYPSC Chambers of Commerce	2016 and ongoing	Improved healthy weight levels Use of calorie posting in local bars and restaurants to increase consumer awareness of the calorie content of the food and drinks on offer. Nos of healthy eating promotional campaigns in all public spaces Nos of healthy eating awareness programmes delivered.
2.10	Work collaboratively to create healthier workplace environments.	Lead HSE Support LCDC Chambers of Commerce Local employers	2016 and ongoing	Nos of employers/workplaces participating. Nos of workplace initiatives in place.

2.11	Promote cross sectoral role models in communities and schools to encourage healthy lifestyles.	Lead LCDC Support LCC Sports partnership HSE Louth LEADER	2016 and ongoing	Nos of sports ambassadors participating in healthy lifestyles campaigns Nos of local medical professionals acting as advocates at community level Reduction of alcohol consumption in local sports clubs Nos of local media promotional campaigns.
2.12	Support, link with, and further improve existing partnerships, strategies and initiatives that support older people to maintain, improve or manage their physical and mental wellbeing.	Lead HSE Support Age Friendly Alliance LCC Age and Opportunity Louth Library Service	2016 and ongoing	Extent of integrated approach. Nos of collaborative initiatives. Nos of initiatives held in libraries to support older people
2.13	Initiate community programmes to encourage and support smokers to quit smoking by promoting a tobacco free society.	Lead HSE Support LCC LCDC	2016 and ongoing	Nos of programmes introduced Nos of smokers quitting Reduction in numbers of smoking related diseases Tobacco free campuses for all public facilities, all playground and family recreational facilities Nos of tobacco free public parks and beaches.
2.14	Support the Community Action on Alcohol Pilot Project (CAAPP) being led by the Alcohol forum.	Lead HSE NEDATF Support Joint Policing Committee Drugs and alcohol forum	2016 and ongoing	Community mobilisation on alcohol initiatives in selected local drug and alcohol task force areas. Community Alcohol Strategy devised.
2.15	Extend existing and developing programmes for physical activity for people with disabilities and their families to enhance and deliver a comprehensive health and wellbeing programme	Lead LSP, Support LCC, SI,HSE,NGB.	2016 and ongoing	Nos of programmes developed. Nos of participants engaging.

OBJECTIVE 3: CONTINUE TO RAISE AWARENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR OUR POPULATION

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
3.1	Support the local cross-sectoral implementation structures to implement Connecting for Life – Ireland’s National Strategy to reduce suicide (2015-2020).	Lead HSE Support CYPSC Addiction Services TUSLA	Ongoing	% reduction in nos of suicides
3.2	Support the implementation of community-based suicide prevention programmes and training.	Lead HSE Support LCDC Louth SOSAD CYPSC LLP	Ongoing	Nos of programmes delivered.
3.3	Provide accessible, user friendly, coordinated mental health services emphasising children at risk and specific to the needs of adolescents 13-18, and other young people.	Lead HSE TUSLA Support CYPSC Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service(CAMHS)	2016	Memorandum of understanding adopting a multi-disciplinary approach addressing children and adolescent Mental Health Services developed between HSE and TUSLA. ‘Headstrong’ early intervention service in operation across the county.

3.4	Improve the quality and effectiveness of services and supports for children with mental health needs, intellectual and physical disabilities, and their families.	Lead HSE Support CYPSC DKIT LCDC		Collaboration with partners to enhance access and environmental friendliness of service settings. Nos of collaborative learning, training, action research, and innovation opportunities undertaken with partners.
3.5	Improve understanding of mental illness and behavioural issues, mental health literacy and information on availability of services to support and respond to individuals, carers and families.	Lead HSE Support LCDC CYPSC LLP	Ongoing	Support mental health and intellectual disability awareness information campaigns.

GOAL 5: NURTURE AND DEVELOP OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD TO YOUNG ADULTHOOD.

OBJECTIVE 1: HEALTH ENSURE THAT OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCE HEALTHY LIVES AND WELLBEING.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
1.1	Adopt a cross-agency approach to ensure that universal services and supports are in place for all children and young people, particularly engaging with those who are most excluded or at risk.	Lead CYPSC Support LCC HSE TUSLA LLP An Garda Síochána LMETB PPN DKIT	2016 and ongoing	Targeted engagement with young people with disabilities, seldom heard young people, members of the Traveller Community and those from new communities. Nos accessing services. No of facilities in each MD.
1.2	Provide parenting programmes to ensure young people have consistent support at home, at school and in free time. ⁹⁷	Lead HSE Support CYPSC LMETB LLP Local schools Youth Services	2016 and ongoing	Nos of parenting programmes delivered. Nos of interactions with parents. Nos of attendee at programmes.
1.3	Provide counselling and therapeutic supports to young people in non-formal settings.	Lead CYPSC Support Youthreach, Local Schools, Tusla, Youth Services	2016 and ongoing	Decrease in nos of mental health issues No. of counselling sessions.
1.4	Provide healthy eating programmes in schools, youth facilities and sports organisations.	Lead DES Support HSE CYPSC LMETB All education institutions Sports clubs Youth Services	2016 and ongoing	Breakfast clubs initiative extended to all schools in county. Extend school meal scheme to all schools in county in particular DEIS schools. Increased nos of children accessing schemes. Increased nos of children and young people with healthy weight.
1.5	Provide play spaces and programmes to increase children and young people's access and engagement with the physical environment to encourage healthy lifestyles. ⁹⁸	Lead LCC Sports Partnership Support LCC HSE LMETB LLP Local sports clubs Youth Services Scouting organisations Environmental Organisations	2016 and ongoing	Increased access for young people to play spaces physical activity programmes in a community setting No of walking trails and campsites No of environmental projects for young people.

⁹⁷ Goal 4

⁹⁸ Goal 1

OBJECTIVE 2: EDUCATION

EMPOWER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL IN ALL ASPECTS OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
2.1	Increase young people's access to formal education. ⁹⁹	Lead DES Support Louth Leader, DkIT, LMETB, Stay in School Initiative	2016 and ongoing	Increased numbers of young people accessing formal education More school completion programmes in targeted areas.
2.2	Increase young people's access to informal educational, recreational and cultural activities and resources.	Lead LCC Support LMETB Comhairle na nÓg Louth's three youth theatres Dundalk Youth Centre Drogheda Boomerang Café Sports clubs Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann DkIT Schools and community groups Louth Library Service Louth Volunteer service Omeath District Development Foroige Youth Work Ireland Louth	2016 and ongoing	Increased opportunities for young people to engage in the arts, music and a variety of sport including technology associated media. No of services by MD. No of young people accessing services. No of volunteers supporting youth activity. Nos of young people accessing libraries as study/recreational spaces. Nos of visits by library service to primary schools.
2.3	Ensure that transitions at key stages of the education process are managed effectively particularly in relation to vulnerable groups.	Lead CYPSC Support TUSLA Local Schools DSP LLP Youth Services LMETB DKIT	2016 and ongoing	Critical transition points at all stages targeted for vulnerable children/adolescents. 18-24 age group transitions in education and training opportunities addressed via working with DSP and Louth LEADER.
2.4	Work to increase young people's civic responsibility through the promotion of voter education programmes and other initiatives.	Lead LCC Support Educational institutions Louth Library Service Comhairle na nÓg Louth Volunteer Centre	2016 and ongoing	Programmes delivered. Increased participation and voluntary effort. No of young people taking up volunteering positions.
2.5	Work collaboratively with the community and youth sector to support the re-engagement and retention of vulnerable young people under 25 in the Labour market. (See Goal 3)	Lead DSP LMETB Support CYPSC Louth LEADER TUSLA	2016	Increased involvement in education and training Decrease in nos of u25 unemployed.
2.6	Develop peer education programmes to tackle issues of racism, sectarianism and discrimination. ¹⁰⁰	Lead DES LCC Peace 4 Support Louth Intercultural group Youth organisations CYPSC Comhairle na nÓg	2016-2022	Programmes developed and being implemented. Raised awareness and increased tolerance of diversity. No of cultural diversity events.

⁹⁹ Goal 2¹⁰⁰ Goal 3

OBJECTIVE 3: OPPORTUNITY**ENHANCE YOUNG PEOPLE'S EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL**

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
3.1	Establish structured links between local employer organisations and local schools to ascertain how aspects of the core curriculum might enhance 'work readiness'.	Lead LMETB Support LCDC Chambers of Commerce Local schools DKIT DSP LLP	2016 and ongoing	More young people 'Work ready'. A youth focused job/skills fair established.
3.2	Promote social entrepreneurship education and active citizenship opportunities in schools and youth organisations. ¹⁰¹	Lead LEO Support Schools Young Social Innovators Youth Services LLP	ongoing 2016-2022	Increased nos of social enterprise projects for young people.
3.3	Develop a local cross- agency initiative to coordinate the Youth Guarantee (Pathways to Work).	Lead DSP Support LMETB CYPSC LCC LLP LEO	2016	Initiative developed and implemented.

OBJECTIVE 4: SAFETY**ENSURE THAT ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL SAFE AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND ONLINE.**

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
4.1	Provide safe places for young people where they can socialise and interact in a positive manner.	Lead LCC Support LMETB Community and youth groups Comhairle na nÓg Dundalk Youth Centre Boomerang Omeath DD Youth Work Ireland Louth Foróige	2016-2018	Nos of youth cafes/hangouts for young people across the county Nos of young people attending.
4.2	Ensure that young people have information and access to appropriate services and supports.	Lead CYPSC Support HSE TUSLA Comhairle na nÓg Youth Services	2016 and ongoing	No of information sites in county per MD. Nos of information campaigns at critical chronological hot spots ie exam time – Halloween etc.
4.3	Provide online safety programmes for all young people to include cyber bullying, social media safety and identity fraud.	Lead DES Support LLP An Garda Síochána Youth Services	2016	No of online safety programmes delivered. No of young people attending online safety programmes. No of parents' sessions for online safety.
4.4	Work in partnership to reduce the risk of young people engaging with the justice system. ¹⁰²	Lead Joint Policing Committee Support TUSLA Youth and sports clubs Youth Services	Ongoing	Decrease in numbers of young people presenting
4.5	Ensure that effective substance misuse education and information programmes are in place in all educational institutions and youth reach settings. ¹⁰³	Lead DES Support LMETB Other education providers NERDTF Youth Services	2016-2018	Nos of programmes delivered. Nos of schools participating.

¹⁰¹ Goal 7¹⁰² Goal 1¹⁰³ Goal 4

OBJECTIVE 5: EQUALITY

SEEK EQUALITY, RESPECT AND BETTER CONNECTIVITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
5.1	Provide young people with opportunities to influence decisions about their own lives and wellbeing, access to quality information, service delivery and policy priorities. ¹⁰⁴	Lead Comhairle na nÓg Support LCC HSE TUSLA Youth Services	Ongoing	Nos of consultations held No Of Comhairle na nÓg advisory meetings. Number of submissions by young people to consultation processes.
5.2	Promote and support young people's right to self-determination and self-expression in relation to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	Lead HSE Support Comhairle na nÓg TUSLA Schools Dundalk Outcomers Youth Services	Ongoing	Decrease in mental health issues among young people. No of LGBT awareness sessions conducted No of young people accessing LGBT services.
5.3	Develop shared spaces where young people can interact safely and where differences in race, colour gender and religion and ethnic origin are embraced and valued.	Lead LCC Support LLP SEUPB/ Peace 4	2016-2022	Nos of shared spaces developed Nos of young people engaging and interacting No of inter community cultural events.
5.4	Provide opportunities for young people to engage in cross border and inter-county projects to develop new networks and understanding on common issues.	Lead LCC (SEUPB/ PEACE 4) Support Comhairle na nÓg Youth organisations Schools Louth Library Service	2017-2022	Nos of cross border and intercounty projects Nos of new connections established. Nos of events held in local libraries
5.5	Develop new intergenerational programmes to increase learning, cultural, historical and technological initiatives across generations. ¹⁰⁵	Lead LCDC Support Age Friendly Alliance Louth Library Service Youth Services Comhairle na nÓg	2016-2022	Nos of intergenerational programmes established. Nos of participants involved. Nos of locations/venues participating. Nos of libraries participating

GOAL 6:

EMBRACE AND FOSTER THE RICH CONTRIBUTION OUR OLDER PEOPLE MAKE TO OUR COMMUNITIES.

OBJECTIVE 1:

CREATE AGE-FRIENDLY SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS THAT SUPPORT OLDER PEOPLE TO MAINTAIN, IMPROVE OR MANAGE THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
1.1	Continue to implement and up-date the Louth Age Friendly Strategy.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support LCC, HSE An Garda Síochána DKIT Louth Economic Forum Louth Library Service CES	2016 and ongoing	Ongoing process with targets and Indicator(s) fulfilled.
1.2	Increase the take-up and impact of the number of age friendly towns and further develop initiatives in existing age friendly towns.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support LCC, HSE An Garda Síochána DKIT Louth Economic Forum Louth Library Service CES	2016 /17 /18	Nos of towns or parts of towns considered 'age-friendly' Nos of age friendly initiatives undertaken. Nos of initiatives held in local libraries

¹⁰⁴ Goal 3

¹⁰⁵ Goal 6



1.3	Improve access to resources, services, lifelong learning and healthcare.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support HSE LLP An Garda Síochána Vincent de Paul LMETB Louth Library Services CES	Ongoing	Plan conceived. Nos of programmes run by local libraries supporting age-friendly initiatives e.g computer skills development
1.4	Increase the impact and effectiveness of informal and formal community care services for older people including home care packages. ¹⁰⁶	Lead HSE Support LCDC DSP	2016 and ongoing	Access to a variety of home care packages appropriate to service users' needs.
1.5	Encourage participatory design and development of public spaces, housing and transport in our towns and villages that anticipate the needs of older age.	Lead LCC Support DkIT	2016 and ongoing	Increased awareness of requirements through lifecourse facilitated by service delivery. Degrees of inclusiveness and sustainability.
1.6	Sustain and extend the Cúltaca model of personalised service brokerage and promote the SLIPWAY service innovation concept to address frailty in the community.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support HSE DkIT LCC	Q4 2017	Both projects underway with increased nos of service users. Project extended to south Louth
1.7	Strengthen the 'living lab' technology research partnership with DkIT, industry, care givers and older people	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support LCC DkIT	Ongoing	Further innovation achieved via CASALA in particular with a focus on user awareness, smarter environments and smarter technologies.
1.8	Build on the Genio-supported 'Flourishing with Dementia' collaborative programme to foster a 'dementia friendly' supportive environment.	Lead Age-Friendly Alliance Support HSE, LCC, DkIT	Ongoing	Pilot sustained.
1.9	Create and manage a central repository, supported by a comprehensive communications plan to ensure that all older people in the county can access user-friendly, up-to-date, and coordinated information and advice in relation to entitlements, services, support and activities.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support LCC Citizen's information bureau HSE LMETB	Ongoing	Age friendly website updated with a communications plan in place. Nos of older people accessing information. Links available from other service providers to this site.

OBJECTIVE 2: REMOVE BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION AND PROVIDE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE INVOLVEMENT OF OLDER PEOPLE IN ALL ASPECTS OF CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LIFE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
2.1	Ensure that older people 'get out and about' through the provision of safe, accessible, affordable, and flexible transport systems with seamless connectivity between these systems in both rural and urban areas.	Lead Flexibus Support LCDC	2016-2022	Nos of rural transport schemes.
2.2	Extend 'The Parlours' and 'Men's Sheds' initiatives across the county to enhance social connectedness.	Lead LCDC Support Age Friendly Alliance HSE DkIT	2016-2018	Nos of initiatives in place.

¹⁰⁶ See Goal 4

¹⁰⁷ Goal 6

2.3	Encourage older people to engage in their communities by promoting active citizenship and the value of volunteering.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support LCC Vincent de Paul Tidy Towns ICA Volunteer Louth	2016 and ongoing	Nos of older people involved in Tidy Towns, ICA, Arts, sporting activities, intergenerational projects.
2.4	Facilitate older people's participation in Start Your Own Business 50+ and social enterprise programmes.	Lead LEO Support Age Friendly Alliance DkIT Regional Development Centre	2016 and ongoing	LEO and Regional Development Centre in DkIT. Social Enterprise Programmes.
2.5	Facilitate businesses to become 'Age-Friendly Champions.'	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support Chambers of Commerce	2016 and ongoing	Nos of businesses involved.

OBJECTIVE 3: SUPPORT OLDER PEOPLE TO FEEL SAFER IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
3.1	Implement the Louth Community Safety Strategy and an Garda Síochána's Older Person's Strategy.	Lead Louth Joint Policing Committee Support LCC An Garda Síochána Other statutory agencies and voluntary organisations as required	Ongoing	Perception re safety and security amongst older people in local areas increased via community text alert system.
3.2	Extend the community Text Alert system to address older people's safety in rural areas.	Lead An Garda Síochána Support LCC Local Communities	Q4 2017	Text alert system operating across the county.
3.3	Improve the protection of older people from abuse through increased interagency collaboration, improved reporting rates and developing better support services.	Lead An Garda Síochána Support LCC HSE	Ongoing	Decrease in cases and nos of reported cases.

OBJECTIVE 4: UTILISE THE EXPERTISE AND WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE THAT IS BUILT UP BY OLDER PEOPLE TO DEVELOP A MORE PROSPEROUS AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
4.1	Work with the DSP to develop and promote employment options (including options for gradual retirement) for people as they age and identify any barriers (legislative, attitudinal, custom and practice) to continued employment and training opportunities.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support DkIT	2016	Increased flexible employment opportunities for older people.
4.2	Encourage older people to initiate and extend intergenerational initiatives at community level.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support LCC Local schools and youth groups DkIT	2016	Nos of intergenerational projects underway
4.3	Engage with local Chambers of Commerce to develop a panel of suitably experienced older people that are in a position to offer business set up and development advice and support.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support LCC Chambers of Commerce LEF	2016 and ongoing	Panels established

OBJECTIVE 5: ENSURE A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT UNDERPINNED BY EVIDENCE-BASED FEEDBACK

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
5.1	Work with Age-Friendly Ireland to develop an up-dated baseline for future actions.	Lead Age Friendly Ireland Support DkIT	2016	Baseline developed
5.2	Promote an 'evaluative culture' to continually assess and improve the impact of actions.	Lead DkIT Support LCC	Ongoing	Appropriate evaluation and monitoring of all initiatives and programmes
5.3	Apply the SEE-IT framework and tool to support collaborative decision-making.	Lead DkIT Support LCC Age Friendly Alliance	Ongoing	Framework utilised and impacting on decision making
5.4	Maintain Co Louth's leadership role in the development of the Age-Friendly initiative nationally and internationally by sharing practices, pooling knowledge, and participating actively in national and international networks and consortia.	Lead DkIT Support Age Friendly Alliance	Ongoing	Acknowledgement of reputation. Nos of initiatives. Transformative impact on society. Nos of collaborative networks established.

GOAL 7: EMPOWER COMMUNITY INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTERPRISE TO SUPPORT URBAN AND RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**OBJECTIVE 1: LEVERAGE RESOURCES AT LOCAL LEVEL TO DELIVER EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC IMPACT IN A TARGETED WAY**

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
1.1	Implement the Louth Leader Strategy to maximise community gain from its focus on agribusiness and artisan foods and craft beverages, tourism, local festivals and the arts and Louth's marine tourism potential.	Lead LLP LCDC (via Louth LEADER) Support LCC LEO LMETB	2016-2022	LDS implemented leveraging benefits of targeted priorities.
1.2	Support the delivery of the Local Enterprise Strategy to encourage entrepreneurship, start-ups and enterprise in communities in rural areas aligning it with specific local needs.	Lead LEO Support LLP LCC	2016 and ongoing	Annual plans setting out measurable targets.
1.3	Develop a memorandum of understanding between Louth LEADER and LEO to ensure co-ordinated interventions for those 'harder to reach' marginalised minority groups to ensure minimum duplication of service	Lead LCDC (via Louth LEADER) LEO	2016	Memorandum developed.
1.4	Develop a social enterprise strategy through a participative planning approach and based on needs of local communities.	Lead LLP Support LCC LEO PPN Louth Volunteer Centre WALK DkIT Louth Age Friendly County Comhairle Na nÓg Secondary Schools	2016	Social Enterprise Strategy completed Nos of Social Enterprise information sessions/training courses participants Number of talks on social enterprise in schools No of grants supplied to community enterprise Mentoring system created.

1.5	Enhance enterprise support in local areas to ensure that community enterprises are "investment ready" at all stages of their development including start up, early stage development and growth phases.	Lead LEO Support LLP LMETB DSP	2016 and ongoing	Increased nos of community enterprise projects.
1.6	Encourage youth enterprise and entrepreneurship particularly for the 18-24 age group.	Lead LEO Support LLP LMETB DSP DKIT Louth Volunteer Centre	Ongoing	Nos of young entrepreneurs and youth enterprise projects
1.7	Create additional opportunity for the over 65s to avail of enterprise training and support	Lead LEO Support LMETB DSP CES Louth LEADER Age Friendly Alliance	Ongoing	Nos of participants
1.8	Undertake a feasibility study to examine the viability of developing the indigenous craft industry in Louth	Lead LEO Support LCC Louth Craftmark Louth LEADER	2016 /2017	Feasibility study completed.

OBJECTIVE 2: STIMULATE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH ACCESS TO LEARNING, CREATIVITY, KNOWLEDGE AND RELIABLE AND AUTHORITATIVE INFORMATION.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
2.1	Continue to use creative hubs to promote design skills, provide support systems and skills acquisition, promotional, networking, funding and collaborative opportunities for creative practitioners.	Lead Creative Spark Support Louth Craftmark Designers Network LCC Arts Service LCC libraries service LEO	2016 and ongoing	Increased nos engaging with and benefiting from creative hubs. Nos of skills development programmes on design thinking and creativity. Nos of participants attending. Nos of businesses showing 'added value' from design thinking in business processes.
2.2	Link local library resources and LMETB programmes with LEO and Louth LEADER enterprise programmes to support business professionals and the provision of information on enterprise, training, skills development and programme opportunities.	Lead LCC (Library Service) Support LEO LLP LMETB	2016 and ongoing	Recognition of Library Service's potential to act as facilitator Nos of events held.
2.3	Engage with local Chambers of Commerce to encourage participation of suitably experienced older people to provide business advice and support.	Lead LEO Support LCC Chambers of Commerce Age Friendly Alliance DKIT		Panel developed Nos of mentoring sessions delivered.
2.4	Support entrepreneurship and investment in enterprise at community level to encourage a green economy.	Lead LCDC (via Louth LEADER) Support LEO SEAI, Chambers of Commerce Community Finance Ireland		Training courses provided and existing training programmes amended Increased number of green economy enterprises.



GOAL 8: VALUE AND SUSTAIN OUR BUILT HERITAGE AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT TO ENHANCE THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO LIVE, WORK AND VISIT IN THE COUNTY.

OBJECTIVE 1: FOSTER A SENSE OF IDENTITY, PRIDE, AND CONFIDENCE IN OUR CULTURAL ASSETS AND OUR NATURAL AND BUILT HERITAGE

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
1.1	Implement the Louth Heritage Plan and Biodiversity Plan to safeguard Louth's unique natural and built heritage.	Lead LCC Support LLP Heritage Council An Taisce Fáilte Ireland Boyne Valley Louth Meath Tourism Development	2016-2021	Plans reviewed and implemented Enhanced awareness of cultural and natural heritage legacies.
1.2	Promote sustainable re-use of the existing building stock, both in our historic town centres and rural communities, and promote the use of traditional building skills.	Lead LCC Support LLP CES Heritage Council An Taisce	Ongoing	Survey completed of re-use potential of existing stock Feasibility study undertaken to explore potential of revival of indigenous skills –thatching, boat building etc.
1.3	Work with partners to raise public awareness of Louth's heritage, support its sustainable exploitation and its Ancient East status to 'earn the heritage dividend' for local communities.	Lead LCC Support LLP FaiIte Ireland Boyne Valley Louth Meath Tourism Development Louth Archaeological Society	Ongoing	Opportunities presented by Louth's Walled Towns. Affirmation of Monasterboice's UNESCO status. Eco-Tourism and Geo-Tourism potential of Cooley Mournes and Gullion areas developed. Community tourism 'ambassadors' initiative established.
1.4	Work with partners, north and south of the border to sustain Louth's rich traditional music, song, dance and literary heritage in Irish and English, as well as promoting the living language.	Lead LCC (Arts Service) Support LLP The Arts Council Arts Council of Northern Ireland Louth Library Services Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Irish Traditional Music Archive Foras na Gaeilge Community traditional arts festivals	2016 2017 2017	County policy for Irish language developed. Increase in levels of community traditional arts activity. Increase in nos of young people participating as performers and audiences. Increased nos of schools' initiatives. Recognition of Oriel area's unique Irish language tradition. Nos of events held in local libraries
1.5	Work with partners to enable and promote diverse cultural traditions in the county, particularly non-Irish nationals, and Traveller and Roma communities.	Lead LCC (Arts Service) Support Louth Library Service Louth intercultural group	2016 and ongoing	Nos of events held. Nos of programmes held in local libraries.
1.6	Strengthen and expand support for contemporary arts practice and Per cent for Public Art scheme.	Lead LCC (Arts Office) Support The Arts Council Louth Libraries Service Creative Spark LLP	2016 and ongoing	Increase in support for local artists Increased access for local audiences via local galleries, venues and festivals Full utilization and promotion of Per cent for Arts scheme.
1.7	Work with the library and archive service, historical societies and heritage groups to conserve collections of local studies and family history and promote access to them locally and internationally.	Lead LCC (Library Service) Support LLP		Project to digitalise collections delivered via Library service Nos of collections secured Nos of partnerships with national archives Nos of local history and heritage programmes held in libraries Increased access to collections locally and internationally.

OBJECTIVE 2: ENHANCE AND PROTECT LOUTH’S OUTSTANDING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (COAST, MOUNTAIN, WOODLAND, WETLAND) FOR THE BENEFIT OF LOUTH’S RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
2.1	Promote recreational benefits and raise awareness about the Eastern Greenway, Louth’s cycle ways, walkways, mountain trails and its eco-tourism potential via Louth Tourism Strategy to create community gain.	Lead LCC Support Tourism strategy partners Local Hoteliers Local Chambers of Commerce Tourism Ireland LLP	2016-2022	Tourism strategy implemented Improved public health and wellbeing Increased nos of visitors to rural areas Omeath Carlingford Greenway extended to the Border and beyond.
2.2	Maximise the use of the River Boyne as an urban and rural waterway; its recreational and tourism potential.	Lead LCC Support LLP CES Tidy Towns Drogheda Port	2016-2022	Coastal and river working group established in the Public Participation Network. Collaborations between the LCC and community groups to undertake specific river related projects. Incorporation of river-based activities to Sports strategy and ensuing improved public wellbeing. Improved linkages between local development companies and river stakeholders. Potential of river to secure European funding under thematic objectives of EU2020 strategy.
2.3	Promote clean local environments by continuing to invest in Tidy Towns, tree planting and other environmental initiatives throughout the county.	Lead LCC Support Tidy Towns Together LLP CES	2016 and ongoing	Increased community mobilisation and social cohesion. Increased participation in Pride of Place and Tidy Towns awards. Improved visitor reviews. Enhanced perception of safety in local areas.
2.4	Promote bio-diversity programmes on LCC estates.	Lead LCC Support Tidy Towns Together LLP CES	2016 and ongoing	Conservation of natural environment Improved quality of life for local residents.
2.5	Ensure more sustainable communities through encouraging an active role in litter and waste minimisation, energy management and water conservation.	Lead LCC Support LLP Tidy Towns Together CES SEAI Irish Water IFA Teagasc	2016 and ongoing	Promotion of brown bin waste collection across country. “Smart farming” and resource management initiatives to reduce CO2 production on farms to meet 2016-2021 targets. Nos of new SEC’s established. Regional waste management plan targets 2016-2021 met.
2.6	Facilitate community gardens through identifying and releasing suitable publicly-owned land for use as allotments.	Lead LCC Support LLP CES	2016 and ongoing	Nos of new allotments developed. Initiatives in artisan food production and food education. Nos of country markets operating. Dedicated suitable unused public land for horticulture purposes.



OBJECTIVE 3: PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND THE USE OF SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SOURCES AND SYSTEMS.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
3.1	Promote an environmentally sustainable low-carbon economy with climate change reliance incorporated.	Lead SEAI Support LCC EPA, ESB	Q1 2016 Q4 2016	Green Infrastructure Strategy developed for Louth to incorporate climate change adaptation measures. Development and delivery of BEC
3.2	Promote the future proofing of the county particularly in relation to flooding, drought and other exceptional weather events stemming from global warming.	Lead LCC Support OPW EPA IFA TEAGASC	2016 and ongoing	Flood infrastructure plans initiated. EC Funding secured.
3.3	Continue to harness the opportunity of Sustainable Energy Communities to achieve sustainable, cost-effective energy management across all sectors of the community.	Lead SEAI Support LCC	Q4 2016	Partnership maintained on international CONCERTO sustainable community collaboration. LCC membership of SEC Sustainable development funding opportunities optimised.
3.4	Promote the benefits of renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives for local businesses across sectors (including agriculture, tourism, retail, food etc.) and identify relevant supports for resource efficiency	Lead SEAI Support LCC Chambers of Commerce LCDC	Ongoing Q4 2016	Dundalk SMART town 2020 initiative affirmed. Pilot Small Business Energy Assessors training course developed. SEAI and EPA Green Business programmes established.
3.5	Scope and map existing sustainable community initiatives (including those focused on food, health, transport, waste etc.) to encourage their continued development of complementary sustainability initiatives including dedicated SECs.	Lead LCC (Energy Office) Support SEAI	 Q2 2016 Q3 2016 Q4 2016 Q1 2017 Q2 2017	Increase in nos of funded Sustainable Energy Communities in county. Data base established of existing sustainability initiatives. GIS Database of Sustainable Energy Partners developed. SEC promotional brochure delivered to partners. Application form to Partners offering SEC. Nos of group applicants into SEC's 1st collaborative event held
3.6	Continue to link with the third level sector to encourage their involvement in the development of novel sustainable energy community initiatives.	Lead SEAI Support LCC DkIT	Q1 2016	CASALA energy project completed. Proposal for Cross Border, Joint LCC Housing & NIHE Near Zero Energy Housing (& Energy Management) project developed.

3.7	Review CSO data on Building Energy Ratings (BER) across the county to raise the visibility of areas with lowest ratings and to target awareness activities in those areas (i.e. promoting retrofit measures and grants and group energy projects). (Data Protection act permitting)	Lead LCC Support SEAI	2016	Review of BER ratings across the county identifying hot spots to target activity.
3.8	Promote energy efficiency and insulation among disadvantaged households drawing attention to grants available and the potential for collaborative initiatives.	Lead LCC Support SEAI LLP	Q1 2016 2016- 2018	BEC advertisements completed. Increase in uptake of Warmer Homes programme grants, Energy Home Grants or Better Energy Community Grant. Increase in number of LA houses with improved BER ratings. Reduced fuel poverty.
3.9	Develop a LCC S.M.A.R.T. Action Plan to complement the White Paper Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future, 2015-2030 and the Public Sector Energy Efficiency Action Plan.	Lead LCC (Energy Office) Support SEAI	Q4 2016	Draft SMART action plan developed as part of ISO 50001 and a 'Register of Opportunities' for energy savings, large and small, across LCC in place.
3.10	Consider development of pop-up exhibits and stalls in public spaces to provide information and promote sustainable energy use and the benefits of energy efficiency improvements.	Lead LCC(Energy Office) Support SEAI DkIT	Q2 2016	Energy awareness proposal developed for Energy awareness week. % take up of sustainable energy schemes.
3.11	Explore options to support more sustainable transport options along with promoting public transport.	Lead LCC Support Louth LEADER	Q1 2016	Finance sought for proposed extension to Greenway. Links developed with Bord Gais Networks and local transport partners with a view to developing CNG transportation facilities within Louth.



APPENDICES

1. **LECP Socio Economic Profile, Murtagh and Partners, September 2014**
2. **LECP Socio Economic Framework, July 2015**
3. **Report on Submissions to the LECP preparation**
4. **The making of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP): Statutory requirements**
5. **Acronyms**
6. **Bibliography**
7. **Screening for SEA and AA**

APPENDIX 1

LECP Socio Economic Profile, Murtagh and Partners, September 2014



SOCIO- ECONOMIC PROFILE
COUNTY LOUTH
LOCAL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY PLAN
August 2014



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Approach and Report Structure	4
3.	Introduction	5
4.	Population and Area	6
4.1	Population Growth 1991 - 2011	7
4.2	Age Distribution	8
	Commentary	9
4.3	Ethnic and Cultural Background	11
4.4	Family Size	12
4.5	Household Size	13
5.	Employment	16
	Live Register Data	16
6.	Education	18
	Ceasing Education Levels	18
	Educational Attainment	18
	Travel Times to Work/School/College for Citizens over 5 Years of Age	19
	Car Ownership by Household	19
	Social Class	20
7.	Health Status	21
	North Eastern Regional Drugs Task Force	21
8.	Deprivation Areas	23
	Education	24
	Social Class Composition	25
	Unemployment	25
	Housing	26

1. INTRODUCTION

Louth County Council (LCC) has commissioned the origination of a data-based, socio-economic profile of the County as a formative element to the development of its Local Economic and Community Plan 2015 – 17.

The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) comprises three key themes:

- **Theme 1 – Employment and Economic Activity;**
- **Theme 2 – Education, Training and Skills; and**
- **Theme 3 – Poverty and Social Exclusion.**

The strategic relationships between the three themes and the role of Government and Local Government intervention are fundamental to the economic, social health and wellbeing of communities and nations alike and their co-ordination at local level has become a priority within national policies.

The vision of developing integrated economic and community development at local level through integrated planning is enshrined in the Putting People First¹ document (October 2012) governing the reform of local government. The integration of social, community and economic development, and its preparation at local level, will bring an enhanced role to effective Local Government by aligning, focussing and co-ordinating planning and implementation and thus generating more effective and efficient outcomes for local communities.

The draft guidelines² for the community element of the Local Economic and Community Plans recommend that plans should be underpinned by a number of guiding principles which reflect the European Commission vision of Europe's growth and development in a smart, inclusive and sustainable manner by 2020. These principles are fundamental to the planning process and the expectations of its outcomes are re-stated below from the document:

- **Promotion and main-streaming of equality:** Combating poverty is one of the aims of EU2020 and one of the headline targets is to reduce the numbers at risk of poverty in the EU by 20 million.
- **Sustainability:** Sustainability offers opportunity and a future for all citizens. It is about using our resources effectively and wisely, and collective governance and co-operation. It is about promoting a more resource efficient, green and more inclusive economy.
- **Maximising returns** from resources by avoiding unnecessary overlap and duplication and by achieving synergies through co-operation and collaboration
- **Participative planning:** The City/County Local and Community Planning process should make provision for meaningful community participation and consultation into the planning process. Planning should pro-actively engage communities and thematic groups within geographic areas for which the plan is being prepared. Participative planning and consultation should be used collaboratively by all Local County Development Committee partners in determining the detailed bottom up actions to be delivered by the Local

¹ Putting People First Action for Effective Local Government Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Oct 2012

² Draft Guidelines for the Community Element of the Local Economic and Community Plans Planning Sub-group on Alignment Feb 2014



County Development Committee member in addressing the high level vision and strategy for the area.

- **Community consultation and engagement** is a critical part of the participative planning and priority identification process. This section and the relevant appendices outline the key elements to be considered in the process. It is noted that participative community planning takes time to develop and embed, typically involving iterative processes.
- **Community development principles:** The multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion and disadvantage and the need for wrap-around supports to reach the most marginalised is a key challenge and needs to be given central consideration in the development of the Local Economic and Community Plan. The ethos of community engagement and participation in a real way needs to underpin the development of the 6 year plan. The principles of community development have been stated as underpinning planning processes in multiple government initiatives over many years but rarely move beyond early statements of intent and are rarely proofed. A fresh commitment to utilising community development principles would complement new planning tools and methodologies.
- **Accessibility and ownership:** The development of the plan and the resultant final plan adopted should be written in a style that is open, straightforward and as accessible as possible. Efforts should be made to reduce the use of technical jargon. This plan should be a people's plan and convey a sense of ownership by all stakeholders and in particular those who are local citizens.

High level EU target objectives for the development of the Local Economic and Community Plan have also been included in the Draft Guidelines³ and are detailed below:

1. Employment

- 69-71% of 20-64 year olds to be employed (currently 64.1%)

2. R&D/ Innovation

- 2.2% of the EU GDP (Public and Private combined) to be invested in R&D/ Innovation

3. Climate Change/ Energy (currently 2%)

- Greenhouse gas emissions 20% lower than 1990 (-7.6% in 2010)
- 16% of energy from renewables (6.4% in 2011)
- 20% increase in energy efficiency

4. Education

- The share of early school leavers should be below 8% (currently 10.6%)
- At least 60% of 30-34 year olds completing third level education (currently 49.4%)

5. Poverty/ Social Exclusion

- At least 200,000 fewer people experiencing consistent poverty by 2020 (currently 277,000)

The socio-economic profile will assist in the provision of high level indicators within the themes which will ultimately provide a basis for strategic targeting of current and prospective projects, initiatives and services. Initially, the Local Economic and Community Plan will complement the statutory, community

³ Draft Guidelines for the Community Element ... on Alignment Feb 2014 P 14 European Commission (2013) 'Ireland's National Reform Programme 2013 Update'

and voluntary structures which are currently in place and which have historically delivered a wide range of high quality provision in the County. The socio-economic profile of County Louth will present the headline indicators of the county compared to the State performance and the municipal areas of Dundalk and Drogheda. The resultant analysis will have the capacity to identify the general areas where there is a performance variance from the 'norm' at county and municipal levels. While this may assist local consideration of the effectiveness of national and mainstream policies by the responsible key statutory and other providers, it will also identify where additional Interventions are required to, at best improve local outcomes to meet the county and State performance levels, and at least address the consequences.

The purpose of the socio-economic framework is to identify economic and social/community issues which will facilitate discussion on the vision for County Louth at a high strategic level where, '*... real choices can be made and real priorities identified*'⁴. It is anticipated that the socio-economic framework will identify the high-level needs and opportunities.

Once the socio-economic framework has been agreed and adopted by the Local County Development Committee and Louth County Council, the community elements of the Local Economic and Community Plan can commence. This process identifies community issues emerging from the socio-economic framework, and are investigated in further detail resulting in a more detailed profile of the areas and their needs. In this Stage 2 process, areas of priority will be identified and the most appropriate interventions and programmes considered. These interventions will become funded contracts managed by the Louth Local County Development Committee and will include current Local Community Development Programme contracts transferred to the Louth Local County Development Committee.

The foregoing paragraphs have set out a truncated background to the process and the ensuing section sets out the approach to preparing the datasets for the socio-economic framework.

⁴ Draft Guidelines for the Community Element of the Local Economic and Community Plans Planning Sub-group on Alignment Feb 2014 P 14

2. APPROACH AND REPORT STRUCTURE

This part of the planning process is essentially desk-based research utilising a range of secondary data made available through statutory data sources including:

- CSO Census 2011 and historical;
- Quarterly Household Survey data;
- CSO SAPS data;
- Trutz Haase All-Island Deprivation Index.

M & P has also had access to an extensive range of county-wide, regional and sectoral strategy documents commissioned by Louth County Council in recent years.

The data appeals to the most up-to-date available sources to compile the socio-economic profile. M & P has modelled the headline population data to take account of the age progression between the census date of April 2011 and April 2015. In other words, a comparison has been made for vital, population age groups in order that the four-year gap can be adequately built into planning and decision-making where appropriate.

3. INTRODUCTION

County Louth is characterised as an important and busy county in a prime location on the eastern seaboard between Belfast and Dublin, the two main cities in Ireland, north and south respectively. The new, improved road and motorway networks place the County one hour from Belfast and Dublin while most major towns and cities in Ireland can be reached in three hours or less. It is also forty-five minutes from Dublin Airport, just over an hour from Belfast City and International Airports and is well-served by train and bus to destinations on the eastern seaboard and to all other destinations.

Statutory, business and community organisations are very active in County Louth and all have generated significant outcomes for the community. The Dundalk Economic Development Group (DEDG) was established in 2006 by Louth County Council and has positively engaged a number of key agencies including the Chambers of Commerce, Enterprise Ireland, IDA, Newry-Dundalk Business Linkage Programme, Louth Leader Partnership, SOLAS Ireland (formerly FÁS), Louth County Enterprise Board, County Development Board and Dundalk Institute of Technology. It is believed that the model approach adopted in County Louth has been responsible for continued economic investment programmes, both new and those which replaced reduced or departed companies and organisations. At the same time, the community and voluntary sector has worked in partnership with statutory agencies to ensure that a wide range of social inclusion measures are targeted at people who people experiencing disadvantage.

The next section presents the demography of County Louth.

4. POPULATION AND AREA

County Louth is a medium-sized Local Authority area whose population of 122,897 represents 2.7% of the State population. It is in the top half of the table by size and it has grown by 10.5% from 2006 to 2011, somewhat greater than the State rate of 8.2%. Table 1 refers.

Local Authority Area	2006	2011	% Growth	% of State
Dublin	1,187,176	1,273,069	7.2%	27.7%
Cork	481,295	519,032	7.8%	11.3%
Galway	231,670	250,653	8.2%	5.5%
Kildare	186,335	210,312	12.9%	4.6%
Limerick	184,055	191,809	4.2%	4.2%
Meath	162,831	184,135	13.1%	4.0%
Donegal	147,264	161,137	9.4%	3.5%
Kerry	139,835	145,502	4.1%	3.2%
Wexford	131,749	145,320	10.3%	3.2%
Wicklow	126,194	136,640	8.3%	3.0%
Mayo	123,839	130,638	5.5%	2.8%
Louth	111,267	122,897	10.5%	2.7%
Clare	110,950	117,196	5.6%	2.6%
Waterford	107,961	113,795	5.4%	2.5%
Kilkenny	87,558	95,419	9.0%	2.1%
South Tipperary	83,221	88,432	6.3%	1.9%
Westmeath	79,346	86,164	8.6%	1.9%
Laois	67,059	80,559	20.1%	1.8%
Offaly	70,868	76,687	8.2%	1.7%
Cavan	64,003	73,183	14.3%	1.6%
North Tipperary	66,023	70,322	6.5%	1.5%
Sligo	60,894	65,393	7.4%	1.4%
Roscommon	58,768	64,065	9.0%	1.4%
Monaghan	55,997	60,483	8.0%	1.3%
Carlow	50,349	54,612	8.5%	1.2%
Longford	34,391	39,000	13.4%	0.8%
Leitrim	28,950	31,798	9.8%	0.7%
State	4,239,848	4,588,252	8.2%	100.0%

Table 1 Population by County CSO Census 2011

Approximately 63% of Louth's population lives in urban centres while 37% are defined as living in rural parts of the County, just marginally higher than the State urban:rural ratio. As depicted in Chart 1 below from Census 2011, Louth is the third largest county for urban concentration of its population outside of the cities and Dublin Local Authorities. Clearly this statistic can inform priorities for strategic focus while at the same time remind planners of the community needs in both rural and urban locations.

In terms of area, County Louth is actually the smallest with an area of 826 square kilometres, which is less than fifty kilometres long and seventeen kilometres wide. This facilitates more efficient management, transport and communications throughout the County. Although there are two key urban areas, Dundalk and Drogheda, there are no crucial population density issues similar to those experienced in the city areas in the rest of the country.

County	Land SQ Miles
Cork	2,870.87
Galway	2,260.83
Mayo	2,058.47
Donegal	1,838.50
Kerry	1,807.79
Tipperary	1,640.51
Clare	1,216.00
Limerick	1,033.97
Roscommon	941.27
Wexford	904.7
Meath	899.36
Kilkenny	795.16
Wicklow	777.47
Offaly	768.44
Cavan	713.1
Waterford	707.19
Sligo	688.9
Westmeath	676.33
Laois	663.06
Kildare	651.23
Leitrim	577.67
Monaghan	489.85
Longford	400.5
Dublin	354.23
Carlow	345.21
Louth	315.8
TOTAL	26,396.41

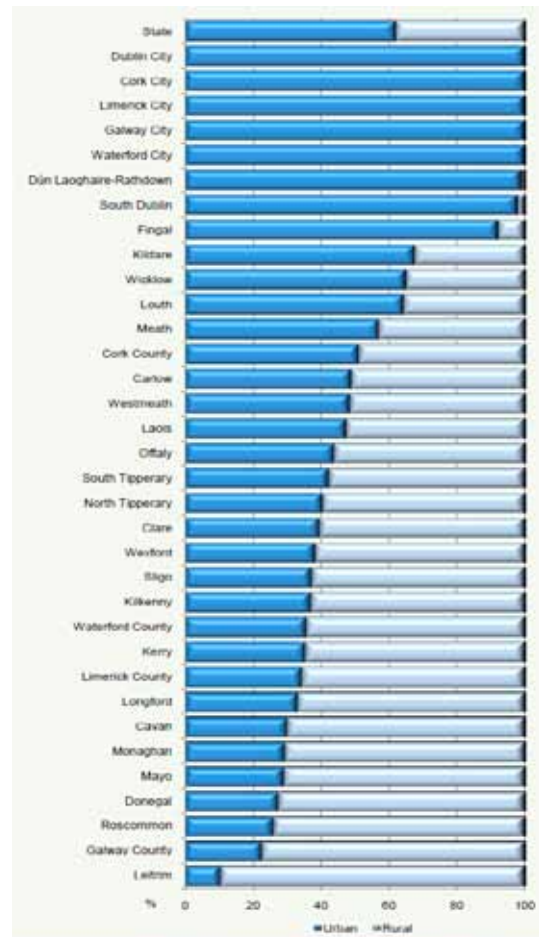


Chart 1 Area and Land Mass & Rural:Urban Population Mix 2011 Census 2011 Profile 1 Town and Country and Ordnance Survey Ireland Mapping Agency

4.1 POPULATION GROWTH 1991 - 2011

Table 2 sets out the main areas of population in County Louth and identifies Drogheda and Dundalk comprising 76,394 persons (62% of County total) with Ardee comprising 4,927 (4% of County total) and smaller towns, villages and hamlets as detailed in the table. The Drogheda population figure of 38,578 is believed to include some 5,000 inhabitants of the southern environs of Drogheda who are, in fact, natives of East Meath.

On account of their size and importance, Dundalk and Drogheda are the two municipal areas which are used in this socio-economic analysis for comparisons.

Table 2 analyses the population growth in County Louth over the 20-year period, 1991 – 2011. The County has grown by some 35% during that period compared to 30% for the State. The largest growth recorded in the census data has been in Drogheda between 1996 and 2006 when a net in-migration of 9,908 persons occurred, while net in-migration for the 20-year period was 13,922 persons or 56%.

Dundalk has grown over the same 20-year period by 26% or 7,755 persons.



	census 1991	census 1996	census 2002	census 2006	census 2011	+/- % Population Growth 1991 - 2011
Drogheda (incl part Meath)	24,656	25,282	31,020	35,090	38,578	56%
Dundalk	30,061	30,195	32,505	35,085	37,816	26%
Ardee	3,604	3,791	3,948	4,694	4,927	37%
Clogherhead	746	775	906	1,558	1,993	167%
Dunleer	1,104	988	1,014	1,449	1,786	62%
Termonfeckin	589	530	503	653	1,443	145%
Tullyallen	393	429	617	1,036	1,358	246%
Dromiskin	443	629	949	992	1,115	152%
Carlingford	650	647	604	623	1,045	61%
Castlebellingham/Kilsaran	762	792	721	816	1,035	36%
Collon	335	308	424	564	814	143%
Louth	373	401	514	549	715	92%
Tallanstown	439	408	443	653	673	53%
Knockbridge	292	274	335	427	583	100%
Omeath	249	249	231	439	503	102%
Tinure	0	0	296	387	456	54%
Jeninstown	270	233	263	237	323	20%
Beaulieu	0	0	0	0	221	0
Annagassan	0	0	0	0	180	0
Baltray	135	130	120	121	103	-24%
Other (mainly rural Louth)	25,623	26,105	26,408	25,894	27,230	6%
County Louth	90,724	92,166	101,821	111,267	122,897	35%
State	3,525,719	3,626,087	3,917,203	4,239,848	4,588,252	30%

Table 2 Constituent Towns and Population Growth 1991 – 2011 CSO Census

The rural parts of County Louth have recorded an increase of 6% (1,607 persons) over the 20-year period reflecting the gradual shift in employment priorities away from farming and agriculture.

Ardee with a population of 4,927 (4% of County) in 2011 is in the middle of the implementation of a strategic development plan 2010 – 2016 commissioned by Louth County Council in 2009. The town is situated in mid-Louth, twenty kilometres south-west of Dundalk and twenty-seven kilometres north-west of Drogheda on the intersection of the N2 national primary Dublin – Derry Route and the N52 national secondary Ardee – Nenagh route, with direct access provided by the N33 to the new M1 and national motorway network. The town has experienced significant growth in the 20-year period (37%), although more moderate growth of 5% has occurred in the 2006 – 2011 period, considerably less than the 10.5% increase across the County and 7.7% and 9.9% in Drogheda and Dundalk respectively.

4.2 AGE DISTRIBUTION

Age and projected age patterns are a strong influence on planning particularly for services and strategic development. The population demography arising from the CSO Census data is based on the census conducted in April 2011 and will be four years old in the implementation year 2015. Mid-Censal data will be captured in April 2016 and the detailed results may not be available until 2017/18. For this socio-economic profile the main analysis will be based on the 2011 data but there is an opportunity to model the data for age and this may



be followed up at an appropriate stage or at least taken into account at planning stages.

Age Band	Dundalk		Drogheda			State		Louth	
Age	Total	% Total	Total	% Total	+/- Drogheda v Dundalk	Total	% Total	Total	% Total
0 - 4	3,008	8.0%	3,542	9.2%	18%	356,329	7.8%	10,411	8.5%
5 - 11	3,842	10.2%	4,258	11.0%	11%	443,033	9.7%	13,153	10.7%
12 - 17	2,952	7.8%	2,788	7.2%	-6%	349,325	7.6%	9,728	7.9%
18 - 24	4,022	10.6%	3,171	8.2%	-21%	411,153	9.0%	10,813	8.8%
25 - 44	11,573	30.6%	13,369	34.7%	16%	1,450,140	31.6%	38,282	31.1%
45 - 64	8,045	21.3%	7,714	20.0%	-4%	1,042,879	22.7%	27,033	22.0%
65+	4,374	11.6%	3,736	9.7%	-15%	535,393	11.7%	13,477	11.0%
Total	37,816	100.0%	38,578	100.0%	2%	4,588,252	100.0%	122,897	100.0%

Table 3 Age Distribution Louth, State and Municipal Towns (CSO Census 2011)

The age groupings selected are based on the significant age groups in relation to service provision across health, education, employment, parenthood and age-related services.

Commentary

The CSO Census data suggests that Louth's population structure has a significantly younger profile than the State's. 19.2% of Louth's population in 2011 were in the 0-4 and 5-11 age groups compared to 17.5% in the State. Drogheda includes 20.2% in these age groups and Dundalk 18.2%.

When comparing the municipal areas, Drogheda has 18% more citizens in the 0-4 age group and 11% more in the 5-11 group. There are 2% more citizens in Drogheda than Dundalk, an absolute figure of 762 persons.

The teenage age group of 12-17 years has a moderately greater representation in Louth at 7.9% against the State's 7.6% reflected also in Dundalk, 7.8% while significantly lower in Drogheda at 7.2%. Drogheda has 6% fewer citizens in this category than Dundalk.

The 18-24 age group is marginally higher in Louth when compared to the State, 8.8% v 9.0%. However, Dundalk has 10.6% in this category, considerably greater than the State and the County, while Drogheda has a lower percentage at 8.2%. There are 21% fewer citizens in the 18-24 age group in Drogheda than in Dundalk.

The 25-44 year age group compares favourably between County and State at approximately 31% of the total population (0.5% lower in Louth) but there are 16% more citizens in Drogheda than Dundalk in this group.

The 45-64 age group includes 22% of the Louth population compared to 22.7% in the State. There is not a significant difference between Dundalk and Drogheda at 21.3% and 20% respectively.

The 65+ age profile is 11.7% in the State and 11% in Louth. However, only 9.7% of the Drogheda population are over 65 years and 11.6% in Dundalk. The

relatively younger profile in Drogheda reflects the housing development patterns in recent years which favoured that area relatively speaking and attracted first-time buyers.

	State			
	2011	2012	2013	2014 (est)
Births	75,554	72,225	68,930	65,785
Deaths	28,380	28,848	30,018	31,237
Natural Increase	47,174	43,377	38,912	34,549
+/- Natural Inc/Dec		-8.05%	-10.29%	-11.21%

	Louth		
	2011	2012	2013
Births	1,903	1,891	1,968
Deaths	737	748	740
Natural Increase	1,166	1,143	1,228
+/- Natural Inc/Dec		-1.97%	7.44%

Table 4 M & P Annual Birth and Death Rates State and Co. Louth (CSO Vital Statistics 2011- 2013)

Analysis of the birth and death rates recorded by CSO indicate that births are declining at State level and that deaths are relatively stable. The annual Natural Increase in the State population presented in Table 4 suggests that this is declining year on year by 10.29% in 2013 over 2012 and an estimated 11.21% in 2014 (M & P estimate). However, the CSO data for Co. Louth is suggesting that births are not declining and are stable at around 1,900 per annum and that deaths are also stable at 740. In fact the decline in the Natural Increase/Decrease of Louth's population was only 1.97% in 2012 and was actually positive in 2013 at 7.44%. This trend suggests that the younger configuration of Louth's population will persist against the national trend and that the demand for services associated with early years will increase relatively. There is no up-to-date information on the impact this will have on the municipal towns but the assumption must be that Drogheda will have a higher than average concentration of younger people under 11 years of age.

Chart 2 confirms that Louth has the seventh lowest average age profile in the State.

Figure 21 Average age by County 2006-2011

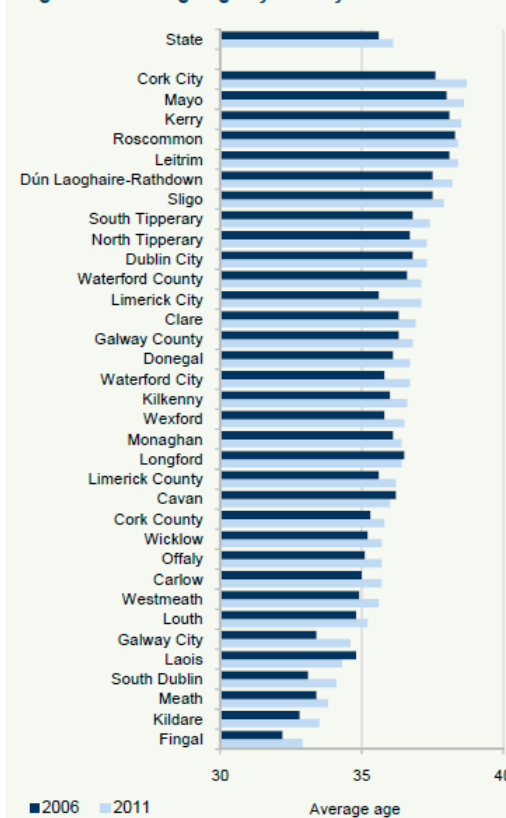


Chart 2 CSO Census Profile Town & Country

4.3 ETHNIC AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Table 5 notes that Louth includes marginally fewer people who have been born in Ireland than the State, 81.5% v 83.1%. Most of the difference arises from the 9% of Louth citizens emanating from the UK compared to 6.4% for the State.

Birthplace	Dundalk		Drogheda		State		Louth	
Ireland	29,114	77.6%	30,758	80.2%	3,758,511	83.1%	99,536	81.5%
UK	3,839	10.2%	1,835	4.8%	288,627	6.4%	10,959	9.0%
Poland	555	1.5%	1,020	2.7%	115,193	2.5%	1,736	1.4%
Lithuania	633	1.7%	968	2.5%	34,847	0.8%	1,628	1.3%
Other EU 27	1,119	3.0%	1,277	3.3%	116,927	2.6%	2,689	2.2%
Rest of World	2,269	6.0%	2,498	6.5%	211,176	4.7%	5,537	4.5%
Not stated	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	37,529	100.0%	38,356	100.0%	4,525,281	100.0%	122,085	100.0%

Table 5 Country of Origin CSO Census 2011

Drogheda includes more people from Poland than Dundalk, 2.7% compared to 1.7%, while 10.2% of Dundalk's population have UK as their birthplace compared to 4.8% in Drogheda and 6.4% in the State. There are more people from the 'Rest of the World' in Dundalk and Drogheda than in the rest of the County although the County rate is similar to that in the State as a whole.

	Dundalk		Drogheda		State		Louth	
White Irish	30,645	81.7%	30,180	78.7%	3,821,995	84.5%	104,674	85.7%
White Irish Traveller	441	1.2%	157	0.4%	29,495	0.7%	663	0.5%
Other White	2,987	8.0%	4,207	11.0%	412,975	9.1%	8,612	7.1%
Black or Black Irish	1,669	4.4%	1,577	4.1%	65,078	1.4%	3,390	2.8%
Asian or Asian Irish	687	1.8%	1,099	2.9%	84,690	1.9%	1,892	1.5%
Other	389	1.0%	484	1.3%	40,724	0.9%	1,047	0.9%
Not stated	711	1.9%	652	1.7%	70,324	1.6%	1,807	1.5%
Total	37,529	100.0%	38,356	100.0%	4,525,281	100.0%	122,085	100.0%

Table 6 Ethnic and Cultural Background CSO Census 2011

County Louth records the category 'white Irish' levels marginally greater than the State although the municipal towns include significantly lower percentages with Drogheda at 78.7% compared to the County at 85.7%, the State at 84.5% and Dundalk at 81.7%. Dundalk includes 441 members of Traveller families and Drogheda, 157, although the proportion of the Traveller population is lower in the County (0.5%) than nationally (0.7%).

4.4 FAMILY SIZE

In terms of family size, there is no significance between State, County and the municipal towns. Table 7 demonstrates similar numbers of children and persons in families, and the composition of families shows little appreciable differences. One small exception to that is the relatively higher number of families with two children in Dundalk and Drogheda when compared to the County and the State. In other words, 10% of families in Dundalk and 9% in Drogheda have two children compared to 7.7% in the State and 8.1% in Louth.

Size of family	Dundalk			Drogheda			State			Louth		
	Number of families	Number of persons in families	Number of children in families	Number of families	Number of persons in families	Number of children in families	Number of families	Number of persons in families	Number of children in families	Number of families	Number of persons in families	Number of children in families
2 persons	40.8%	25.9%	10.0%	39.5%	25.0%	9.0%	39.8%	24.9%	7.7%	37.9%	23.4%	8.1%
3 persons	24.2%	23.1%	22.0%	24.6%	23.4%	22.0%	23.2%	21.8%	20.4%	23.6%	21.9%	20.2%
4 persons	20.4%	25.9%	31.2%	21.9%	27.7%	33.6%	21.1%	26.5%	32.0%	22.2%	27.5%	32.5%
5 persons	10.0%	15.8%	22.1%	10.0%	15.8%	22.4%	11.0%	17.2%	24.3%	11.4%	17.7%	24.4%
6 or more persons	4.6%	9.3%	14.7%	4.0%	8.1%	13.0%	4.8%	9.7%	15.5%	4.8%	9.4%	14.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7 Family Size % CSO Census 2011

Size of family	Dundalk			Drogheda			State			Louth		
	Number of families	Number of persons in families	Number of children in families	Number of families	Number of persons in families	Number of children in families	Number of families	Number of persons in families	Number of children in families	Number of families	Number of persons in families	Number of children in families
2 persons	3,994	7,988	1,376	4,032	8,064	1,251	469,709	939,418	124,765	12,278	24,556	3,792
3 persons	2,373	7,119	3,030	2,516	7,548	3,074	273,416	820,248	332,001	7,663	22,989	9,423
4 persons	1,998	7,992	4,298	2,237	8,948	4,695	249,343	997,372	520,662	7,202	28,808	15,133
5 persons	978	4,890	3,037	1,018	5,090	3,130	129,561	647,805	395,750	3,702	18,510	11,349
6 or more persons	455	2,886	2,019	408	2,608	1,821	57,181	364,237	252,797	1,566	9,900	6,856
Total	9,798	30,875	13,760	10,211	32,258	13,971	1,179,210	3,769,080	1,625,975	32,411	104,763	46,553

Table 8 Family Size CSO Census 2011

Despite the relative compatibility of family size within Louth and the State, Table 8 provides information on the absolute levels.

These indicate that 70% of the children in Louth (33,338) are members of families of four children or more. Almost 40% or 18,100 children are in families of five or more children.

Table 9 provides an analysis of the type of family and age of children within family units.

For the State, 22.3% of families comprise lone mothers with children while in Louth it is 24.2%. Dundalk has 30.8% of families with lone mothers and 25.5% in Drogheda. The lower part of Table 9 identifies the number of children with lone mothers.

The number of families with lone fathers with children is approximately 3.5% in all areas with no significant variances between State, Louth, Dundalk and Drogheda.

	Dundalk			Drogheda			State			Louth		
	Couples with children	Lone mothers with children	Lone fathers with children	Couples with children	Lone mothers with children	Lone fathers with children	Couples with children	Lone mothers with children	Lone fathers with children	Couples with children	Lone mothers with children	Lone fathers with children
Number of families												
All children aged under fifteen	2,346	1,136	53	3,086	972	65	315,974	83,476	6,136	9,016	2,804	177
All children aged over fifteen	1,623	790	195	1,473	675	169	207,216	81,206	20,753	5,609	2,260	604
Other	730	289	18	736	244	10	95,761	21,602	2,142	2,688	715	52
Total number of family units	4,699	2,215	266	5,295	1,891	244	618,951	186,284	29,031	17,313	5,779	833
		30.8%			25.5%			22.3%			24.2%	
Number of children												
All children aged under fifteen	4,678	1,812	78	5,910	1,515	98	632,609	129,347	9,186	18,169	4,385	260
All children aged over fifteen	2,621	1,152	256	2,372	915	229	345,600	114,895	28,526	9,321	3,223	814
Other	2,232	877	54	2,195	708	29	295,770	63,867	6,175	8,122	2,111	148
Total number of family units	9,531	3,841	388	10,477	3,138	356	1,273,979	308,109	43,887	35,612	9,719	1,222
		27.9%			22.5%			18.9%			20.9%	

Table 9 Family Units with Children by Type of Family and Age of Children CSO 2011

4.5 HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Household size can provide information on overcrowding, which can be a causal factor in homelessness, and other characteristics of accommodation. It can also provide indicators on housing demand by examining the number of persons per household. An interesting statistic for Dundalk, for example, is that 9.9% of the town's one-person families occupies 26.1% of the households.

Table 10 below sets out the comparative information for family sizes up to eight persons.

Size of family	Dundalk				Drogheda				State				Louth			
	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons
1 person	3,706	3,706	26.1%	9.9%	3,267	3,267	23.3%	8.6%	392,000	392,000	23.7%	8.7%	10,070	10,070	22.9%	8.2%
2 persons	4,080	8,160	28.7%	21.7%	3,957	7,914	28.2%	20.7%	479,271	958,542	29.0%	21.3%	12,166	24,332	27.7%	19.9%
3 persons	2,551	7,653	17.9%	20.4%	2,649	7,947	18.9%	20.8%	296,010	888,030	17.9%	19.7%	7,977	23,931	18.1%	19.6%
4 persons	2,160	8,640	15.2%	23.0%	2,428	9,712	17.3%	25.4%	268,136	1,072,544	16.2%	23.8%	7,617	30,468	17.3%	24.9%
5 persons	1,129	5,645	7.9%	15.0%	1,164	5,820	8.3%	15.2%	145,102	725,510	8.8%	16.1%	4,122	20,610	9.4%	16.8%
6 persons	430	2,580	3.0%	6.9%	393	2,358	2.8%	6.2%	52,775	316,650	3.2%	7.0%	1,482	8,892	3.4%	7.3%
7 persons	120	840	0.8%	2.2%	110	770	0.8%	2.0%	14,174	99,218	0.9%	2.2%	374	2,618	0.9%	2.1%
8 persons +	38	321	0.3%	0.9%	48	408	0.3%	1.1%	6,740	57,150	0.4%	1.3%	164	1,418	0.4%	1.2%
Total	14,214	37,545	100.0%	100.0%	14,016	38,196	100.0%	100.0%	1,654,208	4,510,409	100.0%	100.0%	43,972	122,339	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10 Private Household by Size CSO Census 2011

Table 11 analyses households by type and provides an overview of accommodation use by different family types. It is a reference exercise to some extent since the size of the dwelling and the number of rooms is not included in the data.

Type of Household	Dundalk		Drogheda		State		Louth	
	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons
One person	26.1%	9.9%	23.3%	8.6%	23.7%	8.7%	22.9%	8.2%
Husband and wife	12.9%	9.8%	13.1%	9.6%	14.5%	10.6%	13.8%	9.9%
Cohabiting couple	3.9%	3.0%	4.7%	3.5%	4.4%	3.2%	3.8%	2.7%
Husband wife and children	26.9%	41.5%	30.3%	45.1%	31.6%	47.6%	32.9%	48.6%
Cohabiting couple and children	4.0%	5.8%	4.7%	6.3%	3.3%	4.6%	4.0%	5.4%
Father and children	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%	1.5%	1.4%	1.6%	1.4%
Mother and children	13.1%	13.9%	11.1%	11.0%	9.4%	9.3%	10.9%	10.7%
Couple and others	1.0%	1.3%	1.2%	1.5%	1.3%	1.6%	1.1%	1.3%
Couple children and others	1.5%	2.9%	1.9%	3.4%	1.8%	3.5%	1.7%	3.1%
Father children and others	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
Mother children and others	1.2%	1.7%	1.3%	1.7%	0.9%	1.2%	1.0%	1.4%
Two or more family units	1.3%	2.5%	1.5%	2.9%	1.1%	2.2%	1.4%	2.7%
Non-family households and relations	2.5%	2.2%	2.1%	1.8%	2.4%	2.1%	2.2%	1.8%
Two or more non-related persons	3.8%	3.8%	3.2%	3.0%	3.8%	3.7%	2.6%	2.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 11 Private Households by Type CSO Census 2011

Table 11 also provides some good quality demographic data on the various family types analysed. For example, the ‘Husband Wife and Children’ type in the Table notes that in the State, 47.6% of the population live in 31.6% of such households, while in Louth, 48.6% live in 32.9%, and in Dundalk, 41.5% live in 26.9% of the households.

Type of accommodation	Dundalk				Drogheda				State				Louth			
	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons
House/Bungalow	13,015	35,049	91.6%	93.4%	12,335	34,841	88.0%	91.2%	1,438,345	4,079,628	87.0%	90.4%	40,661	115,676	92.5%	94.6%
Flat/Apartment	865	1,628	6.1%	4.3%	1,327	2,524	9.5%	6.6%	177,587	342,350	10.7%	7.6%	2,374	4,436	5.4%	3.6%
Bed-sit	20	35	0.1%	0.1%	21	29	0.1%	0.1%	5,695	8,005	0.3%	0.2%	47	70	0.1%	0.1%
Caravan/Mobile Home	2	3	0.0%	0.0%	2	5	0.0%	0.0%	4,800	9,840	0.3%	0.2%	75	124	0.2%	0.1%
Not stated	312	830	2.2%	2.2%	331	797	2.4%	2.1%	27,781	70,586	1.7%	1.6%	815	2,033	1.9%	1.7%
Total	14,214	37,545	100.0%	100.0%	14,016	38,196	100.0%	100.0%	1,654,208	4,510,409	100.0%	100.0%	43,972	122,339	100.0%	100.0%

Table 12 Private Households by Type of Accommodation

Table 12 sets out the type of accommodation that exists in the State, Louth and the two municipal areas. Of note is the housing mix in Dundalk which contains more houses/bungalows than Drogheda which has significantly more apartments. 9.5% of its stock is apartments compared to 6.1% in Dundalk, 10.7% in the State.

Year Built	Dundalk				Drogheda				State				Louth			
	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons
Pre 1919	919	1,913	6.5%	5.1%	583	1,063	4.2%	2.8%	149,939	340,515	9.1%	7.6%	3,339	7,453	7.6%	6.1%
1919 to 1945	1,222	2,652	8.6%	7.1%	949	2,020	6.8%	5.3%	114,817	265,699	7.0%	5.9%	3,288	7,397	7.5%	6.1%
1946 to 1960	1,211	2,885	8.5%	7.7%	1,016	2,357	7.2%	6.2%	127,691	311,298	7.7%	6.9%	3,147	7,566	7.2%	6.2%
1961 to 1970	1,245	3,022	8.8%	8.0%	1,159	2,883	8.3%	7.5%	114,510	285,906	6.9%	6.4%	3,391	8,393	7.7%	6.9%
1971 to 1980	2,208	5,911	15.5%	15.7%	1,763	4,847	12.6%	12.7%	214,197	578,111	13.0%	12.8%	6,159	16,752	14.0%	13.7%
1981 to 1990	1,276	3,590	9.0%	9.6%	1,117	3,247	8.0%	8.5%	172,413	509,817	10.5%	11.3%	3,920	11,970	8.9%	9.8%
1991 to 2000	1,912	5,810	13.5%	15.5%	2,683	8,268	19.1%	21.6%	238,724	749,913	14.5%	16.7%	6,671	21,590	15.2%	17.7%
2001 to 2005	2,208	6,319	15.5%	16.8%	2,958	8,781	21.1%	23.0%	266,110	784,606	16.1%	17.4%	7,776	23,691	17.7%	19.4%
2006 or later	1,215	3,303	8.5%	8.8%	1,024	2,694	7.3%	7.1%	171,397	465,963	10.4%	10.4%	4,272	12,309	9.7%	10.1%
Not stated	796	2,137	5.6%	5.7%	762	2,031	5.4%	5.3%	79,610	208,741	4.8%	4.6%	1,934	5,094	4.4%	4.2%
Total	14,212	37,542	100.0%	100.0%	14,014	38,191	100.0%	100.0%	1,649,408	4,500,569	100.0%	100.0%	43,897	122,215	100.0%	100.0%

Table 13 Permanent private households by year built

In terms of the age of housing and occupation levels, there is little difference in the percentage of housing built prior to 1970 30.7% in Louth and 30% in the State. In the two decades from 1970 to 1990, and until 2006 and later, building levels have also been of similar proportions.

However, the data suggests that Drogheda has a newer housing stock than Dundalk.

When comparing Dundalk and Drogheda, 32.8% housing stock in the former is pre-1979 compared to 26.5% in Drogheda.

Similarly, housing built in the 1970 – 1990 period was greater in Dundalk (32.8%) than Drogheda (26.5%).

In the 1990 to 2006 period and later, Dundalk built 43.1% of its current housing stock and Drogheda 52.9%.

Persons per household were slightly greater in Drogheda than Dundalk reflecting age skew towards younger people in Drogheda and the relatively older profile of the Dundalk population. The Census 2011 data records that the number of persons per household are comparable between Louth and nationally, and between Dundalk and Drogheda.

A small number of houses do not have central heating – Dundalk 1% and Drogheda 0.8%. These figures compare favourably with the State data, 1.4%.

14% of dwellings in Louth were unoccupied in 2011 compared to 17% nationally.

5. EMPLOYMENT

Table sets out the principal status for the population over 15 years of age.

Principal Economic Status	Dundalk			Drogheda			State			Louth		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
At work	45.6%	41.9%	43.7%	51.7%	45.6%	48.5%	53.9%	46.4%	50.1%	50.1%	43.9%	46.9%
Looking for first regular job	1.7%	1.1%	1.4%	1.4%	1.0%	1.2%	1.1%	0.8%	0.9%	1.3%	0.9%	1.1%
Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	18.5%	10.6%	14.4%	18.9%	10.2%	14.4%	14.4%	7.4%	10.8%	17.8%	9.4%	13.5%
Student	13.0%	12.4%	12.7%	9.5%	9.5%	9.5%	11.4%	11.3%	11.3%	10.9%	10.7%	10.8%
Looking after home/family	0.9%	16.4%	8.9%	1.1%	16.6%	9.1%	1.0%	17.5%	9.4%	1.0%	18.0%	9.7%
Retired	14.2%	12.4%	13.2%	12.1%	11.0%	11.6%	13.4%	12.0%	12.7%	13.2%	11.9%	12.5%
Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability	5.6%	4.8%	5.2%	5.2%	5.8%	5.5%	4.5%	4.2%	4.4%	5.5%	5.0%	5.2%
Other	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Economically Active	14,216	15,250	29,466	14,189	15,109	29,298	1,771,510	1,837,152	3,608,662	46,200	48,035	94,235

Table 14 Principal Status Over 15 Yrs by Gender and Location CSO Census 2011

The dataset identifies significant differences in employment and employment opportunities in Louth compared to the State. Significant differences exist between Dundalk and Drogheda, and men and women.

Fewer people are at work in the County - 46.9% compared to 50.1% nationally.

More people are designated unemployed – 13.5% compared to 10.8% nationally.

Significantly more men than women are unemployed.

Live Register Data

The Live Register provides a more contemporary record of the trend in unemployment based on unemployment support claims through the Department of Social Protection and has been analysed here for the month of June for the years between 2011 and 2014.

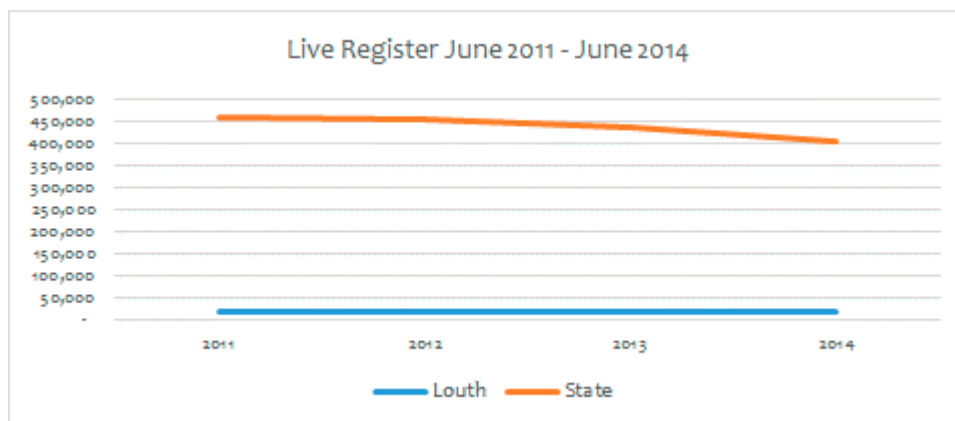


Chart 3 Live Register June 2011 – June 2014

The data fluctuates month on month but there has been a significant improvement in employment across the State and this is reflected in the Louth data.

Table 14 captures the reduction in claims between June 2011 and June 2014 of -12.6% and -11.7% for Louth and the State respectively.

At June	Louth	State
2011	18,368	458,309
2012	18,242	451,974
2013	18,277	435,357
2014	16,054	404,515
+/- Change	-12.6%	-11.7%

Table 15 Live Register Data June 2011 – June 2014

In the State, approximately 39% of those on the Live Register were women while the figure for Louth was 36%.

6. EDUCATION

Ceasing Education Levels

Table 15 notes that Louth experiences significant early school leaving before sixteen years of age and indeed up until seventeen years of age. The four initial age groups in Table 15 state that 35.6% of students in Louth leave before seventeen years compared to 29.9% in the State.

Age	Dundalk	Drogheda	State	Louth
Under 15 years	8.9%	10.9%	8.0%	9.6%
15	6.1%	6.1%	5.0%	6.4%
16	10.7%	9.6%	8.7%	10.7%
17	8.0%	9.0%	8.2%	8.9%
18	11.7%	12.8%	12.4%	12.0%
19	3.8%	4.6%	4.3%	4.1%
20	3.7%	4.1%	3.8%	3.9%
21 and over	18.0%	17.8%	21.4%	17.7%
Not stated	28.9%	25.1%	28.3%	26.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	23,857	24,472	3,003,490	78,939

Table 16 Population 15 Years and Over Ceasing Education CSO Census 2011

Educational Attainment

Table 16 sets out the percentage of the populations who are aged 5 years and over and their highest level of education achieved.

It is surprising that almost two out every hundred (1.8%) of the Louth population have no formal education although the level in the State is 1.4%.

Education Level	Dundalk			Drogheda			State			Louth		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
No Formal Education	1.8%	1.6%	1.7%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	1.6%	1.3%	1.4%	2.1%	1.5%	1.8%
Primary Education	15.8%	17.0%	16.4%	16.0%	18.3%	17.2%	14.7%	12.9%	13.8%	15.9%	16.4%	16.2%
Lower Secondary	20.2%	18.3%	19.2%	19.5%	15.3%	17.3%	18.2%	15.1%	16.6%	21.3%	17.6%	19.4%
Upper Secondary	19.9%	20.5%	20.2%	19.7%	19.8%	19.8%	18.7%	21.3%	20.0%	18.7%	20.2%	19.4%
Technical or Vocational qualification	7.9%	9.2%	8.5%	9.3%	10.7%	10.0%	8.2%	9.0%	8.6%	8.1%	9.5%	8.8%
Advanced Cert/Completed Apprenticeship	6.3%	2.7%	4.4%	8.0%	3.7%	5.8%	7.9%	3.6%	5.7%	8.2%	3.3%	5.7%
Higher Certificate	4.4%	4.5%	4.4%	4.3%	5.1%	4.7%	4.0%	5.0%	4.5%	4.2%	5.1%	4.7%
Ordinary Bachelor Degree or National Diploma	6.1%	6.6%	6.3%	6.1%	7.0%	6.6%	6.7%	8.1%	7.4%	6.0%	7.3%	6.6%
Honours Bachelor Degree Prof qualification or both	6.9%	8.2%	7.6%	6.3%	8.2%	7.3%	8.2%	9.8%	9.0%	6.4%	8.3%	7.4%
Postgraduate Diploma or Degree	5.2%	6.0%	5.6%	5.1%	6.2%	5.6%	6.4%	8.5%	7.5%	4.7%	6.2%	5.5%
Doctorate(Ph.D) or higher	0.6%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.9%	0.6%	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%
Not stated	4.9%	5.2%	5.1%	4.3%	4.2%	4.2%	4.6%	4.7%	4.7%	4.2%	4.3%	4.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	11,475	12,382	23,857	11,867	12,605	24,472	1,473,483	1,530,007	3,003,490	38,733	40,206	78,939

Table 17 Population 15 Years and Over by Gender and Highest Level of Education Completed CSO Census 2011

Significantly higher percentages of the Louth population have attained Primary and Lower Secondary levels as their highest achievement (35.6%) compared to the State (30.4%).

Lower levels of educational achievement are also evidenced at the first degree level and postgraduate levels where Louth records 19.9% of the population achieving here, compared with the State record of 24.6%.

Travel Times to Work/School/College for Citizens over 5 Years of Age

While 40.1% of the Louth population have a travel time of under 15 minutes compared to the 34.1% of the State population, almost half of the Dundalk population (48.8%) also have travel times of less than 15 minutes. Only one-third of the Drogheda population have that luxury, while 43% travel between 15 – 45 minutes.

3.2% of the Louth population and 3.8% of people from Drogheda have travel times in excess of 90 minutes compared to 1.9% of the State's population.

	Dundalk		Drogheda		State		Louth	
Under 15 mins	10,477	48.8%	7,495	33.6%	921,724	34.1%	28,286	40.1%
1/4 hour - under 1/2 hour	6,025	28.1%	6,424	28.8%	812,773	30.1%	20,649	29.3%
1/2 hour - under 3/4 hour	1,679	7.8%	3,163	14.2%	463,182	17.1%	8,401	11.9%
3/4 hour - under 1 hour	443	2.1%	1,375	6.2%	152,894	5.7%	2,727	3.9%
1 hour - under 1 1/2 hours	918	4.3%	1,732	7.8%	140,545	5.2%	4,189	5.9%
1 1/2 hours and over	598	2.8%	856	3.8%	51,038	1.9%	2,236	3.2%
Not stated	1,337	6.2%	1,268	5.7%	162,248	6.0%	4,072	5.8%
Total	21,477	100.0%	22,313	100.0%	2,704,404	100.0%	70,560	100.0%

Table 18 Travel to Work/School/College for Over 5s CSO Census 2011

Car Ownership by Household

Car ownership can reflect relative levels of disposable income although urban/rural mix may also be a factor.

Louth households have lower car ownership rates than the State average with 19.6% of households having no car compared to 17.6% in the State. Higher levels of 26.1% and 24% were recorded in Dundalk and Drogheda respectively.

	Dundalk		Drogheda		State		Louth	
No motor car	3,716	26.1%	3,366	24.0%	289,722	17.6%	8,625	19.6%
One motor car	6,550	46.1%	6,232	44.5%	668,766	40.5%	18,314	41.7%
Two motor cars	3,358	23.6%	3,857	27.5%	556,036	33.7%	13,875	31.6%
Three motor cars	472	3.3%	467	3.3%	101,264	6.1%	2,331	5.3%
Four or more motor cars	116	0.8%	92	0.7%	33,620	2.0%	752	1.7%
	14,212	100.0%	14,014	100.0%	1,649,408	100.0%	43,897	100.0%

Table 19 Car Ownership by Household CSO Census 2011

A greater number of households in Dundalk (46.1%) and Drogheda (44.5%) have one car compared to the State (40.5%). The State averages for two cars and more are significantly greater than County Louth and the municipal areas of Dundalk and Drogheda.

Social Class

Louth has fewer of its population classified as Professional and Managerial and Technical, with both Dundalk and Drogheda lower than the County average. Dundalk includes more people classified as 'Non-Manual' and it also includes 23.1% 'unclassified'.

Social Class	Dundalk	Drogheda	State	Louth
Professional workers	5.3%	5.2%	7.3%	5.9%
Managerial and technical	22.5%	24.4%	27.3%	25.2%
Non-manual	19.3%	17.9%	17.5%	18.1%
Skilled manual	14.0%	16.8%	15.4%	16.9%
Semi-skilled	12.0%	13.5%	10.6%	12.0%
Unskilled	3.8%	4.9%	3.7%	4.1%
All others gainfully occupied and unknown	23.1%	17.4%	18.2%	17.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 20 Population by Social Class CSO Census 2011

7. HEALTH STATUS

There is higher level health data available that would benefit the socio-economic framework in the more detailed documents but it is useful to include some of the salient records of the CSO Census 2011. County Louth includes a large general hospital in Drogheda which serves Louth and surrounding counties.

Health	Dundalk	Drogheda	State	Louth
Very good	58.8%	57.4%	60.3%	60.0%
Good	28.2%	29.4%	28.0%	27.8%
Fair	9.0%	9.1%	8.0%	8.6%
Bad	1.5%	1.5%	1.2%	1.4%
Very bad	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Not stated	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	1.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 21 Population by General Health

Table 21 summarises responses to the health question in the census and that the vast majority in all locations, 86% approximately regard their health as 'very good' or 'good'. Slightly more reported 'fair' in Dundalk and Drogheda, 9% compared to 8% in the State and similar numbers reported 'bad' or 'very bad' – less than 2%.

Number of hours	Dundalk		Drogheda		State		Louth	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1-14	42.2%	41.4%	44.1%	44.7%	45.7%	41.7%	44.4%	42.5%
15-28	15.9%	18.3%	11.9%	13.4%	14.9%	16.1%	15.1%	17.1%
29-42	7.2%	7.7%	6.3%	7.3%	7.5%	7.6%	6.4%	7.0%
43+	20.4%	23.5%	18.8%	21.5%	18.3%	23.3%	19.1%	23.1%
Not stated	14.4%	9.1%	18.8%	13.0%	13.7%	11.3%	15.0%	10.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total Hours	599	935	537	836	72,999	114,113	1,912	3,036

Table 22 Carers by Gender and Number of Unpaid Hours of Care Weekly CSO Census 2011

Table 22 highlights the hours provided, unpaid, to others in the community who are mainly family. It indicates minor variations between the State and other locations but doesn't really shed much light on the health needs of the populations of any of the areas being profiled.

North Eastern Regional Drugs Task Force

The NERDTF provides services in the four north east counties (Cavan, Monaghan, Meath & Louth). It specifically provides funding for a range of projects covering prevention & education along with other demand reduction activities, drug & alcohol treatment & rehabilitation projects (including both day programmes and residential services), as well as other key addiction-related service providers that we work with. One of those funded projects is the Louth Community Drug and Alcohol Team which is located in Drogheda and provides confidential assistance and services in response to individuals, families and the community who are affected by drug & alcohol use.

The Louth Community Drug and Alcohol Team works closely with the HSE, Gardaí, Louth County Council and the local services addressing homelessness.

8. DEPRIVATION AREAS⁵

Overall, the Border Region is the most disadvantaged region of Ireland, but County Louth is the third most affluent local authority area within the region. Louth has massively been affected by the economic downturn after 2007, reflected in the drop in the absolute deprivation score from -3.7 in 2006 to -10.5 in 2011. This represents a drop of 6.8, compared to a nationwide drop of 6.5. As a consequence, the relative position of Louth has marginally improved from the eighth most disadvantaged to the ninth most disadvantaged local authority area in Ireland.

However, as the foregoing datasets presented above note, the county is not characterised by particular extremes either with regard to affluence or deprivation. Of the 43 EDs in County Louth most (28) are marginally below average while 13 are marginally above average. The slightly more affluent areas comprise the wider peripheries of Dundalk and Drogheda, but neither of the towns themselves. The most disadvantaged areas are found within Dundalk itself.

At a local level, the most disadvantaged EDs are:

● Dundalk Urban No. 1	-12.8
● Dundalk Urban No. 2	-11.8
● Castletown (Pt.)	-9.5
● West Gate	-9.3

The former two EDs are the only EDs in County Louth which fall into the 'disadvantaged' category. All other EDs are, at the most, marginally below the national average.

The most affluent EDs in Louth which record just above the average comprise

● Haggardstown (Pt.)	5.7
● Monasterboice	3.4
● Jenkinstown	3.3

While there has been a continuous decline in the age dependency rate (the proportion of population under 15 years of age or over 64 as part of the total population) throughout the State in the period between 1991 and 2006, from 38.1% (1991) to 31.4% (2006), the ratio has again increased to 33.0% in 2011. A marginally smaller decline applied to County Louth in the period between 1991 and 2006 (38.5% to 32.5%). In 2011 the age dependency rate for Louth at 34.3% is marginally above the national average although age dependency rates are not exceeding 40% in any ED in County Louth.

Within Louth, there are some typical urban-rural differential, with Dundalk Urban No. 3 (28.8%), Dundalk Urban No. 2 (28.9%) and Dundalk Urban No. 5

⁵ The 2011 Pobal HP Deprivation Index Area Profile for County Louth Trutz Haase February 2013

(29.6%) having the lowest age dependency rates, while Barronstown (39.7%) and Dysart (38.9%) have the highest rates.

The proportion of lone parents (as a proportion of all households with dependent children) in the State has exactly doubled over the past 20 years to 2011, growing from 10.7% in 1991 to 21.6% nationally in 2011. Rates in urban and rural areas vary, and lone parent rates in the major cities are up to twice the national average (e.g. Limerick City 37.5%). County Louth had a rate of 24.3% in 2011; i.e. slightly above the national average. Within the county, Dundalk Urban No. 1 (41.9%), Castletown (Pt.) (38.5%) and Dundalk Rural (Pt.) (35.3%) all have rates which are high by national comparison. In contrast, there are nine EDs where the rate is under 10 per cent.

The age dependency ratio of 34.1% is marginally above the national average, while the proportion of lone parents at 26.0% is also above the nationally prevailing share.

Education

In 1991, 36.7% of the adult population had primary education only. This dropped to half that level (18.9%) in 2006 and even further to 16.0% in 2011. Between 2006 and 2011 the adult population with primary education only decreased by 2.9 percentage points. The rate for County Louth has fallen from 41.6% in 1991, to 21.7% in 2006, and 18.7% in 2011, but has nevertheless consistently remained above the national average

However, there are several rural EDs where still considerable parts of the adult population have primary education only. These are Drumcar (32.3%) and Dundalk Urban No. 1 (32.3%), both of which are characterised by levels of adults with primary education only which are twice as high as the national average.

The reverse applies with regard to third-level education, which has more than doubled over the past 20 years. In 1991, 13.0% of the national adult population had completed third-level education and this had grown to 30.5% in 2006, but only increased marginally to 30.6% in 2011. The proportion of Louth's population with third-level education grew from 9.7% in 1991, to 25.9% in 2006 and has marginally decreased to 25.6% in 2011. This 20-year growth is below that which has occurred nationally (15.9 percentage points compared to 17.6 percentage points nationally) and, in addition, from an already lower than average starting point.

At ED level, and again reflecting the situation with regard to the higher incidences of low levels of education, there are particularly low shares of population with third-level education in Dundalk Urban No. 2 (15.8%), Dundalk Urban No. 1 (15.8%) and West Gate (17.2%), but none falling below the 10 per cent level. Third-level education accounts for 21.8%, which is well below the nationally prevailing rate (30.6%).

Social Class Composition

At State level, the proportion of professionals in all classes rose from 25.2% in 1991 to 34.6% in 2011, whilst the proportion of the semi- and unskilled classes declined from 28.2% to 17.5% over the same period.

In Louth, the proportion in the professional classes (31.1%) and the proportion in the lower skilled professions (19.6%) are marginally below the national average. Differences in the social class composition within the county reflect those of educational attainment, with Haggardstown (Pt.) having the highest composition (48.8% professionals, 10.8% semi- and unskilled manual classes), and Dundalk Urban No. 2 having the lowest (11.7% professionals, 30.7% manual classes).

Unemployment

Of all the census indicators used in the development of the HP Deprivation Index, the economic downturn after 2007 has most strongly affected the unemployment rates. Unemployment rates have broadly halved over the 15-year period from 1991 to 2006 and subsequently risen by 2011 to levels surpassing the 1991 levels. The following paragraphs therefore pay particular attention to the change in trends that relate to the 1991 to 2006 period and the five-year period of 2006 to 2011 thereafter.

For the State, the male unemployment rate fell from 18.4% in 1991 to 8.8% in 2006 and then rose to 22.3% in 2011. The female unemployment rate fell from 14.1% in 1991 to 8.1% in 2006. In 2011 it had again nearly doubled, accounting for 15.0%.

Female unemployment rates have tended to be slightly below male unemployment rates, but did not fall at the same pace during the time of the economic boom due to the increasing female labour force participation (i.e. reflecting the trend of increased female participation in the labour force with more women registering their unemployed status). Increase in unemployment rates since the 2006 Census has been much more pronounced with regard to male unemployment, which rose by a factor of 2.5 compared to a nearly two-fold increase for female unemployment.

During the growth period, unemployment rates for County Louth fell at a slightly faster rate than the State between 1991 and 2006, albeit from a higher starting point. Male unemployment fell from 23.8% in 1991 to 11.3% in 2006, a drop of 12.5 percentage points (compared to 9.6 percentage points nationally). Female unemployment declined from 19.1% to 10.9%, a drop of 8.2 percentage points (compared to 6.0 percentage points nationally).

Over the past five years, male unemployment in Louth experienced a two-and-a-half fold increase, reaching 27.7% in 2011. This compared to a national male unemployment rate of 22.3%. Correspondingly, the female unemployment rate almost doubled between 2006 and 2011, reaching 19.0%.

As a result, current unemployment rates in County Louth remain several percentage points above the national average.

Unemployment rates in individual EDs reach levels well above those prevailing county wide, and are highest in Dundalk Urban No. 2 (38.7% male, 31.7% female), followed by Dundalk Urban No. 1 (40.1% male, 23.7% female), Castletown (Pt.) (36.9% male, 23.8% female), Ardee Urban (35.7% male, 23.2% female) and Dundalk Rural (Pt.) (33.4% male, 24.8% female). Overall, it is apparent that it is the urban areas which are most affected by unemployment in County Louth.

Housing

There has been a 1.9 percentage point decrease in the proportion of local authority housing in Ireland over the past 20 years, from 9.8% in 1991 to 7.9% in 2011. However, the proportion in the Border Region has increased by 1.0 percentage point, from 7.1% to 8.1%. Nevertheless, Louth has seen a decline in the proportion of local authority housing, from 10.7% to 8.9%.

At ED level, the highest concentrations of local authority housing are found in Castletown (Pt.) (17.6%), St. Mary's (Louth Pt.) (16.4%) and Dundalk Rural (Pt.) (16.4%).

APPENDIX 2

LECP Socio Economic Framework, July 2015



Louth County Council



Socio Economic Statement
Prepared as part of the

Local Economic and Community Plan

CONENTS

	Page No.
1. Introduction	2
2. LECP Guiding Principles	3
3. Socio Economic Evidence Base	5
4. Spatial Planning Context	20
5. Economic and Enterprise SPC Role	23
6. Economic Objectives	25
7. Local Community Development Committee Role	28
8. Community Objectives	29
9. Stages in Plan Preparation	34

LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN (LECP)

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the LECP, as provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the relevant local authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders. The expansion and strengthening of local authority functions in economic development and local/community development provided for in the Act is an important means to advance the overarching purpose of local government, as highlighted in the Action Programme for Effective Local Government – Putting People First, “to promote the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities”. This overarching vision needs to inform each LECP. Accordingly, the LECP should not, itself, be formulated as a high level strategy but, rather, needs to be as action-focused as possible, recognizing that delivery will be through programmes of other stakeholders as well as by the local authority.

Mary T. Daly
Director of Economic Development

Joe McGuinness
Director of Community

LECP GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) comprises three key themes:

- Theme 1 – Employment and Economic Activity
- Theme 2 – Education, Training and Skills; and
- Theme 3 – Poverty and Social Exclusion.

The strategic relationships between the three themes and the role of Government and Local Government intervention are fundamental to the economic, social health and wellbeing of communities and nations alike and their co-ordination at local level has become a priority within national policies.

The vision of developing integrated economic and community development at local level through integrated planning is enshrined in the Putting People First document (October 2012) governing the reform of local government. The integration of social, community and economic development, and its preparation at local level, will bring an enhanced role to effective Local Government by aligning, focusing and co-ordinating planning and implementation and thus generating more effective and efficient outcomes for local communities.

The draft guidelines for the community element of the Local Economic and Community Plans recommend that plans should be underpinned by a number of guiding principles which reflect the European Commission vision of Europe's growth and development in a smart, inclusive and sustainable manner by 2020. These principles are fundamental to the planning process and the expectations of its outcomes are re-stated below from the document:

- Promotion and main-streaming of equality.
- Sustainability.
- Maximising returns.
- Participative planning.
- Community consultation and engagement.
- Community development principles.
- Accessibility and ownership.

High level EU target objectives for the development of the Local Economic and Community Plan have also been included in the Draft Guidelines and are detailed below:

1. Employment

- 69-71% of 20-64 year olds to be employed (currently 64.0%)

2. R&D / Innovation

- 2.2% of the EU GDP (Public and Private combined) to be invested in R&D / innovation

3. Climate Change / Energy (currently 2%)

- Greenhouse gas emissions 20% lower than 1990 (-7.6% in 2010)
- 16% of energy from renewables (6.4% in 2011)
- 20% increase in energy efficiency

4. Education

- The share of early school leavers should be below 8% (currently 10.6%)
- At least 60% of 30-34 year olds completing third level education (currently 49.4%)

5. Poverty / Social Exclusion

- At least 200,000 fewer people experiencing consistent poverty by 2020 (currently 277,000)

SOCIO ECONOMIC EVIDENCE BASE

1. Introduction

County Louth is characterized as an important and busy county in a prime location on the eastern seaboard between Belfast and Dublin, the two main cities in Ireland, north and south respectively. The new, improved road and motorway networks place the County one hour from Belfast and Dublin, most other major towns and cities in Ireland can be reached in three hours or less. Louth is also forty-five minutes from Dublin Airport, just over an hour from Belfast City and International Airports and is well-served by train and bus to destinations on the eastern seaboard and to all other destinations.

2. Population and Area

County Louth is a medium-sized Local Authority area whose population of 122,897 represents 2.7% of the State population. It is in the top half of the table by size and it has grown by 10.5% from 2006 to 2011, somewhat greater than the State rate on 8.2%.

3. Population Growth 1991 – 2011

Table 1 sets out the main areas of population in County Louth and identifies Drogheda and Dundalk comprising 76,394 persons (62% of County total) with Ardee comprising 4,927 (4% of County total) and smaller towns, villages and hamlets as detailed in the table. The Drogheda population figure of 38,578 is believed to include some 5,000 inhabitants of the southern environs of Drogheda who are, in fact, natives of East Meath.

On account of their size and importance, Dundalk and Drogheda are the two municipal areas which are used in this socio-economic analysis for comparisons.

Table 1 analyses the population growth in County Louth over the 20-year period, 1991 – 2011. The County has grown by some 35% during that period compared to 30% for the State. The largest growth recorded in the census data has been in Drogheda between 1996 and 2006 when a net in-migration of 9,908 persons occurred, while net-migration for the 20-year period was 13,922 persons or 56%.

Dundalk has grown over the same 20-year period by 26% or 7,755 persons.

	Census 1991	Census 1996	Census 2002	Census 2006	Census 2011	+/- % Population Growth 1991 - 2011
Drogheda (incl part Meath)	24,656	25,282	31,020	35,090	38,578	56%
Dundalk	30,061	30,195	32,505	35,085	37,816	26%
Ardee	3,604	3,791	3,948	4,694	4,927	37%
Clogherhead	746	775	906	1,558	1,993	167%
Dunleer	1,104	988	1,014	1,449	1,786	62%
Termonfeckin	589	530	503	653	1,443	145%
Tullyallen	393	429	617	1,036	1,358	246%
Dromiskin	443	629	949	992	1,115	152%
Carlingford	650	647	604	623	1,045	61%
Castlebellingham/Kilsaran	762	792	721	816	1,035	36%
Collon	335	308	424	564	814	143%
Louth	373	401	514	549	715	92%
Tallanstown	439	408	443	653	673	53%
Knockbridge	292	274	335	427	583	100%
Omeath	249	249	231	439	503	102%
Tinure	0	0	296	387	456	54%
Jenkinstown	270	233	263	237	323	20%
Beaulieu	0	0	0	0	221	0
Annagassan	0	0	0	0	180	0
Baltray	135	130	120	121	103	-24%
Other (mainly rural Louth)	25,623	26,105	26,408	25,894	27,230	6%
County Louth	90,724	92,166	101,821	111,267	122,897	35%
State	3,525,719	3,626,087	3,917,203	4,239,848	4,588,252	30%

Table 1 Constituent Towns and Population Growth 1991 – 2011 CSO Census

The rural parts of County Louth have recorded an increase of 6% (1,607 persons) over the 20-year period reflecting the gradual shift in employment priorities away from farming and agriculture.

Ardee with a population of 4,927 (4% of County) in 2011 is in the middle of the implementation of a strategic development plan 2010 – 2016 commissioned by Louth County Council in 2009. The town is situated in mid-Louth, twenty kilometers south-west of Dundalk and twenty-seven kilometers north-west of Drogheda on the intersection of the N2 national primary Dublin - Derry Route and the N52 national secondary Ardee – Nenagh route, with direct access provided by the N33 to the new M1 and national motorway network. The town has experienced significant growth in the 20-year period (37%), although more moderate growth of 5% has occurred in the 2006 – 2011 period, considerably less than the 10.5% increase across the County and 7.7% and 9.9% in Drogheda and Dundalk respectively.

4. Age Distribution

Age and projected age patterns are a strong influence on planning particularly for services and strategic development. The population demography arising from the CSO Census data is based on the census conducted in April 2011 and will be four years old in the implementation year 2015. Mid-Censal data will be captured in April 2016 and the detailed results may not be available until 2017/18. For this socio-economic statement the main analysis will be based on the 2011 data but there is an opportunity to model the data for age and this may be followed up at an appropriate stage or at least taken into account at planning stages.

Age Band	Dundalk		Drogheda		+/- Drogheda v Dundalk	State		Louth	
	Total	% Total	Total	% Total		Total	% Total	Total	% Total
0-4	3,008	8.0%	3,542	9.2%	18%	356,329	7.8%	10,411	8.5%
5-11	3,842	10.2%	4,258	11.0%	11%	443,033	9.7%	13,153	10.7%
12-17	2,952	7.8%	2,788	7.2%	-6%	349,325	7.6%	9,728	7.9%
18-24	4,022	10.6%	3,171	8.2%	-21%	411,153	9.0%	10,813	8.8%
25-44	11,573	30.6%	13,369	34.7%	16%	1,450,140	31.6%	38,282	31.1%
45-64	8,045	21.3%	7,714	20.0%	-4%	1,042,879	22.7%	27,033	22.0%
65+	4,374	11.6%	3,736	9.7%	-15%	535,393	11.7%	13,477	11.0%
Total	37,816	100.0%	38,578	100.0%	2%	4,588,252	100.0%	122,897	100.0%

Table 2 Age Distribution Louth, State and Municipal Towns (CSO Census 2011)

The age groupings selected are based on the significant age groups in relation to service provision across health, education, employment, parenthood and age-related services.

Summary

The CSO Census data suggests that Louth's population structure has a significantly younger profile than the State's.

- 19.2% of Louth's population in 2011 were in the 0-4 and 5-11 age groups compared to 17.5% in the State. Drogheda includes 20.2% in these age groups and Dundalk 18.2%.
- When comparing the municipal areas, Drogheda has 18% more citizens in the 0-4 age group and 11% more in the 5-11 group. There are 2% more citizens in Drogheda than Dundalk, an absolute figure of 762 persons.
- The teenage age group of 12-17 years has a moderately greater representation in Louth at 7.9% against the State's 7.6% reflected also in Dundalk, 7.8% while significantly lower in Drogheda at 7.2%. Drogheda has 6% fewer citizens in this category than Dundalk.
- The 18-24 age group is marginally higher in Louth when compared to the State, 8.8% v 9.0%. However, Dundalk has 10.6% in this category,

considerably greater than the State and the County, while Drogheda has a lower percentage at 8.2%. There are 21% fewer citizens in the 18-24 age group in Drogheda than in Dundalk.

- The 25-44 year age group compares favourably between County and State at approximately 31% of the total population (0.5% lower in Louth) but there are 16% more citizens in Drogheda than Dundalk in this group.
- The 45-64 age group includes 22% of the Louth population compared to 22.7% in the State. There is not a significant difference between Dundalk and Drogheda at 21.3% and 20% respectively.
- The 65+ age profile is 11.7% in the State and 11% in Louth. However, only 9.7% of the Drogheda population are over 65 years and 11.6% in Dundalk. The relatively younger profile in Drogheda reflects the housing development patterns in recent years which favoured that area relatively speaking and attracted first-time buyers.

	State			
	2011	2012	2013	2014 (est)
Births	75,554	72,225	68,930	65,785
Deaths	28,380	28,848	30,018	31,237
Natural Increase	47,174	43,377	38,912	34,549
+/- Natural Inc/Dec		-8.05%	-10.29%	-11.21%

	Louth		
	2011	2012	2013
Births	1,903	1,891	1,968
Deaths	737	748	740
Natural Increase	1,166	1,143	1,228
+/- Natural Inc/Dec		-1.97%	7.44%

Table 3 Annual Birth and Death Rates Analysis State and Co. Louth M & P 2014 (CSO Vital St 2011-2013)

Analysis of the birth and death rates recorded by CSO indicate that births are declining at State level and that deaths are relatively stable. The annual Natural Increase in the State population presented in Table 3 suggests that this declining year on year by 10.29% in 2013 over 2012 and an estimated 11.21% in 2014.

However, the CSO data for Co. Louth are suggesting that births are not declining and are stable at around 1,900 per annum and that deaths are also stable at 740. In fact, the decline in the Natural Increase/Decrease of Louth’s population was only 1.97% in 2012 and was actually positive in 2013 at 7.44%. This trend suggests that the younger configuration of Louth’s population will endure against the national trend and that the demand for services associated with early years will increase relatively. There is no up-to-date information on the impact this will have on the municipal towns but the assumption must be that Drogheda will have a higher than average concentration of younger people under 11 years of age.

This confirms that Louth has the seventh lowest average age profile in the State.

5. Ethnic and Cultural Background

Table 4 notes that Louth includes marginally fewer people who have been born in Ireland than the State, 81.5% v 83.1%. Most of the difference arises from the 9% of Louth citizens emanating from the UK compared to 6.4% for the State.

Birthplace	Dundalk		Drogheda		State		Louth	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Ireland	29,114	77.6%	30,758	80.2%	3,758,511	83.1%	99,536	81.5%
UK	3,839	10.2%	1,835	4.8%	288,627	6.4%	10,959	9.0%
Poland	555	1.5%	1,020	2.7%	115,193	2.5%	1,736	1.4%
Lithuania	633	1.7%	968	2.5%	34,847	0.8%	1,628	1.3%
Other EU 27	1,119	3.0%	1,277	3.3%	116,927	2.6%	2,689	2.2%
Rest of World	2,269	6.0%	2,498	6.5%	211,176	4.7%	5,537	4.5%
Not stated	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	37,529	100.0%	38,356	100.0%	4,525,281	100.0%	122,085	100.0%

Table 4 Country of Origin CSO Census 2011

Drogheda includes more people from Poland than Dundalk, 2.7% compared to 1.7% while 10.2% of Dundalk's population has UK as their birthplace compared to 4.8% in Drogheda and 6.4% in the State. There are more people from the 'Rest of the World' in Dundalk and Drogheda than in the rest of the County although the County rate is similar to that in the State as a whole.

	Dundalk		Drogheda		State		Louth	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
White Irish	30,645	81.7%	30,180	78.7%	3,821,995	84.5%	104,674	85.7%
White Irish Traveller	441	1.2%	157	0.4%	29,495	0.7%	663	0.5%
Other White	2,987	8.0%	4,207	11.0%	412,975	9.1%	8,612	7.1%
Black or Black Irish	1,669	4.4%	1,577	4.1%	65,078	1.4%	3,390	2.8%
Asian or Asian Irish	687	1.8%	1,099	2.9%	84,690	1.9%	1,892	1.5%
Other	389	1.0%	484	1.3%	40,724	0.9%	1,047	0.9%
Not stated	711	1.9%	652	1.7%	70,324	1.6%	1,807	1.5%
Total	37,529	100.0%	38,356	100.0%	4,525,281	100.0%	122,085	100.0%

Table 5 Ethnic and Cultural Background CSO Census 2011

6. Family Size

In terms of family size, there is no significant difference between State, County and the municipal towns. One small exception to that is the relatively higher number of families with two children in Dundalk and Drogheda when compared to the County and the State. In other words, 10% of families in Dundalk and 9% in Drogheda have two children compared to 7.7% in the State and 8.1% in Louth.

For the State, 22.3% of families comprise lone mothers with children, while in Louth it is 24.2%. Dundalk has 30.8% of families with lone mothers and 25.5% in Drogheda.

The number of families with lone fathers with children is approximately 3.5% in all areas with no significant variances between State, Louth, Dundalk and Drogheda.

7. Household Size

Household size can provide information on overcrowding, which can be a causal factor in homelessness, and other characteristics of accommodation. It can also provide indicators on housing demand by examining the number of persons per household. An interesting statistic for Dundalk, for example, is that 9.9% of the town’s one-parent families occupy 26.1% of the households.

Type of Household	Dundalk		Drogheda		State		Louth	
	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons
One person	26.1%	9.9%	23.3%	8.6%	23.7%	8.7%	22.9%	8.2%
Husband and Wife	12.9%	9.8%	13.1%	9.6%	14.5%	10.6%	13.8%	9.9%
Cohabiting couple	3.9%	3.0%	4.7%	3.5%	4.4%	3.2%	3.8%	2.7%
Husband wife and children	26.9%	41.5%	30.3%	45.1%	31.6%	47.6%	32.9%	48.6%
Cohabiting couple and children	4.0%	5.8%	4.7%	6.3%	3.3%	4.6%	4.0%	5.4%
Father and children	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%	1.5%	1.4%	1.6%	1.4%
Mother and children	13.1%	13.9%	11.1%	11.0%	9.4%	9.3%	10.9%	10.7%
Couple and others	1.0%	1.3%	1.2%	1.5%	1.3%	1.6%	1.1%	1.3%
Couple children and others	1.5%	2.9%	1.9%	3.4%	1.8%	3.5%	1.7%	3.1%
Father children and others	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
Mother children and others	1.2%	1.7%	1.3%	1.7%	0.9%	1.2%	1.0%	1.4%
Two or more family units	1.3%	2.5%	1.5%	2.9%	1.1%	2.2%	1.4%	2.7%
Non-family households and relations	2.5%	2.2%	2.1%	1.8%	2.4%	2.1%	2.2%	1.8%
Two or more non-related persons	3.8%	3.8%	3.2%	3.0%	3.8%	3.7%	2.6%	2.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6 Private Households by Type CSO Census 2011

Table 6 also provides some good quality demographic data on the various family types analysed. For example, the ‘Husband Wife and Children’ type in the Table notes that in the State, 47.6% of the population live in 31.6% of such households, while in Louth, 48.6% live in 32.9%, and in Dundalk, 41.5% live in 26.9% of the households.

8. Employment

Principal Economic Status	Dundalk			Drogheda			State			Louth		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
At work	45.6%	41.9%	43.7%	51.7%	45.6%	48.5%	53.9%	46.4%	50.1%	50.1%	43.9%	46.9%
Looking for first regular job	1.7%	1.1%	1.4%	1.4%	1.0%	1.2%	1.1%	0.8%	0.9%	1.3%	0.9%	1.1%
Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	18.5%	10.6%	14.4%	18.9%	10.2%	14.4%	14.4%	7.4%	10.8%	17.8%	9.4%	13.5%
Student	13.0%	12.4%	12.7%	9.5%	9.5%	9.5%	11.4%	11.3%	11.3%	10.9%	10.7%	10.8%
Looking after home/family	0.9%	16.4%	8.9%	1.1%	16.6%	9.1%	1.0%	17.5%	9.4%	1.0%	18.0%	9.7%
Retired	14.2%	12.4%	13.2%	12.1%	11.0%	11.6%	13.4%	12.0%	12.7%	13.2%	11.9%	12.5%
Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability	5.6%	4.8%	5.2%	5.2%	5.8%	5.5%	4.5%	4.2%	4.4%	5.5%	5.0%	5.2%
Other	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Economically Active	14,216	15,250	29,466	14,189	15,109	29,298	1,771,510	1,837,152	3,608,662	46,200	48,035	94,235

Table 7 Principal Status Over 15 yrs by Gender and Location CSO Census 2011

Analysis of the employment data utilizes the 2011 CSO Census data since it provides some interesting and relevant analysis throughout County Louth.

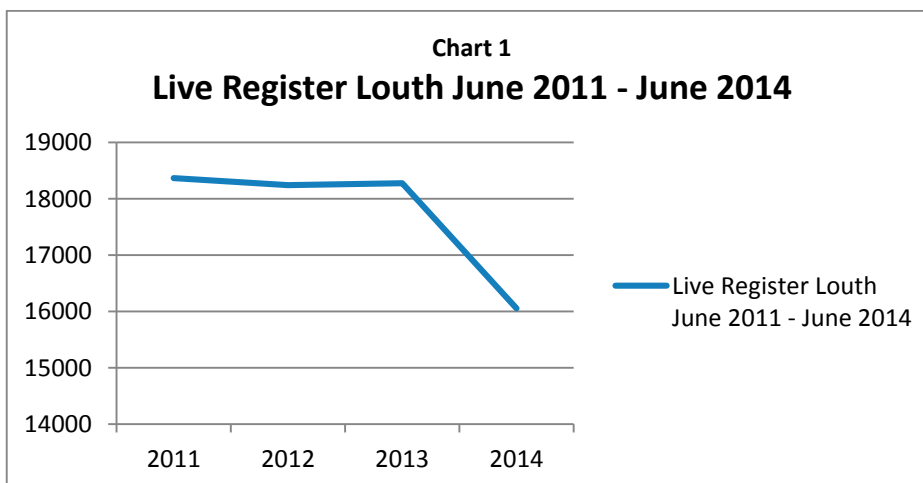
Summary

- In 2011 the unemployment rate for Louth was 24% compared to 19% in the State.
- 36,211 (29%) of population aged 15 years and over were not in the labour force – of these:
 - 28% Students
 - 25% Looking after the home
 - 33% Retired
- Of the 44,232 people recorded as working and living in Louth, 23% (10,301) travel to work outside Louth.
- The number of people both resident and non-resident recorded as working daytime in Louth was 32,809.
- From 2006 to 2011, male unemployment in Louth experienced a two-and-a-half fold increase, reaching 27.7% in 2011. This compared to a national male unemployment rate of 22.3%.
- The female unemployment rate almost doubled between 2006 and 2011, reaching 19.0%.
- Current employment rates in County Louth remain several percentage points above the national average.
- Unemployment rates in individual EDs (2011 SAPS) reach levels well above those prevailing county wide, and are highest in:
 - Dundalk Urban No. 2 (38.7% male, 31.7% female)

- Dundalk Urban No. 1 (40.1% male, 23.7% female)
- Castletown (Pt.) (36.9% male, 23.8% female)
- Ardee Urban (35.7% male, 23.2% female) and
- Dundalk Rural (Pt.) (33.4% male, 24.8% female).
- The urban areas are most affected by unemployment in County Louth.
- The dataset identifies significant differences in employment and employment opportunities in Louth compared to the State.
- Significant differences exist between Dundalk and Drogheda, and men and women.
- Fewer people are at work in the County – 46.9% compared to 50.1% nationally.
- More people are designated unemployed – 13.5% compared to 10.8% nationally.
- Significantly more men than women are unemployed.

Live Register Data

The Live Register provides a more contemporary record of the trend in unemployment based on unemployment support claims through the Department of Social Protection and has been analysed here for the month of June for the years between 2011 and 2014. Localised comparative data has also been presented up to and including July 2014.



At June	Louth	State
2011	18,368	458,309
2012	18,242	451,974
2013	18,277	435,357
2014	16,054	404,515
+/- Change 2011 – 14	-12.6%	-11.7%

Table 8 Live Register Data County Louth and State June 2011 – June 2014

The data fluctuates month on month but there has been a significant improvement in employment across the State and this is reflected in the Louth data.

Table 8 captures the reduction in claims between June 2011 and June 2014 of -12.6% and -11.7% for Louth and the State respectively.

In the State, approximately 39% of those on the Live Register were women while the figure for Louth was 36%.

The recording of claims in specific Social Welfare offices between 2011 and 2014 facilitates a more localized analysis of Live Register data. M & P has extracted the latest available dataset for July 2014 compared it to the recorded claims in the month of July 2011, 2012 and 2013. Claims at offices in Dundalk, Drogheda, Ardee are identified and compared against datasets for County Louth and the State. It has also been possible to present claims by people under 25 years of age, over 25 and total figures.

	< 25 Years	> 25 Years	Total
State	-30.5%	-10.1%	-14.0%
Louth County	-29.3%	-9.5%	-13.4%
Ardee	-39.0%	-16.7%	-21.0%
Drogheda	-29.8%	-14.1%	-16.9%
Dundalk	-26.0%	-1.3%	-6.8%

Table 9 Comparative Live Register Data YOY July 2011 – July 2014

9. Education

Ceasing Education Levels

Table 10 notes that Louth experiences significant early school leaving before sixteen years of age and indeed up until seventeen years of age. The four initial age groups in Table 10 state that 35.6% of students in Louth leave before seventeen years compared to 29.9% in the State.

Age	Dundalk	Drogheda	State	Louth
Under 15 years	8.9%	10.9%	8.0%	9.6%
15	6.1%	6.1%	5.0%	6.4%
16	10.7%	9.6%	8.7%	10.7%
17	8.0%	9.0%	8.2%	8.9%
18	11.7%	12.8%	12.4%	12.0%
19	3.8%	4.6%	4.3%	4.1%
20	3.7%	4.1%	3.8%	3.9%
21 and over	18.0%	17.8%	21.4%	17.7%
Not stated	28.9%	25.1%	28.3%	26.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	23,857	24,472	3,003,490	78,939

Table 10 Population 15 Years and Over Ceasing Education CSO Census 2011

Educational Attainment

Table 11 Sets out the percentage of the population who are aged 15 years and over and their highest level of education achieved.

It is surprising that almost two out of every hundred (1.8%) of the Louth population have no formal education although the level in the State is 1.4%

Educational Level	Dundalk			Drogheda			State			Louth		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
No formal Education	1.8%	1.6%	1.7%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	1.6%	1.3%	1.4%	2.1%	1.5%	1.8%
Primary Education	15.8%	17.0%	16.4%	16.0%	18.3%	17.2%	14.7%	12.9%	13.8%	15.9%	16.4%	16.2%
Lower Secondary	20.2%	18.3%	19.2%	19.5%	15.3%	17.3%	18.2%	15.1%	16.6%	21.3%	17.6%	19.4%
Upper Secondary	19.9%	20.5%	20.2%	19.7%	19.8%	19.8%	18.7%	21.3%	20.0%	18.7%	20.2%	19.4%
Technical or Vocational qualification	7.9%	9.2%	8.5%	9.3%	10.7%	10.0%	8.2%	9.0%	8.6%	8.1%	9.5%	8.8%
Advanced Cert/Completed Apprenticeship	6.3%	2.7%	4.4%	8.0%	3.7%	5.8%	7.9%	3.6%	5.7%	8.2%	3.3%	5.7%
Higher Certificate	4.4%	4.5%	4.4%	4.3%	5.1%	4.7%	4.0%	5.0%	4.5%	4.2%	5.1%	4.7%
Ordinary Bachelor Degree or National Diploma	6.1%	6.6%	6.3%	6.1%	7.0%	6.6%	6.7%	8.1%	7.4%	6.0%	7.3%	6.6%
Honours Bachelor Degree Prof qualification or both	6.9%	8.2%	7.6%	6.3%	8.2%	7.3%	8.2%	9.8%	9.0%	6.4%	8.3%	7.4%
Postgraduate Diploma or Degree	5.2%	6.0%	5.6%	5.1%	6.2%	5.6%	6.4%	8.5%	7.5%	4.7%	6.2%	5.5%
Doctorate (Ph.D) or higher	0.6%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.9%	0.6%	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%
Not stated	4.9%	5.2%	5.1%	4.3%	4.2%	4.2%	4.6%	4.7%	4.7%	4.2%	4.3%	4.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	11,475	12,382	23,857	11,867	12,605	24,472	1,473,483	1,530,007	3,003,490	38,733	40,206	78,939

Table 11 Principal Status Over 15 yrs by Gender and Location CSO Census 2011

Significantly higher percentages of the Louth population have attained Primary and Lower Secondary levels as their highest achievement (35.6%) compared to the State (30.4%)

Lower levels of educational achievement are also evidenced at the first degree level and postgraduate levels where Louth records 19.9% of the population achieving here, compared with the State record of 24.6%.

Summary

- 36% of students leave school before 17 years of age compared to 30% in State
- 1.8% of the population have no formal education in Louth compared to 1.4% in State.
- 36% of the Louth population record primary and lower secondary level as highest achievement compared to 30% in state.
- 20% of Louth population progress to degree and postgraduate level compared to 25% in State.
- Between 2006 and 2011 the adult population with primary education only in the State decreased by 2.9 percentage points. The rate for County Louth has fallen from 41.6% in 1991, to 21.7% in 2006, and 18.7% in 2011, but has nevertheless consistently remained above the national average.
- Several rural EDs were still considerable parts of the adult population have primary education only.

Social Class

Louth has fewer of its population classified as Professional and Managerial and Technical, with both Dundalk and Drogheda lower than the County average. Dundalk includes more people classified as 'Non-Manual' and it also includes 23.1% 'unclassified'.

Social Class	Dundalk	Drogheda	State	Louth
Professional workers	5.3%	5.2%	7.3%	5.9%
Managerial and technical	22.5%	24.4%	27.3%	25.2%
Non-manual	19.3%	17.9%	17.5%	18.1%
Skilled manual	14.0%	16.8%	15.4%	16.9%
Semi-skilled	12.0%	13.5%	10.6%	12.0%
Unskilled	3.8%	4.9%	3.7%	4.1%
All other gainfully occupied and unknown	23.1%	17.4%	18.2%	17.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 12 Population by Social Class CSO Census 2011

10. Health Status

There is higher level health data available that would benefit the socio-economic framework in the more detailed documents but it is useful to include some of the salient records of the CSO Census 2011. County Louth includes a large general hospital in Drogheda which serves Louth and surrounding counties.

Health	Dundalk	Drogheda	State	Louth
Very good	58.8%	57.4%	60.3%	60.0%
Good	28.2%	29.4%	28.0%	27.8%
Fair	9.0%	9.1%	8.0%	8.6%
Bad	1.5%	1.5%	1.2%	1.4%
Very bad	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Not stated	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	1.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 13 Population by General Health

Table 13 summarises responses to the health question in the census and that the vast majority in all locations, 86% approximately regard their health as 'very good' or 'good'. Slightly more reported 'fair' in Dundalk and Drogheda, 9% compared to 8% in the State and similar numbers reported 'bad' or 'very bad' – less than 2%.

Number of Hours	Dundalk		Drogheda		State		Louth	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1 – 14	42.2%	41.4%	44.1%	44.7%	45.7%	41.7%	44.4%	42.5%
15 – 28	15.9%	18.3%	11.9%	13.4%	14.9%	16.1%	15.1%	17.1%
29 – 42	7.2%	7.7%	6.3%	7.3%	7.5%	7.6%	6.4%	7.0%
43 +	20.4%	23.5%	18.8%	21.5%	18.3%	23.3%	19.1%	23.1%
Not Stated	14.4%	9.1%	18.8%	13.0%	13.7%	11.3%	15.0%	10.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total Hours	599	935	537	836	72,999	114,113	1,912	3,036

Table 14 Carers by Gender and Number of Unpaid Hours of Care Weekly CSO Census 2011

11. Deprivation Areas

Overall, the Border Region is the most disadvantaged region of Ireland, but County Louth is the third most affluent local authority area within the region. Louth has been disproportionately affected by the economic downturn after 2007, reflected in the drop in the absolute deprivation score from -3.7 in 2006 to -10.5 in 2011. This represents a drop of 6.8, compared to a nationwide drop of 6.5. As a consequence, the relative position of Louth has marginally improved from the eight most disadvantaged to the ninth most disadvantaged local authority area in Ireland.

However, the county is not characterized by particular extremes either with regard to affluence or deprivation. Of the 43 EDs in County Louth most (28) are marginally below average while 13 are marginally above average. The slightly more affluent areas comprise the wider peripheries of Dundalk and Drogheda, but neither of the towns themselves. The most disadvantaged areas are found within Dundalk itself.

At a local level, the most disadvantaged EDs are:

- Dundalk Urban No. 1 -12.8
- Dundalk Urban No. 2 -11.8
- Castletown (Pt.) -9.5
- West Gate -9.3

The former two EDs are the only EDs in County Louth which fall into the 'disadvantaged' category. All other EDs are, at the most, marginally below the national average.

The most affluent EDs in Louth which record just above the average comprise

- Haggardstown (Pt.) 5.7
- Monasterboice 3.4
- Jenkinstown 3.3

While there has been a continuous decline in the age dependency rate (the proportion of population under 15 years of age or over 64 as part of the total population) throughout the State in the period between 1991 and 2006, from 38.1% (1991) to 31.4% (2006), the ratio has again increased to 33.0% in 2011. A marginally smaller decline applied to County Louth in the period between 1991 and 2006 (38.5% to 32.5%). In 2011 the age dependency rate for Louth at 34.3% is marginally above the national average although age dependency rates are not exceeding 40% in any ED in County Louth.

Within Louth, there are some typical urban-rural differentials, with Dundalk Urban No. 3 (28.8%), Dundalk Urban No. 2 (28.9%) and Dundalk Urban No 5 (29.6%) having the lowest age dependency rates, while Barronstown (39.7%) and Dysart (38.9%) have the highest rates.

The proportion of lone parents (as a proportion of all households with dependent children) in the State has exactly doubled over the past 20 years to 2011, growing from 10.7% in 1991 to 21.6% nationally in 2011. Rates in urban and rural areas vary, and lone parent rates in the major cities are up to twice the national average (e.g. Limerick City 37.5%). County Louth had a rate of 24.3% in 2011; i.e. slightly above the national average. Within the county, Dundalk Urban No. 1 (41.9%), Castletown (Pt.)(38.5%) and Dundalk Rural (Pt.) (35.3%) all have rates which are high by national comparison. In contrast, there are nine EDs where the rate is under 10 per cent.

The age dependency ratio of 34.1% is marginally above the national average, while the proportion of lone parents at 26.0% is also above the nationally prevailing share. The incidence of Lone Parenthood can reflect lifestyle choice and/or disadvantages but either cause can indicate specific family and community needs particularly early years intervention and a greater need for childcare.

Education

In 1991, 36.7% of the adult population had primary education only. This dropped to half that level (18.9%) in 2006 and even further to 16.0% in 2011. Between 2006 and 2011 the adult population with primary education only decreased by 2.9 percentage points. The rate for County Louth has fallen from 41.6% in 1991, to 21.7% in 2006, and 18.7% in 2011, but has nevertheless consistently remained above the national average.

However, there are several rural EDs where still considerable parts of the adult population have primary education only. These are Drumcar (32.3%) and Dundalk Urban No. 1 (32.3%), both of which are characterized by levels of adults with primary education only which are twice as high as the national average. It is noted that small area analysis may include bias as a result of, say, a significant number of the population residing in sizeable care homes (eg Drumcar). However, the SAPS analysis has the capacity to identify additional areas of needs regarding disability (probably inadvertently in these cases) which may otherwise 'slip under the radar' in the wider analysis.

The reverse applies with regard to third-level education, which has more than doubled over the past 20 years. In 1991, 13.0% of the national adult population had completed third-level education and this had grown to 30.5% in 2006, but only increased marginally to 30.6% in 2011. The proportion of Louth's population with third-level education grew from 9.7% in 1991, to 25.9% in 2006 and has marginally decreased to 25.6% in 2011. This 20-year growth is below that which has occurred nationally (15.9 percentage points compared to 17.6 percentage points nationally) and, in addition, from an already lower than average starting point.

At ED level, and again reflecting the situation with regard to the higher incidences of low levels of education, there are particularly low shares of population with third-level education in Dundalk Urban No. 2 (15.8%), Dundalk Urban No. 1 (15.8%) and West Gate

(17.2%), but none falling below the 10 per cent level. Third-level education accounts for 21.8%, which is well below the nationally prevailing rate (30.6%).

Social Class Composition

At State level, the proportion of professionals in all classes rose from 25.2% in 1991 to 34.6% in 2011, whilst the proportion of the semi- and unskilled classes declined from 28.2% to 17.5% over the same period.

In Louth, the proportion in the professional classes (31.1%) and the proportion in the lower skilled professions (19.6%) are marginally below the national average. Differences in the social class composition within the county reflect those of educational attainment, with Haggardstown (Pt.) having the highest composition (48.8% professionals, 10.8% semi- and unskilled manual classes), and Dundalk Urban No.2 having the lowest (11.7% professionals, 30.7% manual classes).

Unemployment

Of all the census indicators used in the development of the HP Deprivation Index, the economic downturn after 2007 has most strongly affected the unemployment rates. Unemployment rates have broadly halved over the 15-year period from 1991 to 2006 and subsequently risen by 2011 to levels surpassing the 1991 levels. The following paragraphs therefore pay particular attention to the change in trends that relate to the 1991 to 2006 period and the five-year period of 2006 to 2011 thereafter.

For the State, the male unemployment rate fell from 18.4% in 1991 to 8.8% in 2006 and then rose to 22.3% in 2011. The female unemployment rate fell from 14.1% in 1991 to 8.1% in 2006. In 2011 it had again nearly doubled, accounting for 15.0%.

Female unemployment rates have tended to be slightly below male unemployment rates, but did not fall at the same pace during the time of the economic boom due to the increasing female labour force participation (i.e. reflecting the trend of increased female participation in the labour force with more women registering their unemployed status). Increase in unemployment rates since the 2006 Census has been much more pronounced with regard to male unemployment, which rose by a factor of 2.5 compared to a nearly two-fold increase for female unemployment.

During the growth period, unemployment rates for County Louth fell at a slightly faster rate than the State between 1991 and 2006, albeit from a higher starting point. Male unemployment fell from 23.8% in 1991 to 11.3% in 2006, a drop of 12.5 percentage points (compared to 9.6 percentage points nationally). Female unemployment declined from 19.1% to 10.9%, a drop of 8.2 percentage points (compared to 6.0 percentage points nationally).

Over the past five years (2006 – 2011), male unemployment in Louth experienced a two-and-a-half fold increase, reaching 27.7% in 2011. This compared to a national male

unemployment rate of 22.3%. Correspondingly, the female unemployment rate almost doubled between 2006 and 2011, reaching 19.0%. As a result, current unemployment rates in County Louth remain several percentage points above the national average.

Unemployment rates in individual EDs reach levels well above those prevailing county wide, and are highest in Dundalk Urban No. 2 (38.7% male, 31.7% female), followed by Dundalk Urban No. 1 (40.1% male, 23.7% female), Castletown (Pt.) (36.9% male, 23.8% female), Ardee Urban (35.7% male, 23.2% female) and Dundalk Rural (Pt.) (33.4% male, 24.8% female). Overall, it is apparent that it is the urban areas which are most affected by unemployment in County Louth.

Housing

There has been a 1.9 percentage point decrease in the proportion of local authority housing in Ireland over the past 20 years, from 9.8% in 1991 to 7.9% in 2011. However, the proportion in the Border Region has increased by 1.0 percentage point, from 7.1% to 8.1%. Nevertheless, Louth has seen a decline in the proportion of local authority housing, from 10.7% to 8.9%.

At ED level, the highest concentration of local authority housing are found in Castletown (Pt.)(17.6%), St. Mary's (Louth Pt.)(16.4%) and Dundalk Rural (Pt.)(16.4%).

SPATIAL PLANNING CONTEXT

The LECP must be consistent with the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and the statutory Louth County Development Plan 2019 – 2015, Drogheda and Environs Development Plan 2011 – 2017 and the Dundalk and Environs Development Plan 2009 – 2015. The Council are currently at the draft stage of the Louth County Development Plan 2015 – 2021. The Dundalk and Drogheda plans shall continue to have effect and be read together with the County Development Plan for the administrative area of the County of Louth within which the dissolved Dundalk Town Council and Drogheda Borough Council are situated.

Regions and Strategic Planning Areas

National policy contained in the ***National Spatial Strategy (NSS) 2002***, is translated to a regional level in the planning guidelines, which guides policy making decisions at a local level through the ***Louth County Development Plan 2009 – 2015*** and when adopted the ***Draft Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021***.

SI 573 Local Government Act 1991 (Regional Assemblies) (Establishment) Order 2014 provides for the consolidation of regional structures from 8 regional authorities and 2 regional assemblies to 3 regional assemblies. In accordance with same, while Louth is located in the Border NUTS III area the county it is within 2 Strategic Planning Areas and the County will be moving to the ***Eastern and Midland Region***. Recognizing the strong links with the adjacent border region counties and cross-border aspects the planning guidelines for the Border Strategic planning area will also apply. The Regional Planning Guidelines currently applicable are the ***Border Regional Authority: Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022*** which provide a framework for long term strategic development in the Border region (Counties of Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth) setting out policies *inter alia* for population, environment, economic development etc

County Development Plan

The Louth County Development Plan is a strategic landuse and development plan which sets out the special policy and framework for the growth of the County over a six year period. The Plan acknowledges and addresses wider social, economic and environmental trends and focuses on planning issues, possibilities and considerations that underpin how the development process in Louth is to be structured in order to achieve the plans objectives for the wider community. The current and draft development plans have taken account of development plans in the neighbouring authorities of Meath County Council and Monaghan County Council.

Purpose of the County Development Plan

The main purpose of the County Development Plan is to act as a framework for development and growth of County Louth for the period 2015 – 2021. The plan identifies key challenges facing Louth across a range of issues including population, housing, infrastructure and services, environmental protection, heritage and amenity as well as identifying guidance and suitable landuse zonings for the appropriate location of development. Policies and objectives are set out that seek to direct development and growth, promote appropriate development in appropriate locations and protect and enhance natural and built resources where required.

It is important to note that the Louth County Development Plan sits within a hierarchy of spatial planning policy and is required to demonstrate consistency with the higher order spatial plans of the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning guidelines. The development plan is the mechanism for the implementation of national and regional policy at a local level

Development Plan and the LECP

As outlined the development plan is the strategic development or framework plan for the County. The LECP must be consistent with the provisions, policies and objectives of the development plan and must not present competing or conflicting objectives. This is outlined in the legislative provisions that require a LECP to be undertaken - Section 66B of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and guidance issued in January 2014 by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

Policies and Objectives of Louth County Development Plan 2009 – 2015 and Draft Louth County Development Plan 2015 – 2021

The LECP must be consistent with the strategic objectives of the core strategy of the development plan. These objectives direct the focus for appropriate development to appropriate locations in County Louth over the period of the plan. The LECP must be consistent with the objectives of the core strategy as outlined below.

1. Realise the potential and promote the development and growth of County Louth through harnessing the economic and employment potential of the competitive advantages of the County. This includes for its strategic location, connectivity and accessibility to external markets and having regard in particular to the role of the Dundalk Gateway and Drogheda Primary Development Centre as catalysts for development within the region and to forge strong economic links on a cross border basis with Northern Ireland and adjoining counties in a sustainable manner.
2. Direct new development in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy which will provide for the sustainable development of the county for the period 2015-2021 and beyond.

3. Ensure a more sustainable and integrated concept of development with regard to land use, transportation, water services, energy supply and waste management over the lifetime of the Plan.
4. Provide a framework for the management and regulation of development and use of land that will guide day to day planning decisions thus ensuring a more sustainable and integrated concept of development with regard to all forms of land use.
5. Afford suitable protection to the environment and natural resources of County Louth and ensure the fulfillment of environmental responsibilities.
6. Protect and enhance County Louth's Heritage (both built and natural) and other amenities in order that the full potential of the county can be realised, particularly in terms of attracting tourists and visitors to the county.
7. To acknowledge the complimentary role of the **Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)** which is to be formulated during the lifetime of the **Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021** which will be an integrated strategy designed to promote social inclusion at all levels of society within the county. Encourage and support the development of inclusive communities which engage and include all members of society facilitating equal physical, social and cultural access and integration
8. To support Louth **Local Enterprise Office (LEO)** in attracting investment and encouraging and stimulating entrepreneurship.
9. Facilitate the development of infrastructural projects which will underpin sustainable development throughout the county during the period of the Plan.
10. Provide a framework for sustainable development through energy efficiency, increase in the use of renewable energy, minimization of travel demand and increased use of sustainable transport modes.
11. Engage in efforts to limit the human induced causes of climate change and take account of climate change in planning and delivering work programs.

LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN

ECONOMIC

Economic and Enterprise SPC

Louth County Council Strategic Policy Committee will take a lead role in preparing and developing the economic development elements of the LECP

The Louth Economic Forum will, inter alia, act as an advisory group to the SPC.

Key elements of our Economic & Enterprise Strategy will include:

- The advising on the economic components of the community elements of the Plan.
- Ensuring that the economic elements of the LECP's are formulated in accordance with the regional framework set out in the regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and has regard to any regional enterprise strategies prepared by Enterprise Ireland.
- Creating and sustaining jobs and promoting the interests of the community in accordance with the Louth Economic Forum 10 point plan.
- Promoting Economic Development in the interests of Job Creation, income growth and overall well being of the county and its residents.
- Ensuring that Louth is acknowledged as the location of choice for economic development, cultural and educational opportunity supported by modern and sophisticated infrastructure providing ease of access for all.
- Working in partnership with local educational institutions to support entrepreneurship and business start-ups.
- Identifying regional and local attributes that are essential to enhancing local economic performance and the means by which these may be used to enhance competitiveness and to promote local economic activities.
- Placing Dundalk and Drogheda at the heart of the regional gateway of the eastern corridor to ensure the economic transformation/regeneration of urban centre's affected by economic decline.
- Delivering a County Development Plan that promotes economic development and employment growth.

- Continuing to encourage the development of Rural Enterprise as a means of supporting and sustaining rural communities by strengthening the economic fabric of the towns/small villages and their capacity to advance rural economic generation.
- Developing the role of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) to support SME's
- Identifying opportunities for existing and prospective business to engage with local government on relevant matters.
- Identifying local strengths and opportunities, weaknesses and deficiencies relevant to economic performance.
- Exploiting and coordinating funding sources from the public, private and community and voluntary sectors.
- Identifying regional and local economic potential and the requirements to realise it.

Economic Objectives

(In no specific order)

Maximise on Louth's unique position on the M1 Dublin Belfast Eastern Economic Corridor and close proximity to Dublin Airport.

Indicative Actions

- Work collaboratively with key stakeholders to bring forward innovative ideas to boost job creation in this region to facilitate the development of the border region's action plan for jobs.
- Work with the private sector to ensure a continued supply of marketable office buildings and improve access to credit to attract inward investment.
- Co-operate with IDA Ireland in marketing and promotion of the County
- Create a Louth Brand particularly around a polycentric Gateway – Eastern Economic Corridor – as an alternative “City”
- Active engagement by the Council, agencies, business and community organisations with and support Connect Ireland in rolling out its community partnership programme to create jobs.

Create an environment within the County which fosters existing business and grows new enterprises leading to more local jobs.

Indicative Actions

- Identifying regional and local attributes that are essential to enhancing local economic performance and the means by which these may be used to enhance competitiveness and to promote local economic activities
- Capitalising on Louths Traditional Sectoral Strengths
- Supporting innovation in domestic market enterprises
- Sustain, support and create jobs and new models of flexible value creating enterprise through developing Louth as a leader in Age-Friendly Business
- Work alongside the LEO to promote an environment for research, development and innovation activity and develop innovation management capability
- Encourage companies to harness and adopt and embed new technologies as a means of capturing new customers
- Help foster the environment for new start-ups in areas with potential

Promote sustainable urban and rural developments that meet the environmental, social and economic needs of the citizens of Louth.

Indicative Actions

- Promote proper planning and sustainable development that supports economic growth and a better quality of life for all
- Provide a high quality service to the users of the planning process
- Ensure a co-ordinated response to the rejuvenation of the towns of Drogheda,

Dundalk and Ardee that attracts new investors delivering an appropriate retail mix and reselling the merits of these towns to their respective hinterlands.

- In partnership with all stakeholders devise and deliver on action plans for the town centres.
- Promote and encourage sustainable development of rural towns and hinterlands as a means of supporting and sustaining rural communities.

Facilitate infrastructure investment that underpins employment growth.

Indicative Actions

- Maintain a high quality transport network that is accessible, safe, smart and integrated
- Promote and strengthen high speed, quality and reliable broadband which underpins sustainable economic growth, delivery of public services and social development.

Continue to encourage the provision of education and training within the County.

Indicative Actions

- Targeted co-ordination of education and training provision to ensure better utilisation and sharing of resources
- Continuing professional development with the education and training providers to develop their capacity to ensure the on-going provision of high quality programmes.
- Endeavour to provide the skills required for economic and social development which will assist people to respond to changing circumstances and to improve their employability.
- Better collaboration and student recruitment from Northern Ireland
- DkIT to become an Age-Friendly Campus
- Establish a National Green Data Centre Park in Drogheda

Continue to gain recognition as a premier producer of fresh, natural, safe, quality food products in the Agriculture, Farming, Food and Fisheries sector for domestic and export market.

Indicative Actions

- Exploiting the region's unique location advantages in the east coast's Dublin-Belfast economic corridor to attract foreign and domestic food and related mobile investment
- Increased competitiveness leading to company expansions and new business start-ups.
- Pursuing new and existing product and service opportunities through interaction with primary food producers and the educational, development, marketing and research establishments.
- Employing new marketing initiatives, in particular highlighting the sustainability, provenance and traceability of food and seafood products from Louth and its

neighbouring counties in the North East Region.

Protect and enhance the natural environment by positioning Louth as Irelands first Smart Green County.

Indicative Actions

- Capitalise on funding from SEAI Better Energy Community
- Replicate the Dundalk 2020 approach in Drogheda and Ardee
- Implement a special saving initiative for 60 selected Louth companies
- Develop the proposal of Dundalk Science and Technology Park as an IDA Flagship Green Business Park

Develop and maximise on the tourism potential within the region to deliver a better visitor experience and create a demand for return visits.

Indicative Actions

- Capitalise on Louth’s unique location as the hub of the Boyne Valley, Cooley, Mournes, Gullion Region and Irelands Ancient East , three of Failte Ireland’s top tourism destinations in the country
- Strengthen cross-border co-operation in tourism development
- Ensure the development and growth of Festivals
- Establish Louth’s reputation as a premier host for sporting events

Develop and sustain Arts, Culture & Heritage which will underpin the quality of life for individuals and communities.

Indicative Actions

- Strengthen and expand support for our contemporary arts and our cultural heritage, as a public good, of economic benefit and an under-pinning of community life.
- Broadening access and participation, and working towards a deepening of appreciation of the cultural riches of the County
- Encourage local people and visitors alike to appreciate our rich heritage by ensuring proper development and improved promotion of the myriad of sites within the County.

LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN

COMMUNITY

Louth Local Community Development Committee will take a lead role in preparing and developing the community development elements of the LECP.

In the context of developing and implementing the community elements of the Louth Local Economic Community Plan the role and function of Louth Local Community Development Committee is to:-

- bring a stronger focus on local and community development, by setting jointly agreed local and community development goals and objectives that the **key public-funded agencies and bodies** will work collaboratively to achieve, and promote local and community development interventions as fundamental contributions to the development of the LCDC administrative area in general;
- take a strategic view of **public-funded interventions and supports** at local level examining both **current and potential funding streams**, as well as **funding pressures** across the area, and exploring how the outcomes that matter to communities and citizens can be achieved as budgets change and contract; and
- bring all the **relevant public-funded agencies bodies** together **to target their resources** in a way that delivers on the high-level LECP goals generally and the community objectives and actions specifically. These resources will include:
 - a) resources directly under the management responsibility of the LCDC including, for example, the new **LEADER** Programme and the Social Inclusion Activation Programme (**SICAP**);
 - b) **resources under the direct management** and oversight responsibility of **LCDC partners**, for example those local and community development resources managed directly by local authorities, HSE, Education and Training Boards (ETBs), Department of Social Protection (DSP), Local Development Companies (LDCs) etc.; and
 - c) **resources under the direct management of other public-funded local development agencies and bodies who may not be represented on LCDCs** including for example, Children and Young Peoples Services Committees (CYPSCs), Traveller Interagency Groups (TIGs), Drugs Task Forces (DTFs), Family Resource Centres (FRCs), other Community Development Projects and bodies, etc.

Community Objectives

(In no specific order)

Provide appropriate structures for active participation by citizens in decisions that affect their lives.

Indicative Actions

1. Develop and support the Public Participation Network
2. Enhance the effectiveness of community engagement and participation with decision makers and the
 - Public Participation Network
 - The Louth Older People's Forum
 - Louth Comhairle na nOg
3. Support Volunteering to provide services and opportunities to the community across the life cycle
4. Strengthen the ability of community organizations and groups to build structures, systems, people and skills in community development with the view to identifying issues and resolutions to inform local decision making
5. Create effective working and communication relationships between statutory agencies and community and voluntary organizations
6. Promote and empower equality through engaging individuals and groups "at risk of social exclusion"
7. Promote equality and interculturalism cohesion in policies and equality proof the LECP and all cross agency plans for Co Louth
8. Gather, compile, analyse and disseminate data to provide evidence informed responses to decision making at all levels of local community planning
9. Utilise the SEE-IT assessment tool to assist the LCDC in carrying out ongoing impact assessment on the LECP
10. Utilize the Community Led Local Development (CLLD) approach to the development and implementation of rural development initiatives. Ref: Recommendation 11 CEDRA
11. Map public and community organization services in County Louth. To evaluate service effectiveness of current provision and to identify gaps which will allow targeted areas of improvement.

Achieve excellence and innovation in the education of young people and adults through the provision of dynamic services.

Indicative Actions

1. Increase the number of young people completing full time education through partnerships, strategies and initiatives at local level.
2. Skills for the economy—Promote further education and training to:
 - encourage the development of entrepreneurship skills among young

- people
 - to start and sustain their own business
 - promote the development of in-school internship programmers
 - assist long-term unemployed people and unemployed young people
- 3. Active Inclusion—Devise and implement a strategy to promote literacy and numeracy
- 4. Invest in services for children and young people

Build a high quality health & wellbeing environment

- Indicative Actions**
1. Support people of all ages to maintain, improve and manage their physical and mental wellbeing.
 2. Develop a local health promotion brand to improve information sharing on health promotion and wellbeing across all LCDC promotions.
 3. Develop community supports to focus on drugs and alcohol abuse, obesity, suicide awareness, safe mental health, disabilities and dementia.
 4. Develop models and supports to promote and foster advocates for health and wellbeing across all ages and in all sectors of society.
 5. Promote innovative working methods to provide seamless area based services for citizens.
 6. Activate the role of the private sector to assist local authorities and state agencies together with communities to maximise the positive involvement of business in healthy towns, cities and counties.
 7. Develop a sports strategy to increase participation in sport and physical activity.
Ref:
 8. Increase the capacity of parents, carers and families to support healthier choices for their children, those they care for and themselves.
 9. Work collaboratively to eliminate health threats and reduce and manage risks.

Promote active participation and inclusion in society, through the provision of income supports, employment and other services.

- Indicative Actions**
1. Develop and implement an action plan to support youth employment , including the EU Youth Guarantee and having regard to the development of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities and how it applies to those young people under 25 years of age
 2. Draw on the strengths and reach of youth work services and local development companies in working with public agencies and employers to promote the training, employment and entrepreneurship of young people.
 3. Employment & Participation –introduce an active case management approach that will support those in long-term social welfare into education, training and employment Goal 5 National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2007-16
 4. Employment & Participation—Increase the employment of people with disabilities who do not have a difficulty in retaining a job. Ref: Goal 9 National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-16
 5. Promote and support the employment of and participation of older persons in the workforce for as long as they choose.

Build Safer Communities**Indicative Actions**

1. Create safe communities where all citizens can be confident, secure and supported by Statutory Agencies.
2. Create safe and peaceful societies through reduced levels of crime, intimidation or anti-social behavior
3. Identify priority hotspots for resource requirements based on anti-crime incidence and evidence of need.

Tackle Alcohol and Substance Misuse**Indicative Actions**

1. Reduce the impact of alcohol and substance misuse throughout the county through the development of a countywide substance and detoxification strategy.
2. Develop parenting skills programmes and workshops aimed at educating parents and guardians on drug and alcohol issues affecting young people.
3. Provide co-ordinated interventions to both prevent and educate all citizens of the dangers of alcohol and substance misuse and to deal with its effects.

Create Age Friendly Environments across the Life Course**Indicative Actions**

1. Enhance social connectedness and empowerment by enabling older people access resources, services, lifelong learning and healthcare through services such as Cultaca, Good Morning Call Service, befriending services, etc
2. Facilitate older people to live in well-maintained, affordable, safe, and secure homes which are suitable to their physical and social needs
3. Encourage the design and development of public spaces, buildings and transport in our cities, towns and villages that are healthy, inclusive and friendly for people of all ages across the lifecourse.
4. Increase investment in community care services for older people, including home care packages, enhanced day care services and innovative respite services to support older people to live independently in the community for as long as they can.

Nurture Children and Young People**Indicative Actions**

1. Strengthen young people's self-esteem and resilience to social media pressure
2. Assist and support children's and youth organisations in the county, in conjunction with TUSLA.
3. Deliver integrated services for children and young people with complex needs or disabilities

Promote equality, diversity and independence for all citizens regardless of race, ability, religion, ethnicity, gender, age or sexual orientation.

Indicative Actions

1. Reduce racist crime, hate crime and discrimination
2. Promote Traveller Interagency Programme
3. Utilise the Peace Programme to ensure the integration of communities
4. Promote Social Inclusion to also include people with Physical Disabilities

Improve Quality of Life for residents and visitors to Louth

Indicative Actions

1. Encourage and assist Tidy Towns to improve the Quality of Life
2. Develop an Arts Programme that adds to the Quality of Life for all
3. Promote a Heritage Plan and Biodiversity Plan that assists the Community in Louth

Encourage citizens to engage with our outdoor and communal spaces as a positive recreational, health and social lifestyle.

Indicative Actions

1. To maximize the use of the public realm and outdoor facilities.
2. To encourage participation in sports and leisure activities for the betterment of all.

Target areas of high concentration of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion

Indicative Actions

1. Tackle Child Poverty through a multidimensional approach Ref: 4.1 Better Outcomes Brighter Futures & National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (check)
2. Deliver high quality housing for those who cannot afford to meet their own housing needs and to underpin the building of sustainable communities; Ref: Goal 10 National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-16
3. Implement the Regional Homelessness Action Plan
4. Continue the goals and objectives of RAPID and Regenerative Programmes
5. Work to address matters of Fuel Poverty
6. Provide a wide range of adult education courses both certified and non-certified especially NEETS target group

Improve the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas

Indicative Actions

1. Support young people building business and livelihoods in the rural economy, such as farming, fishing, forestry, food hospitality and tourism.
2. Develop a Rural Economic Development Zone (Rural Town Stimulus Programme) through the development of a local strategic economic development plan, developing skills in community leadership, governance and community rural

economic development to support the development and implementation of the plan.

3. Develop a programme of capacity building for rural communities initiated by local government in partnership with local development structures in line with proposal in PPF.
4. Enhance social enterprise support in local areas to ensure that social enterprises are “investment ready” at all stages of their development including start up, early stage development and growth phases.
5. Improve and integrate the Rural Transport Programme (RTP) into the overall public transport system. The Commission recommends ongoing and comprehensive monitoring of the programme in order to ensure that it is meeting the transport needs of rural Ireland going forward.
6. Employ a multi-agency approach to re-skilling and up skilling of rural dwellers taking into consideration availability of and access to opportunities: and that all skills strategies should actively consider the needs of rural dwellers.
7. Develop capacity building skills required in order to ensure full and comprehensive participation by all communities in rural economic development planning processes and implementation should be an integral part of the development processes at local level. The responsibility for this should rest within the revised local economic development systems proposed in PPF.
8. Develop a local and regional tourism destinations directory to complement the national destinations directory on a multi-sectoral approach. This should be complemented by a destination management and marketing initiative.
9. Develop an indigenous renewable energy business with a particular focus on their potential for economic development.

LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN

Stages in the preparation of the Local Economic and Community Plan

Nest Steps

Stage 1

Preparation

- Establish and analyse the socio-economic evidence base
- On foot of this evidence develop a socio-economic statement for the county and develop high level goals for the integrated LECP
- Advisory Steering Group to prepare SPC & LCDC to adopt the statement for Public Consultation

Stage 2

Public Consultation

- Undertake a Public Consultation (4 weeks) on the socio-economic statement and high level goals
- Revise the Statement and refer to the Municipal Districts and Regional Assemblies
- Advisory Steering Group to prepare, and the SPC & LCDC to adopt the revised statement for submission to MDs and RAs

Stage 3

Develop the Objectives and Actions

- Develop detailed objectives for the economic and community element of the plan underpinned by clear measurable actions.
- Advisory Steering Group to prepare, SPC & LCDC to agree the objectives and actions.
- Advisory Steering Group to submit a final draft incorporating the statement and goals, objectives and actions for consideration by the MDs and RAs

Stage 4

Finalise Plan

- SPC & LCDC consider and adopt final draft revised as necessary following consideration by the MDs and RAs
- Local Authority to adopt the final draft of the LECP
- Final Plan submitted to the Minister and published by the LA

Stage 5

Monitor & Review

- Advisory Steering Group to monitor progress on actions and against measurable target for the evaluation.

The dissemination of the Socio-economic Framework is the beginning of Stage 2 of the process. This is a consultation process to further define and refine the objectives of the plan. All Stakeholders are invited to make submissions on this framework.

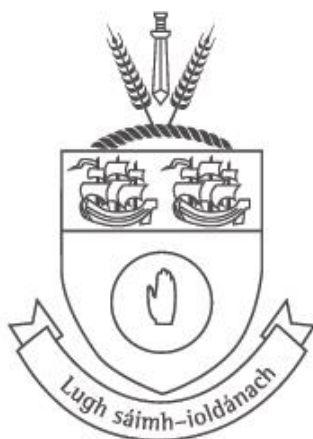
APPENDIX 3

Report on Submissions to the LECP preparation



REPORT

PUBLIC CONSULTATION SUBMISSIONS TO THE LOUTH LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN (LECP)



Comhairle Contae **Lú**
Louth County Council

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	3
Report Format	3
Initial Public consultation: Invitations to submit	3
Submissions Received	4
Summary of submissions received	
1. Age Friendly Full Version	4/5
2.1 Pavee Point Cover Letter	8
2.2 Pavee Point Submission	
3. Irish Traveller Movement	11
4. Carers	12
5. Yellow Flag Programme	13
6. Pay Pal	13/14
7. Inver Colpa Rowing	14
8. Creative Spark	15
9. Irish Wind Energy Association	16
10. Gaelectric	16
11. An Garda Síochána	16
12. Royal College of Physicians of Ireland	17

PREFACE

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 indicated that each local authority should develop a Local Economic Action Plan (LECP) consisting of an integrated economic plan and a community plan. The Louth Economic Community Plan (LECP) is a joint venture between Louth Co Council's Economic Strategic Policy Committee and the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). It will contain high level goals and objectives for the county, which, when adopted, will have a six year lifespan, and will guide policy until 2021.

Apart from setting out the high level economic goals and objectives to be delivered in the county over the next six years, the plan will place a particular focus on promoting the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities through highlighting a series of complementary themes and actions. It will build on the programmes for social and economic advancement already promoted by Louth County Council in its Development Plan, Foreign Direct Investment Action Plans and Housing Strategy in a meaningful way, that is cohesive with the existing and potential abilities of the now formalised Public Participation Network (PPN) through the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and the Economic Strategic Policy Committee (SPC).

Sections 66C(2) and 66C(3) of the Act set out the statutory consultation to be undertaken by the LCDC in developing the economic and community elements of the LECP. In particular, Sections 66C(2) (a)(i) and (3)(a)(i) require that the LCDC consults with members of the public, and publicly funded bodies who may make a contribution to the furthering of the LECP, by publishing a notice inviting submissions to the economic and community elements of the LECP.

Following on from the consultation process, Louth County Council will submit a draft of the economic and community elements of the LECP for the consideration of Municipal District Members and the Regional Assembly who in turn, shall adopt by resolution a statement on the draft for consideration by the elected members and the LCDC.

This is the report on the written submissions received in the Public Consultation Phase of the preparation of the LECP. The content of the submissions received in this phase will be considered in preparing the economic and community elements of the LECP.

REPORT FORMAT

We have treated the summary of the submissions in a manner similar to the established Local Authority Development Plan process. In summarising these submissions, we have identified Recommendations and Opportunities for Action for the purposes of clarity and homogeneity.

The report consists of the following sections:

- I. Initial Public Consultation: Invitations to submit
- II. Submissions received
- III. Summary of submissions received.

(I) INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION: INVITATION TO SUBMIT

Written submissions were invited to the LECP from August 2015 until 26 September 2015. A dedicated email account was made to receive submissions electronically. Invitation was extended to this process via press release, media activity and a dedicated webpage on the Louth County Council website.

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Individual letters inviting submissions were also sent to the LCDC, Louth Economic Forum, Louth Co Council Strategic Policy Committees and a range of statutory service providers, business interests and other service providers throughout the county. They were accompanied by a reader friendly guide to the LECP.

Persons wishing to make submissions were invited to refer to a Socio-Economic Statement prepared by Louth Co Council Economic SPC as part of the LECP to support the public consultation phase. This statement set out currently identified draft Economic and Community indicative objectives.

As this is the inaugural LECP for County Louth, the content of all submissions received has been summarised in order to contribute to an 'up to date' profile of Louth; and existing and emergent socio-economic trends. The submissions have also enabled the formal identification of some of the stakeholders and actors who are fundamental to drive the objectives of the LECP over this 'design of the Plan' period, and into the next in order "to promote the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities"[1].

(II) SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

There were 12 no. submissions received over the public consultation period. The submissions are recorded here in the order in which they were received.

1.1 Age Friendly Full Version	26.01.2015
1.2 Age Friendly Short Version	26.01.2015
2.1 Pavee Point Cover Letter	20.05.2015
2.2 Pavee Point Submission	20.05.2015
3. Irish Traveller Movement	04.09.2015
4. Louth Carers Association	04.09.2015
5. Yellow Flag Programme	04.09.2015
6. Pay Pal	21.09.2015
7. Inver Colpa Rowing	21.09.2015
8. Creative Spark	25.09.2015
9. Irish Wind Energy Association	25.09.2015
10. Gaelectric	28.09.2015
11. An Garda Síochána	05.10.2015
12. Royal College of Physicians of Ireland	07.10.2015

(III) SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

1.0 AGE FRIENDLY CITIES AND COUNTIES (AFCC) PROGRAMME

The submission on behalf of Age Friendly Ireland and the Louth Age Friendly Alliance is in two parts; an executive summary and a full submission.

The Age Friendly Programme highlights the importance of including population ageing and "age friendliness" in planning. Their submission is divided into 6 sections.

1.1 Introduction

Age Friendly Ireland has been recently established to manage the 6 year old national Age Friendly Cities and Counties (AFCC) Programme. The AFCC is hosted by Dublin City Council on behalf of the local government sector.

In Ireland, the trend towards an ageing population is happening at a slower pace than in many other European countries. However, despite a slower rate of growth, this change is happening.

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The CSO predicts that there will be approximately 1.1m people aged 65 years and over living in Ireland by 2036, an increase of almost 250% over the 2006 figure.

By August 2014, under the leadership of Louth County Council, the AFCC was operational in Louth; one of 21 of the 31 local authority areas to have initiated the programme at that time. AFCC will have rolled out to the remainder of the Local Authorities by the end of 2015. This Council acts in an advisory role to the Age Friendly Alliance and is a key stakeholder group which provides the opportunity for older people to share their concerns and experiences, as well as to ensure consistence of services, supports and outcomes for the Age Friendly County Programme.

The Age Friendly Cities & Counties Programme uses a model based on the World Health Organisation (WHO) *Age-Friendly Cities Framework and Guidelines* which were developed in recognition of the challenges and opportunities that will face societies as they respond to an unprecedented growth in the number of older people living in our communities.

1.2 Demography

Globally, average life expectancy at birth has increased by 20 years since 1950 to 66 years and is expected to extend a further 10 years by 2050. In the developed world, the very old (age 80+) are the fastest growing population group. People are experiencing older age differently from their grandparents' generation, enjoying longer lives, better health and more active lifestyles.

The WHO argues that countries can afford to get old only if governments, international organisations and civil society enact "active ageing" policies and programmes that enhance the health, participation and security of older citizens. They stress that the time to act is now.

1.3 How the Age Friendly Programme can help implement the LECP

Urban and rural development and services can contribute to the participation, health, independence and security of older persons in an age friendly county.

1.4 Alignment of the Age Friendly Programme to the LECP

1.4.1 Pillar 1 - Employment & Economic Activity

Older people want the choice to continue working if they wish, in order to increase or maintain income.

Many would prefer a gradual retirement rather than a 'cliff edge' ending.

Evidence does not support that older workers have higher instances of issues such as absenteeism, lower productivity etc.

Key issue: Although the participation of older people in the labour force has increased, the level of self-employment is still low.

Key issue: There are opportunities for businesses to create new markets among the growing "silver market", but many have not yet considered this potential. There are more than 1 million older (60+) people living & shopping in Ireland. Those aged 50+ own 70% of the world's wealth and account for 55% of spending.

The potential of older people as a tourism resource is highlighted; older people are an increasingly diverse group becoming more educated, engaged and more active and seeking tourism destinations and experiences.

Opportunity for LECP action - Business mentor panels: Engage with local Chambers of Commerce to develop a panel of suitably experienced older people that are in a position to offer business set up and development advice and support.

Opportunity for LECP action - Over 65 business start-up support: There is currently a dearth in opportunity for the over 65s to avail of enterprise training and support.

Opportunity for LECP action - TourAge: Use the experience of European programmes such as *TourAge* to harness the growing older adult tourist industry.

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Opportunity for LECP action - Age Friendly Business Programme: Most age friendly practices are low or zero cost. Simple changes such as making a business premises easier to find, enter, move around in it and make purchases are encouraged; as is advertising as an age friendly business.

1.4.2 Education, Training & Skills

Key issue: As people age, they are less likely to participate in formal education, particularly in programmes of education, especially those leading to qualifications.

Key issue: Learning in later life has health and social benefits for older people and is a way of keeping older people active and engaged.

Key issue: Evidence shows that ageing does not reduce adults' capacity for learning and that the brain benefits from mental exercise and exposure to new experiences throughout life in order to remain vital.

1.4.3 Social Inclusion & Poverty

Key issue – Income: In 2007, 73 per cent of older people were dependent on social transfers for three-quarters or more of their household income, which compares to 15 per cent of working age adults. (ESRI 2010) Social welfare pensions account for 54% of gross income, occupational and private pensions contribute 24% of income and income from work and self-employment makes up 11% of income. (Office of Social Inclusion 2008)

In recent years, the majority of older people have been taken out of poverty through the improvement in the value of the state pension. However, in the current economic situation, the challenge is to ensure that the state pension remains above the poverty level.

Key issue – Social Isolation: One of the main determinants of health and wellbeing is a sense of social inclusion or feeling part of a network of family, friends and community. Research finds that the health risks associated with lower levels of social integration are comparable to those of smoking, high blood pressure and obesity.

Key issue – Intergenerational Contact: Increasing social distance between generations. There has been a growing tendency for the generations to associate with and value their contemporaries to the exclusion of other age groups; an increased emphasis on self-sufficiency also contributes to intergenerational 'distance' as do more geographically dispersed families.

1.4.4 Climate Change & Environment

Local authorities can improve older people's well-being and quality of life by basing their planning decisions and resource allocations on the known needs of older people. Physical changes that often accompany ageing, such as reductions in vision, hearing, or difficulty in depth perception, as well as physiological changes such as reduced muscle mass or slower reflexes can pose risks for older people when they are out and about in their community. The ideal for older people is a compact community with locally available facilities and services that are environmentally sustainable.

1.4.5 Health & Wellbeing

Key issue - Access to services: this factor is important in helping older people remain living independently in the community, against evidence that people experiencing unmet need for services and support were more likely to develop more serious problems, which potentially lead to admission to hospital or nursing home.

Opportunity for action – Evaluate the age-friendliness of significant buildings: e.g. hospital and health care centres; do they have adequate seating and are appointments organised with distance and transport? An audit of centres could be undertaken with the Older Peoples Council. A checklist of essential features is available on <http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Age-Friendly-PHC-Centre-toolkitDec08.pdf>

Example of existing initiative – *Older People Remaining at Home (OPRAH)*: Age Friendly Ireland is currently rolling out the implementation of a programme which will investigate the feasibility of a new approach to the provision of care in the community.

Example of existing initiative – *The Health Fitness and Wellbeing Initiative*: This initiative is in the Fingal Age Friendly County Strategy developed by the Sports Development department in the Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown in association with Fingal County Council and the members of the Fingal Senior Citizen's Forum.

Example of existing initiative – *Parlours*: The Parlours Initiative is an access to information scheme currently operating in four locations across Louth; two in Dundalk and two in Drogheda. The Parlour is a place where older people can drop-in at any time for a chat or to get advice and information on any of the services available in the community; health, housing, transport, lifelong learning, leisure and exercise opportunities etc., which facilitate inclusion and wellbeing in later life.

Example of existing initiative – *Cúltaca*: The Parlours Initiative complements the existing Cúltaca programme, an independent service dedicated to improving the quality of life and wellbeing of people over 65 years of age. There are currently two Cúltaca working in Dundalk. Over the past three years the Cúltaca have worked with over five hundred older people, providing a range of supports depending on the need and circumstances of each person.

1.5 National Policy Context

The population is generally ageing and other issues associated like health; the Centre for Ageing Research & Development in Ireland (CARDI) has argued that the number of people needing specialist care will increase from 12,270 to 14,502 to 2021 from 2006 numbers.

1.6 Current National Government Approach

Evolving national policy (Health Ireland, National Positive Ageing Strategy and Putting People First, among others) points to the increasing importance of population ageing and in particular to the need for collaborative and innovative solutions to respond effectively to same.

By placing the interests and needs of older people at the heart of policy, planning and programmes whole communities will benefit. That is because what is essential for older people is good for everyone: everybody likes to have access to services and leisure opportunities locally, near to where they live, and close to their social networks of family, friends and neighbours.

The National Positive Ageing Strategy was launched in April 2013 and aims to create conditions which support individuals and families to plan and prepare for older age. It has four goals: remove the barriers to participation; support people as they age to maintain, improve or manage their physical and mental health and wellbeing; enable people to age with confidence, security and dignity at home; and support and use research about people as they age to better inform policy.

The National Positive Ageing Strategy is consistent with the whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approach to health and wellbeing adopted by Healthy Ireland, and it addresses the broader determinants of health.

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2.0 PAVEE POINT

The submission on behalf of Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre is accompanied by a cover letter. The submission is in two parts: an executive summary and a full submission.

Pavee Point highlights the importance of recognising and including Irish Travellers and Roma in the LECP. Their submission is divided into 4 sections and has had regard to Draft guidelines for the preparation for the community element of the Local Economic and Community Plans.

Key message: Delivering services based on equality does not mean 'treating people the same', but designing and implementing programmes that are inclusive, culturally appropriate, and appropriate to the needs of groups in society, including Travellers and Roma. This leads to better outcomes for disadvantaged groups, including Travellers and Roma.

2.1 Introduction

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre ('Pavee Point') is a national voluntary, or non-governmental, organisation committed to the attainment of human rights for Irish Travellers and Roma.

The submission proposes that the actions in the submission could, if implemented, enable local government to meet its positive duty and demonstrate its commitment to inclusion and community wellbeing. Pavee Point urges that achieving equality of outcome should be a key objective of the LECPs, and should be included in the guiding principles and objectives for the LECPs.

Pavee Point welcomes the principles of the LECP plan making process and urges that these principles underpin all aspects of the planning process for the LECP.

Pavee Point adds the following community development principles of empowerment, solidarity, and collective action to achieve positive social change regarding inequality, social exclusion and poverty. It urges that these should also be guiding principles in the development of the LECPs.

Pavee Point believes that the local economic and community planning process provides an opportunity to put in place a co-ordinated and inter-agency approach across a range of services which have the potential to address barriers and issues affecting Travellers and Roma.

2.2 Travellers & Roma in Ireland

This is a submission on the profile and experiences of Travellers and Roma in Ireland and key issues affecting them. The number of people enumerated as Irish Travellers in Census 2011 was 29,573; an increase of 32% since census 2006 nationally. Their population increased in Louth over that period alongside all counties apart from Limerick and Waterford.

Census 2011 reports that the general age profile of Travellers is lower than the population as a whole (average age of Travellers was 22.4 compared with 36.1 years for the overall population).

The situation of Roma in Ireland is very intricate and complex. There are an estimated 5,000 Roma in Ireland from countries including Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. However, there is very little accurate data available as Roma ethnicity is not collected in immigration, employment, or other Government statistics. Nor is Roma ethnicity included in the 'ethnic and cultural background' question in the Census.

Research by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) in 2012 found that in 11 EU countries; 1 in 3 Roma are unemployed, about 90% of the Roma live in poverty and about half of the Roma said that they have experienced discrimination in the past 12 months

2.2.1 Health

In 2010, 'Our Geels', the All Ireland Traveller Health Survey (AITHS) was published by the Department of Health. Key findings are highlighted. Amongst them life expectancy at birth for male Travellers is 15.1 and for female Travellers is 11.5 years less than the general population at 61.7 and 70.1 years respectively.

The general healthcare experience of Travellers is not as good as the general population, with communication cited as a major issue by both Travellers and service providers. Moreover, a lack of trust in services is a recurring theme.

Travellers have a greater burden of chronic diseases than the general population. Just under half of all Travellers feel discriminated against.

Suicide rates are nearly 7 times higher in Traveller men compared with the general male population. Suicide accounts for 11% of all Traveller deaths.

2.2.2 Accommodation

In Census 2011 there were 7,765 households where some or all of the occupants indicated they were Travellers (and of which 1,874 contained some persons who indicated they were not Travellers).

Between 2006 and 2011, the percentage of Traveller households residing in caravans or mobile /temporary structures halved from 24.7% to 12.3%. In 2011, 920 households with Travellers resided in such temporary accommodation.

A Pavee Point commissioned study in 2013 noted that Travellers live in smaller and more overcrowded homes than the settled community.

2.2.3 Employment, Enterprise and the Traveller Economy

Unemployment in the Irish Traveller community was 84.3% in 2011; an increase from 74.9 per cent five years earlier. The Census 2011 reports that 19% across the whole population are unemployed.

Research undertaken by the *Equal at Work* initiative in 2003 identified the range of barriers experienced by Travellers with regard to progression in the labour market, including; literacy, educational qualifications, (particularly where the Leaving Certificate is concerned), ageism; (particularly those who have not had the opportunity to complete the Leaving Certificate) prejudice in relation to where people live, and a lack of confidence.

Research from Pavee Point and elsewhere identifies a number of key features of the Traveller economy which is not so much the particular economic activities in which Travellers engage, but the distinct manner in which these activities are organised.

Travellers and other ethnic minority groups including Roma, experience barriers in accessing supports for enterprise, while the regulatory/ legislative infrastructure has had the effect of undermining the Traveller economy.

2.2.4 Education

The 2011 Census highlights lower education attainment by Travellers decreasing markedly relative to the general population throughout primary, secondary and third levels.

The Report on the First Phase of the Evaluation of DEIS (2011) found that the educational attainment of Travellers remains significantly lower than that of their settled peers in both reading and mathematics. The magnitude of the difference between the scores of the two groups is large in every case.

The 2012 State of the Nation's Children report found that Traveller children, immigrant children and children with a disability are more likely to report being bullied at school.

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2.2.5 Key Policy Issues

Key Issue – Habitual Residence Condition: Habitual residence is a condition which applicants must satisfy in order to qualify for certain social welfare assistance payments. Pavee Point notes that this condition is having a disproportionate and devastating impact on Travellers and Roma in Ireland. It raises serious human rights concerns and the condition must be reformed.

Key Issue – Traveller Ethnicity: Until Travellers' ethnicity is recognised by the State, Pavee Point believe that difficulties for the community will remain.

Key Issue – Ireland's National Traveller Roma Integration Strategy: Ireland's National Traveller Roma Integration Strategy was submitted in 2012 (on foot of a requirement for all EU Member states to submit a strategy). However, Traveller and Roma representatives had no involvement in the development of the strategy; no funding has been associated with any of the actions; and no targets and monitoring provisions have been specified as part of the policy framework of the plan.

Pavee Point has also called for a coordinated approach in the form of a Traveller and Roma Agency in Ireland, or at a minimum a Traveller Unit.

2.3 The Local Economic and Community Plans

Recommendation – Inclusion of Traveller representation on the LCDC: Pavee Point wishes that each LCDC includes participation and membership of Traveller organisations.

Recommendation – Inclusion of Traveller Representation on the SPC: Pavee Point calls for the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for economic development to include representation of Traveller interests.

Recommendation – Inclusion of traveller Representation Joint steering Group: Pavee Point calls for Traveller interests to be represented on the joint steering group established to oversee the integrated economic and community elements of the LECP.

Further Recommendations

Pavee Point notes that the LECP will identify economic priorities and will determine how enterprise and Traveller economy supports are delivered, through the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs). They set out crucial elements:

- *General policies and programmes* as well as group-specific (targeted) initiatives to support Travellers in enterprise, mainstream labour market and the Traveller economy.
- *Formal and visible recognition* and acknowledgement of the potential of Travellers and Roma entrepreneurs, the Traveller economy and Traveller and Roma specific enterprise and their role in tackling unemployment.
- *Enterprise supports* catering for the specific needs of Travellers and Roma targeting the employment of trainers and mentors from Traveller and Roma communities. They also advocate collaboration with Traveller organisations in designing, delivering and promoting targeted supports and programmes.
- *Abolition of all unnecessary regulatory barriers to enterprise.* The LECP should ensure that all proposed policies and regulations be subject to equality or social impact assessment, and regulatory impact assessment.
- The LECPs should ensure *the gathering of information* on the needs and participation of Travellers in enterprise support programmes.
- *The role and importance of the Traveller economy and entrepreneurship* should be included in all social inclusion and LECP provisions.
- The LECP should include *specific provision for support mechanisms for social enterprises* that are developed by Travellers, or by Traveller organisations.

2.4 Principles for Effective Inclusion

Recommendation – *Cultural Identity*: Travellers and Roma communities have a right to a cultural identity. This should be recognised and reflected in LECP strategy development and in implementation measures for these policies.

Recommendation: *Data collection*: The LECP must put in place a system for capturing data on the participation of Travellers and Roma (as well as other minority ethnic groups) in all thematic areas and actions within its remit. This would include mandatory implementation of an ethnic identifier. Pavee Point has supported the design and implementation of ethnic identifiers in Ireland.

Recommendation: In developing high-level needs, opportunities, objectives and associated indicators, Pavee Point wishes that provision be made for disaggregation of all data, needs, objectives, targets and indicators to include Travellers and Roma. Gaps in data that will arise (owing to a lack of ethnic identifiers across most local and national organisations) must be acknowledged as a gap in the LECP and an important priority, as the absence of this data impedes the work of the LCDC and local authority in developing their respective local and economic elements of the plan.

Recommendation - *Preparatory actions and consultation*: Identify barriers that are likely to exist for Travellers (including consideration of different age groups, gender etc.) as a 'one size fits all' approach will not be sufficient.

Recommendation - *Equality/Social impact assessment*: Equality proofing and impact assessment should be a fundamental part of the process of developing the plan and should be undertaken with Traveller and Roma representative organisations and other disadvantaged groups.

Recommendation – *Training for Inclusion*: The above recommendations are to be undertaken by local authority staff and all LCDC members should be made fully aware of the context in which Travellers and Roma live in Ireland. Anti-racism and cultural awareness training should be provided and participation should be mandatory, and repeated at regular intervals for all staff, LCDC and SPC members.

Recommendation – *Recruitment & Monitoring*: Criteria for employment and job descriptions should include provisions for a commitment to anti-racism and equality across the local authority as a whole (as well as implementation bodies for the LECP). There are examples of good practice in positive action for Travellers' recruitment in Ireland within the public sector e.g. the civil service internship programme for Travellers, South Dublin County Council.

Recommendation - *Positive Action Programme*: A positive action measure with respect to any future employment opportunities for Travellers and Roma should be a key policy for the LECP and actions arising from them.

Recommendation – *Innovative Measures*: Traveller and Roma representative organisations have the potential to contribute to development of good practice and effective services in Ireland, through exploratory research, piloting and development of initiatives. We would recommend that the LECPs support innovative approaches, and work with organisations such as Pavee Point in their development. These could include targeted measures and programmes delivered in cooperation with Traveller organisations around enterprise and entrepreneurship or other joint initiatives and programmes.

Communique International October 2015 for Louth County Council

3.0 IRISH TRAVELLER MOVEMENT

A submission made on behalf of the Irish Traveller Movement requesting the rollout of the Yellow Flag Programme as an action in the Louth LECP.

This Yellow Flag Programme was pioneered by the Irish Traveller Movement in 2008 and promotes interculturalism, equality and diversity in the whole-school programme; allowing schools to apply them to the day to day running of the school, working with students, staff, management, parents and wider community groups.

Recommendation; Specifically the Irish Traveller Movement requests an *action to support the growth of the programme in Louth* by making a provision within the LECP and or other council budget allocations for the programme to be carried out initially in 2 schools in September 2016 and then from 2017 (in 5 schools per year in Louth).

4.0 LOUTH CARERS' ASSOCIATION

A submission made on behalf of the Louth Carers' Association.

The Carers' Association is Ireland's national voluntary organisation for and of family carers in the home. The Association aims to provide family carers with emotional and practical supports; to promote the interests of family carers and those receiving care in the home; and to lobby and advocate in an effort to gain recognition and support for carers' invaluable contribution to Irish society. In recent years carers have been adversely and disproportionately affected by spending cuts.

This submission recognises that Louth County Council has an essential and a positive role to play in enabling carers and care recipients to lead fuller lives and engage with their communities in a meaningful way. It sets out 4 recommendations for inclusion in the LECP and the local authority's discharge of their revised responsibilities arising from Local Government reform in 2014.

4.1 Recommendation: *Carer-proofing Louth County Council plans and programmes* to ensure that the potential impact on family carers is considered

Several examples of local authority driven physical environment and service actions for this recommendation are provided: allocating larger disabled parking spaces and painting them bright blue, and building accessible playgrounds.

4.2 Prioritising the funding of the Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme

The Association welcomes the reorientation of healthcare away from institutional-based settings in favour of care at home. Such a shift is not possible, however, without recalibration of the basic supports necessary to sustain people with care needs at home.

Recommendation: Louth County Council can work to address these issues by providing sufficient resources at a local level for the operation of the Housing Grant Scheme and ensuring the 20 percent contribution required from the County Council is ring-fenced; by seeking to ensure an adequate supply of accessible housing; through introduction of protocols linking health and housing policies which will ensure that funding for Housing Adaptation and Mobility Aid Grants reflect the increasing number of people cared for at home; and by protecting funding for the Senior Alert Scheme.

4.3 Recommendation: *Extension of Local Property Tax exemptions to include households where high level care is provided*

Carers' contribution must be incentivised rather than penalised. Despite being the greatest source of care provision, current exemptions to the Local Property Tax include only nursing homes, hospitals and charity-owned care centres, making no allowances for private households where high level care is provided.

4.4 Recommendation: *Ensuring water affordability strategies are in place to support Family Carers with high essential water needs*

In advance of 2019, when a fully-established Irish Water is scheduled to take over responsibility for water services, The Carers Association Louth is calling on Louth County Council to lobby for the allocation of a special free medical allowance which will reflect the increased essential water needs of caring households, and to support vulnerable households through measures such as bill capping, budgeting tools and pre-termination exemptions.

Communique International October 2015 for Louth County Council

5.0 YELLOW FLAG PROGRAMME

The submission on behalf of the Yellow Flag Programme is in two parts; a cover letter and attached submission document. This submission requests that the Programme is supported by becoming an action in the Louth LECP.

This Yellow Flag Programme has a proven record of creating whole school change with regard to the promotion of inclusion and diversity. It is a very cost-effective targeted initiative which they believe will advance the commitment by Louth County Council to implement policies and actions to promote equality and integration.

The Yellow Flag Programme submission notes that the programme has indirect benefits; notably that it encourages and promotes active partnership and engagement and effective communication between teachers, students, parents and community. As such, the benefits of the programme are taken 'beyond the school walls'.

It mentions that relationships are also built as part of the programme with community groups in the area. The programme will link in with and add value to the local community initiatives already happening on the ground in Louth.

Recommendation: As in the submission at 4.0 by the Irish Traveller Movement, this submission requests an action to support the growth of the programme in Louth by making a provision within the LECP and or other Council budget allocations for the programme to be carried out initially in 2 schools in Sept 2016 and then from 2017 (in 5 schools per year in Louth).

6.0 PAY PAL

A submission on behalf of Pay Pal highlighting their role as a major local employer, and membership of the Louth Economic Forum (LEF), and Chair of the LEF Education and Training Committee.

PayPal is a large multinational corporation that employs 1,000 people in their site in the Xerox Technology Park, Dundalk and expects that figure to grow to 1,400 by 2018.

The submission sets out 4 recommendations for inclusion as objectives the LECP.

Recommendations**6.1 *Creating and Sustaining Employment***

Multinationals like PayPal have a positive impact through direct job creation and in spin-off trade and services. Indecon research shows that for every single job created by companies like PayPal, an additional 0.71 extra in-direct jobs are created in the economy. Consequently, it is vital that Louth be marketed as an attractive location for foreign direct investment and a great place to live.

The LECP objectives should be reflective of the Louth FDI Plan to include reference to the creation of a global corporate brand for Louth and the investment in existing amenities and infrastructure in corporate and business parks in the County.

6.2 *Creating and Sustaining Employment and Self Employment Opportunities*

'Connecting Communities', a key policy plan launched in November 2014, as part of the National Broadband Plan, identifies the goal of having 100% of premises in Dundalk, Ardee and the vast majority of Drogheda, covered by commercial broadband operators by 2016. This is a welcome move and one which PayPal believe should be reflected in the County's LECP; enabling more entrepreneurs and SMEs to operate online in order to create sustainable employment and self-employment opportunities.

The LECP objectives are requested to include an official commitment to enacting the Broadband Plan, prepared by the Louth Economic Forum.

6.3 Supporting Training and Upskilling

PayPal has strong links with Dundalk IT and the Louth Meath Education and Training Board and chairs the Louth Economic Forum's Education and Training committee. There is a huge opportunity for industry and education and training providers to work in collaboration creating 'work-ready' graduates.

The LECP objectives are requested to include a campaign of organising events targeted at children and teenagers that encourage them to select and enjoy subjects like languages, science, maths, engineering and technology.

The submission gives examples of initiatives in Louth and elsewhere: a 'Maths Trails' in local parks, a STEM initiative which would commission the production of a video for students encouraging them to look at these subjects as future career opportunities, and the celebration of a European Language Week, similar to how the Council promotes and engages on Seachtain na Gaeilge. The submission notes that the Grammar School in Dundalk is celebrating European Day of Languages 2015 as part of a pilot programme and asks that this be extended to all schools in County Louth.

6.4 Tackling Social Exclusion

PayPal is an inclusive employer and is aware of the developing multicultural nature of new communities in County Louth. The LECP objectives should include an objective in relation to the development of inclusive communities in the context of active citizenship.

The submission goes on to give examples of how social inclusion initiatives can work: e.g. creation of a 'Welcome to County Louth' pack, leaflet or information page on the Council's website. It encourages the Council to conduct an information awareness campaign, via social media, encouraging residents and citizens, particularly those new to the area, to register to vote ahead of future elections and referenda.

7.0 INVER COLPA ROWING CLUB

This submission is presented on behalf of the Inver Colpa Rowing Club for the purpose of embedding the River Boyne and its associated opportunities into the LECP. It presents an opportunity to reconnect people and place/ connecting communities and their social and cultural heritage in keeping with Strategic Objectives 6 & 7 of the Core Strategy of the Draft Louth County Development Plan.

The Inver Colpa Rowing Club trains new members and teaches river skills. It adds to the quality of life of all its members and reinforces the strong maritime, fishing and rowing heritage in Drogheda.

Recommendation -The submission requests a *boat house facility* for the Rowing Club in Drogheda for use too by the wider community and sets out views and suggested actions using the format of the Indicative actions identified in the Socio Economic Statement prepared by the Council to support the public participation phase of the Louth LECP.

Recommendation – *Reconnect Drogheda Town and River Boyne*: More use of the river will encourage and improve the social economy along the river.

Communique International October 2015 for Louth County Council

Recommendation – *Regeneration of Boyne Waterway*: The Rowing Club sees a need for further regeneration of the urban waterway stating that the Club and other activities along the river breathe new life into this neglected part of the town, and can allow for opportunities to have a series of events year round.

Recommendation – *Target funding*: By prioritising actions for the River, funding sources can be targeted.

Indicative Economic Objective: To promote sustainable urban and rural developments to include the river Boyne as a way of regenerating Drogheda and better integrate the river with the town through river stakeholder participation.

Indicative Economic Objective: To facilitate infrastructure investment to perhaps include the River Boyne as a part of the transport network.

Indicative Economic Objective: To continue to encourage the provision of education and training to perhaps include for cultural training/ tradition skills – rowing, boat building/ coracles etc.

Indicative Economic Objective: To develop and maximise on the tourism potential within the region to include the Boyne as an attraction without reference to administrative boundaries. There is an opportunity here too to enhance Louth's reputation as a premier host for sporting events; the Boyne Coastal Boat Race / Boyne Swim, capitalise on the collaborations within the Drogheda Maritime Festival and the Boyne Boat Race and host a series of other rowing events throughout the year.

Indicative Economic Objective: To develop and sustain Arts, Culture and Heritage includes reference to broadening access to and appreciation of cultural riches of the county e.g the submission emphasises the value of integrating the River Boyne with Drogheda town.

Indicative Community Objective: To provide appropriate structures for active participation by citizens in decisions that affect their lives to include for inclusion of coastal communities/ stakeholders as part of a coastal and river working group in the public participation network.

Indicative Community Objective: To build a high quality health & wellbeing environment to include reference to using the River as a means of providing activities to improve wellbeing through rowing/ sport/ swimming and include the Rowing club in a sports strategy.

Indicative Community Objective: To promote active participation and inclusion in society may include better linkages between local development companies and the Rowing Club to provide additional training to club members and trainers.

Indicative Community Objective: To Improve Quality of Life for residents and visitors to include consideration of the abilities of the River and Club to promote these Indicative actions.

8.0 CREATIVE SPARK

A submission on behalf of Creative Spark a Community Enterprise Centre setting out the following recommendations:

The Economic and Enterprise Role of the LECP should reference the Community Enterprise Centres (CECs), of which there are four in the County (Ardee Business Park, Creative Spark, Millmount Development Centre, and The Mill) and recognise their ability to deliver objectives of the LECP.

Communique International October 2015 for Louth County Council

The CECs also have a role in delivering education and training and entrepreneurship within the County.

Creative Spark note too that they in particular, have a role in developing and sustaining Arts, Culture & Heritage which will underpin the quality of life for individuals and communities

The reference to and utilisation of the CECs are stated to be relevant in light of the recent Protocol agreed between Enterprise Ireland and the National Association of Community Enterprise Centres (NACEC) regarding the LEOs, where each organisation has agreed to collaborate to the benefit of SMEs and community enterprises in each county.

9.0 IRISH WIND ENERGY ASSOCIATION (IWEA)

The submission on behalf of the Irish Wind energy Association (IWEA) is in two parts; a cover letter and attached submission document.

The IWEA is Ireland's leading renewable energy representative body

The IWEA is committed to promoting the use of wind energy in Ireland and beyond. Renewable energy development is a vital part of Ireland's strategy to tackle two major challenges facing us today – ensuring a secure supply of energy and combating climate change.

Ireland's target under EU Directive is for renewable resources to account for 16% of total energy consumption by 2020. In line with these commitments, DCENR (Department of Communications Energy and Natural Resources) has a target for electricity from renewable energy sources (RES-E) of 40% by 2020.

The submission supports the Draft Louth County Development Plan statements, policies and objectives in relation to renewable energy and notes that Plan's integration with the LECP.

Recommendation: *Education and Training.*

The submission refers to the LECP Indicative Economic Objective to continue to encourage the provision of education and training within the County and suggests an **additional** Indicative Action that: meeting the needs for growth of renewable energies through training programmes and skills development will be met locally. The submission notes that IWEA has already, through the Wind Skillnets programme supported and provided range of training opportunities for the wind and renewables sectors in Ireland.

The submission refers to the LECP Indicative Economic Objective to facilitate infrastructure investment that underpins employment growth. It suggests that there should be an indicative action within this objective to promote renewable energy developments in order to achieve and encourage economic growth.

10.0 GAELECTRIC

A submission on behalf of Renewable Energy Provider Gaelectric supporting the IWEA submission and emphasising that they believe Louth is well placed in terms of its geography, wind resource and available infrastructure to be a renewable hub for Ireland in the future which in turn will support economic growth and jobs for generations to come.

11.0 AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNÁ

Submission on behalf of An Garda Síochána, Louth Division by the Chief Superintendent. This submission attests to their review of the Socio-Economic Statement prepared as part of the LECP.

Communique International October 2015 for Louth County Council

The submission refers to the community elements of the Plan and submits that their role in community policing and pre-active community engagement programmes should be highlighted.

The submission notes An Garda Síochána's commitment to tackling alcohol and substance abuse via pro-active policing measures and their role in addressing the antisocial behaviour issues that sometimes arise.

The submission refers specifically to the existence of An Garda Síochána Schools Programme as a benefit to the education objectives within the LECP.

The submission notes An Garda Síochána's positive contributions toward building safer communities via programmes like; Neighbourhood Watch, Business Watch, Text Alert and Community Alert.

The Policing Plan for the Louth Divisions has many initiatives that promote community elements of the LECP and as such An Garda Síochána area committed to promoting the indicative goals and objectives as set out in the LECP Socio Economic Statement.

12.0 ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

A submission on behalf of Royal College of Physicians of Ireland enclosing their policy statement entitled 'The Race we don't want to win – Tackling Ireland's obesity epidemic' prepared by their Policy Group on Obesity in August 2015.

The submission draws attention to their public policy recommendations for the physical and built environment that encourage people to be active and make healthy food choices.

Section 4.1 of the policy statement is entitled 'Planning for a healthy physical environment' and has 7 no. recommendations for the physical and built environment summarised in the context of the LECP here as:

Recommendation: Provision of green area, playgrounds and other community leisure facilities to promote physical activity and remove barriers to the full use of local sports and leisure facilities.

Recommendation: Promotion of active travel in rural and urban area which benefits human health and climate change mitigating.

Section 5.3 of the policy statement is concerned with Actions for 'Community Settings' and sets out two recommendations summarised in the context of the LECP as follows:

Recommendation: Sports people and bodies to use their profile and influence in communities to promote physical activity and consumption of healthy foods.

Recommendation: Health professionals to use their leadership role in communities to promote healthy lifestyles.

[1] This is the quote used in the statement put out by Louth for public submission phase and is from the Action Programme for Effective Local Government – Putting People First 2012, which itself is linked to the LG 2014 Act

ENDS

APPENDIX 4

The making of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP): Statutory requirements



Summary of Local Government Act, S.66C: Preparation and making of Louth LECP

SUMMARY PROVISIONS OF ACT	SCHEDULED ACTIONS TO MEET PROVISIONS	INDICATIVE TIMELINE
<p>Consult with the public, report on that consultation.</p> <p>Consult with public authorities & publicly funded bodies.</p> <p>Consult with anybody proscribed under 66H (regulations /guidance by Minister re LECPs).</p>	<p>Integrated Priorities and Goals set.</p> <p>Consultation complete.</p> <p>Draft Goals and Objectives presented to SPC & LCDC</p>	<p>Ended by December 2015</p>
<p>Local Authority will submit the draft economic and community elements of the LECP to each Municipal District (MD) (3 no.) and Regional Assembly (RA).</p> <p>Each will adopt a narrow statement on the draft elements.¹</p>	<p>Economic & Community 'elements' in the form of Goals, Objectives & Actions of Draft LECP circulated to Municipal Districts and Regional Assembly</p>	<p>End January 2016</p>
	<p>Early February 2016</p>	<p>Statements of Municipal Districts & Regional Assembly presented to SPC & LCDC for consideration</p>
<p>The Plan shall integrate economic & community elements and shall be made (reserved function) by members with or without amendment.</p> <p>Any amendment confined to consistency with (i) core statement and development plan or (ii) regional strategy.</p>	<p>After adoption of statements by MDs & RA and any statements by SPC & LCDC the LECP adopted at next full Council Meeting</p> <p>Mid March</p>	<p>LECP MADE</p>

¹ Municipal District and Regional Assembly statements on the economic and community elements of the LECP must be confined to their consistency with (i) the core strategy & development plan, (ii) regional strategies and (iii) the opposing elements i.e. economics elements consistency with community elements and visa versa.

APPENDIX 5

Acronyms



Acronyms

CEDRA	Commission for Economic Development in Rural Areas
NACEC	National Association of Community Enterprise Centres
AA	Appropriate Assessment
ACA	Architectural Conservation Area
APSR	Areas with Potential Significant Flood Risk
BIC	Business Innovation Centres
BMW	Border, Midland & Western
BRA	Border Regional Authority
CAWT	Co-operation & Working Together
CBI	Confederation of Business Industry
CEDRA	Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas.
CFRAMs	Catchment based Flood Risk Assessment & Management Plans
CLÁR	Ceantair Laga Árd Riachtanais
CNS	Community Network Services
CREDIT	Centre for Renewable Energy Dundalk Institute of Technology
cSAC	Candidate Special Areas of Conservation
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSP	Core Strategy Policy
CYPSC	Children and Young Peoples' Services Committee
DCENR	Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources
DOELG	Department of Environment, Community and Local Government
DEDCO	Dundalk Enterprise Development Company Ltd
DECLG	Department of Environment, Community & Local Government
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DFI	Disability Federation of Ireland
DETI	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment
DkIT	Dundalk Institute of Technology
DSP	Department of Social Protection
DRD	Department of Regional Development
DWIRP	Drinking Water Incident Response Plan
ECJ	European Court of Justice
ENVO	Environment Objective
ENVP	Environment Policy
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESCs	Energy Supply Companies
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESDP	The European Spatial Development Perspective
ESP	Economic Strategy Policy
ESRI	Economic & Social Research Institute
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FRMPs	Flood Risk Management Plans
FRP	Flood Risk Policy
GDA	Greater Dublin Area
GDI	Gateway Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
GHG	Green House Gases
GNP	Gross National Product
GSI	Geological Survey Ireland
GVA	Gross Value Added
HDA	Habitats Directive Assessment
HEI	Higher Education Institute
HLA	Housing Land Availability
HLR	Housing Land Requirement
HPSU	High Potential Start-Up
HR	Human Resources
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICBAN	Irish Central Border Area Network
ICLRD	International Centre for Local & Regional Development
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IDA	Industrial Development Agency
IFS	Irish Financial Services
JPC	Joint Policing Committee
INFO	Infrastructure Objective
INFP	Infrastructure Policy
INI	Invest Northern Ireland
IoT	Institute of Technology
IP	Internet Protocol
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IROPI	Imperative reasons of overriding public interest
ISNI	Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland
ITI	Intertrade Ireland
LAs	Local Authorities
LDS	Local Development Strategy
LYIT	Letterkenny Institute of Technology
LMETB	Louth Meath Education Training Board
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
MANS	Metropolitan Area Network (Telecommunications System)
NAP	National Action Plan
NBS	National Broadband Scheme
NDP	National Development Plan
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NERDATF	North East Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force
NI	Northern Ireland
NIAH	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
NIRSA	National Institute for Regional & Spatial Analysis
NRA	National Roads Authority
NSMC	North South Ministerial Council
NSS	National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020
NSSPI	National Strategies for Social Protection & Social Inclusion
NUI	National University of Ireland

NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
NW	North West
OECD	Organisation for Economic Competitiveness & Development
OPW	Office of Public Works
PDA	Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended
POM	Programme of Measures
POWCAR	Place of Work Census & Anonymised Records
PPN	Public Participation Network
PRFA	Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments
R & D	Research & Development
RAL	Remedial Action List
RAPID	Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment & Development
RBD	River Basin District
RBMPs	River Basin Management Plans
RDS	Regional Development Strategy
RDSNI	Regional Development Strategy Northern Ireland
RES-E	Renewable Energy Sources
RFRA	Regional Flood Risk Appraisal
RPG	Regional Planning Guidelines
RTDI	Research, Technological Development & Innovation
S & E	Southern & Eastern
SDZ	Strategic Development Zones
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SFRAs	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SG	Strategic Goal
SICAP	Social Inclusion Community Action Programme
SIO	Social Infrastructure Objective
SIP	Social Infrastructure Policy
SME	Small & Medium Enterprises
SOLAS	Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna
SPA	Special Protection Areas
SPC	Strategic Planning Committee
SPGs	Strategic Planning Guidelines
SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats
TSO	Transmission System Operator
UFW	Unaccounted for Water
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation
VDS	Village Design Statement
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WiSAR	Wilderness Search & Rescue
WSIP	Water Services Investment Programme

APPENDIX 6

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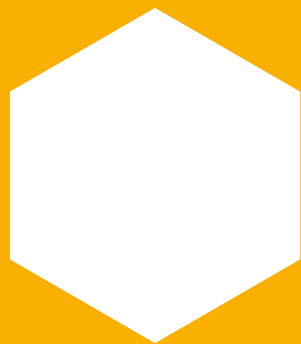
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APPENDIX 7

Screening for SEA and AA



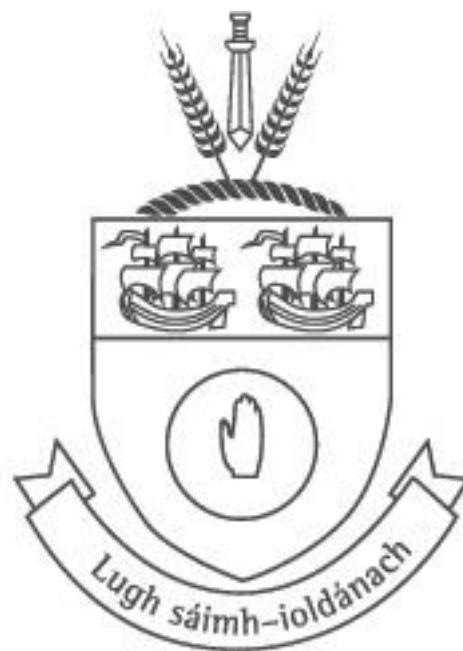


LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

DRAFT

LOCAL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY PLAN 2016 -2022 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report

*A Plan for the promotion of economic and
community development in County Louth*



Comhairle Contae **Lú**
Louth County Council

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 REQUIREMENT FOR SEA Page 1
2.0 STATUTORY CONTEXT Page 2
2.1 Relationship of Draft Louth LECP with other plans / programmes
3.0 STATUTORY CONTEXT Page 3
3.1 European Directive
3.2 Domestic SEA Statutory Provision
3.3 SEA Process
4.0 REQUIREMENT TO CARRY OUT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT Page 4
5.0 CONCLUSION Page 5

LECP DRAFT Economic Elements

February 2016

REV_3

1.0 REQUIREMENT FOR STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

Europe requires an assessment of the likely significant effects of public plans and programmes on the environment. The process undertaken to assess the effects of plans and programmes on the environment is provided for in the relevant directive, and is called the 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.”¹

This is the statement of consideration of SEA for the Draft Louth LECP 2016 -2022.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAFT LOUTH LECP

The LECP is a primary new tool for local government to advance their economic and community functions identified in 2012 under the *Action Programme for Effective Local Government – Putting People First* and crystallised in the Local Government Reform Act 2014. The vision of the Action Programme is *“to promote the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities.”* LECP Guidance requires that *“This overarching vision needs to inform each LECP. Accordingly, the LECP should not, itself, be formulated as a high level strategy but, rather, needs to be as action-focused as possible, recognising that delivery will be through the programmes of other stakeholders as well as by the local authority.”*

The requirement for the making of LECPs for each local authority area is contained in section 44 of the Local Government Reform Act that commenced 1st July 2014 by sections 66A – 66H of the Local Government Act, 2001 as amended.

Section 66B of the Local Government Act, 2001 states that the LECP shall be for:

- “(a) the promotion of economic development in its functional area, and*
- (b) the promotion of local and community development in its functional area.”*

In 2015, the Minister issued guidelines on the making of integrated LECP (Circular LG 1/2015 and AL 1/2015). In June 2015, these guidelines were formally published and issued under Sections 66H and 128E of the amended Local Government Act that provide for the LECPs to be made in accordance with such guidance.

There is no consent regime associated with the LECPs. They are to complement and enunciate existing and emergent national, regional and local economic and community policies including land use and development objectives.

¹ *Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities, Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG), November 2004*



2.1 Relationship of Draft Louth LECP with other plans / programmes

According to the guidelines on LECPs *“As the framework for the economic development and local/community development of the local authority area...²”* the Draft LECP does not direct land use policy for the county. *“It is required to complement the City/ County Development Plans that set important statutory frameworks in relation to, for example, appropriate locations for new development such as business parks, retail development and industry. The LECP needs to be consistent with the broad locational policies of the Development Plan and not present alternate or competing proposals that would lead to inconsistency.³”* Land use policy and objectives for County Louth after regional and national policies, are contained in the extant land use Development Plans and Local Area Plans for which SEA and AA processes were carried out and accompany each Plan.

- The Louth County Development Plan 2015 – 2021;
- Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan 2011-2017;
- Dundalk and Environs Development Plan 2009-2015;
- Louth County Council, Dunleer Local Area Plan 2010 – 2016;
- Louth County Council, Ardee Local Area Plan 2010 – 2016.

The Draft Louth LECP is therefore complementary to the extant Development Plans themselves and has been prepared having regard to higher order spatial plans; the National Spatial strategy (NSS) 2002 – 2022 and Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022 for the Border Region (RPGs). This complementary role is characterised by consistency with, and deference to, the objectives of land use / spatial plans and government programmes. *“Each LECP must be consistent, in the first instance, with the existing Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and subsequently with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs) to be prepared by the Regional Assemblies and a new National Planning Framework which, it is envisaged, will replace the National Spatial Strategy. The LECP must also be consistent with the statutory City/County Development Plan, and should be consistent with current Government policy in relation to economic development (at present the Medium Term Economic Strategy 2014 – 2020 (MTES) and Enterprise strategy as set out in Making it Happen – Growing Enterprise for Ireland⁴), as well as having regard to other national policy initiatives under the Action Plan for Jobs.”*

In accordance with the requirements of the guidelines on LECPs the Draft Louth LECP has observed existing and emergent plans and programmes by national, regional and local government in its preparation. Preparation has included a socio-economic statement for public and stakeholder consultation to inform preparation of the community elements of the plan by the Local Community Development Committee, and the economic elements of the plan by the SPC for Economic Development and Enterprise, before integration into the Draft LECP for presentation to the local authority for adoption.

² Guidelines on Local Economic and Community Plans, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, By circular LG 1/2015 / AL 1/2015 January 2015 and at para. 3 by Community Division of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, June 2015

³ *ibid.*, para. 20

⁴ Superseding documents: Enterprise 2025, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, November 2015

3.0 STATUTORY CONTEXT

3.1 European Directive

Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment is known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.

The SEA Directive requires that plans or programmes prepared or adopted by an authority and required by legislation be subject to an SEA. Mandatory SEA is required for plans which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste/ water management, telecommunications, tourism, town & country planning or land use, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in the EIA Directive. Mandatory SEA is also required where Appropriate Assessment of a plan or programme is required. A companion Appropriate Assessment Screening Report exists for the Draft Louth LECP 2016 -2022; to be read in conjunction with this SEA and the Draft LECP.

3.2 Domestic SEA Statutory Provision

The SEA directive was transposed into Irish legislation by Statutory Instruments (SI).

- SI No. 435 of 2004 European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004. Amended by SI No. 200 of 2011 European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011, and
- SI No. 436 of 2004 Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004. Amended by SI No. 201 of 2011 Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

The Draft Louth LECP is within the scope of SI 435 of 2004 (as amended), since the draft plan is subject to preparation and/or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level.

3.3 SEA Process

In 2003, ahead of the making of the first SEA Regulations in Ireland the EPA published a report entitled *Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland (2001-DS-EEP-2/5)* that identified a process to undertake SEA to comply with the SEA Directive.

Following the making of the 2004 Regulations, Circular Letter BC 14/2004 in November 2004 from the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government (DHLG) informed regional and local authorities of the making of; *Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities*. This process was refined by the updated Regulations and by Department of Environment Community and Local Government Circular PSSP6/2011 issued in July 2011.



The steps in SEA taking EPA and DHLG guidance together are:

- **Screening** certain plans (determining whether or not SEA is required)
- **Scoping** the Environmental Report (determining the range of environmental issues to be covered by the SEA)
- Collection of the baseline environmental data and preparation of an **environmental report**
- The carrying out of **consultations**
- The **integration of environmental considerations** into the plan or programme
- The publication of information on the decision (**SEA Statement**)

4.0 REQUIREMENT TO CARRY OUT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Article 9 of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended set out the instances where SEA will be required.

Article 9(1) through 9(4) are the specific circumstances of plans which generate the requirement for SEA. These paragraphs of Article 9 are repeated in table 1 below and the response of the Draft Louth LECP is set alongside.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Draft Louth LECP 2016 - 2022 does not set the framework for future development consent of projects and therefore, as per the provisions of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended SEA is not required.

"Article 9 Requirement to carry out environmental assessment."	Response of Draft Louth LECP 2016 - 2022
<p>"(1) Subject to sub-article (2), an environmental assessment shall be carried out for <u>all plans and programmes</u></p> <p>(a) <u>which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or</u></p> <p>(b) <u>which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site.</u>"</p>	<p>The Draft Louth LECP does not set a framework for future development consent of projects that attract the requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Statement of that assessment (EIS). Land uses and activities for which consent is required by reason of the location, nature and / or extent of development, and for which an EIA is determined by statute or the competent consenting authority to be required, are consented by processes set down in environmental and planning statutes separate from that which proscribes LECPs.</p> <p>The Draft Louth LECP 2016 – 2022 sets out integrated priorities and economic and community goals, objectives and actions for the County of Louth that are consistent with and complement existing land use plans and socio-economic policy. As such the LECP defers to existing development objectives.</p> <p>An Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening exercise for the Draft Louth LECP, February 2016 has determined that there is no predicted potential for significant effects on the identified likely zone of influence by the Draft Louth LECP 2016 – 2022, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. The Appropriate Assessment Screening (Stage 1) has concluded that no further assessment stages are required.</p>
<p>"(2) A plan or programme referred to in sub-article (1) which determines the use of a small area at local level or a minor modification to a plan or programme referred to in sub-article (1) shall require an environmental assessment only where the competent authority determines that it is likely to have significant effects on the environment and, for this purpose, the competent authority shall make any necessary determination."</p> <p>[Prior to making a decision under this paragraph competent authority required to give notice to certain environmental authorities in a proscribed format]</p>	<p>The Draft Louth LECP 2016 – 2022 is for the entirety of the local authority administrative area of County of Louth and not a sub-area of that authority.</p> <p>The Draft Louth LECP is the inaugural LECP of the county and as such is not a modification to, nor will conflict with, or vary any existing plan.</p>
<p>"(3) A competent authority shall determine whether plans and programmes <u>other than those referred to in sub-article (1), which set the framework for future development consent of projects, are likely to have significant effects on the environment.</u>"</p> <p>[Prior to making a decision under this paragraph competent authority required to give notice to certain environmental authorities in a proscribed format]</p>	<p>There is no consent regime associated with an LECP. The provisions of the LECP cannot be relied upon to consent developments or activities.</p>
<p>"(4) A competent authority shall, in determining on a case by-case basis under sub-article (2) or (3) whether a plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, take account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 1 and any submission or observation received in response to a notice under sub-article (5)."</p>	<p>Not relevant as Article 9(2) nor 9(3) apply to the Draft Louth LECP.</p>

Table 1 Article 9(1) through 9(4) of European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended against the Draft Louth LECP 2016 – 2022. (*emphasis added*)

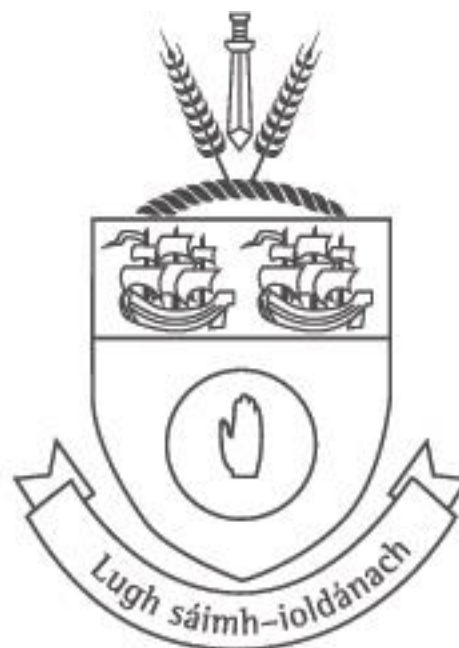


LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

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LOCAL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY PLAN 2016 -2022 Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report

*A Plan for the promotion of economic and
community development in County Louth*



Comhairle Contae **Lú**
Louth County Council

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 REQUIREMENT FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT Page 1
1.1 Louth Natura 2000 Network
2.0 STATUTORY CONTEXT Page 2
2.1 European Directives
2.2 National Provisions for Natura 2000 and AA
2.3 AA Guidance
3.0 STAGES OF APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT Page 4
4.0 AA SCREENING Page 4
4.1 Step 1: Description of Plan or Project
4.2 Step 2: Natura 2000 Sites
4.3 Step 3: Assessment of Likely Effects
4.4 Step 4: Screening Conclusion and Statement
5.0 CONCLUSION Page 15

DRAFT LECP

February 2016

REV_2

1.0 REQUIREMENT FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT (AA)

European Directives concerned with the protection of wildlife, including birds, and their habitats have had the effect of designating certain spatial areas for the conservation of species and / or their habitats. Such sites are part of a Europe wide network identified as the Natura 2000 network of sites that according to the European Commission now covers 18 % of the EU’s land area and almost 6 % of its marine territory, and is the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world.

These relevant Directives are the Birds (1979) and Habitats (1992) Directives and have been transposed into Irish law.

The Habitats Directive, allowing for the designation of conservation sites, also requires that the possible nature conservation implications of any plan or project on the Natura 2000 network be assessed in order for that project or plan to proceed. This assessment is known as Appropriate Assessment (AA). Louth County Council has prepared the Draft Louth Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016 – 2022, and this is the consideration of the Appropriate Assessment (AA) of that plan.

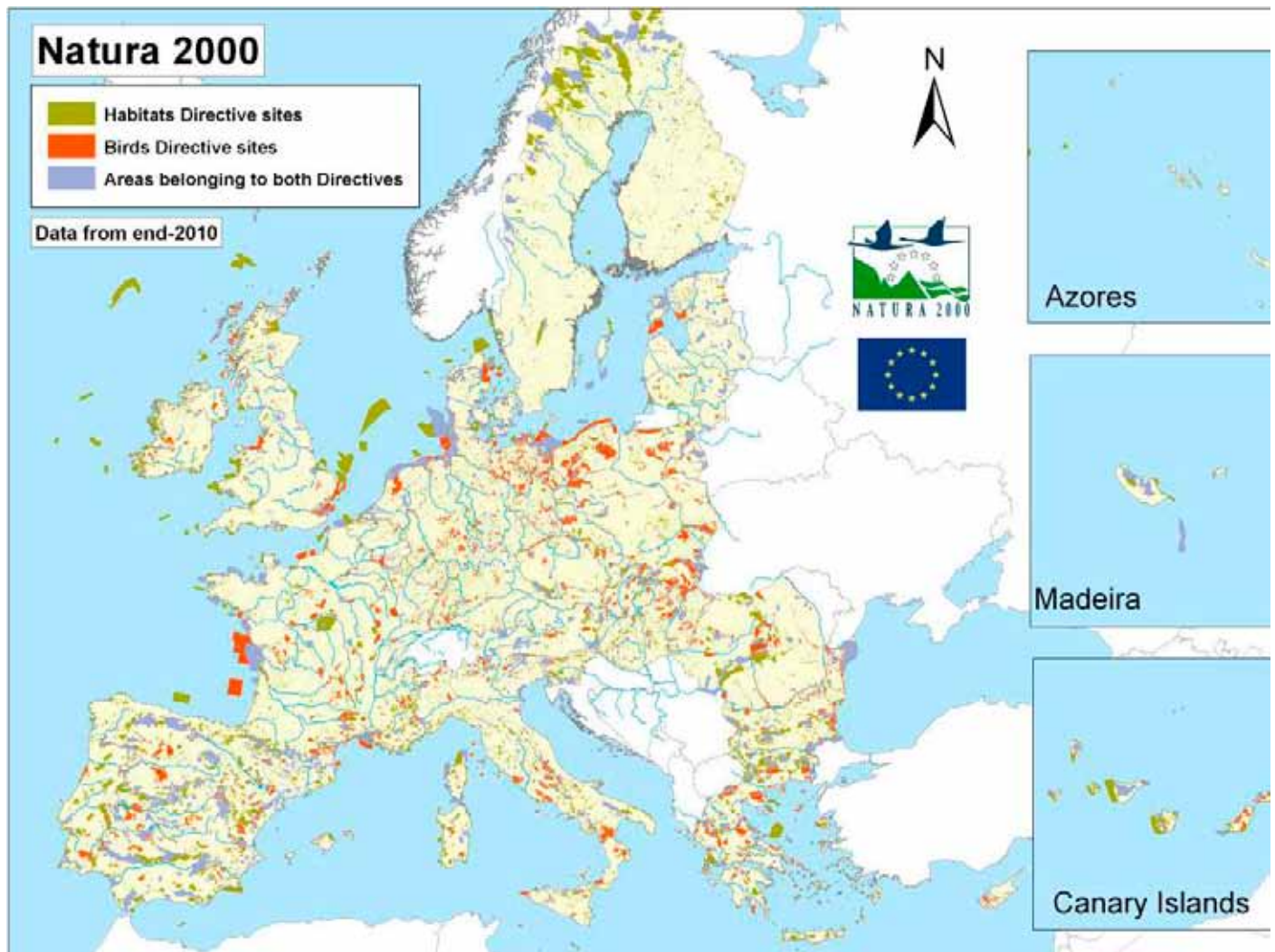


Figure 1 Europe’s Natura 200 Network at 2010¹.

¹ Biodiversity Priorities for Ireland (2014-20), (for the EU Biodiversity Strategy for Natures Conservation to 2020), A. Bleasdale, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht



2.0 STATUTORY CONTEXT

The primary European Directives for the conservation of the natural environment and protection of species requiring the consideration of AA in plan making are: the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive.

2.1 European Directives

The Birds Directive is the oldest piece of EU legislation concerned with the natural environment and was adopted as Directive 79/409/EEC in April 1979. This Directive has since been amended in 2009 as 2009/147/EC. The purpose of the Birds Directive is to protect habitats, including migratory habitats, for endangered birds' species.

The Habitats Directive was adopted in May 1992 as 92/43/EEC for the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. The Habitats Directive aims to promote the maintenance of biodiversity, taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements.

Annexes of both Directives set out the species and habitats that are protected and in what manner. Together, the Birds and Habitats Directives require that sites are designated for nature conservation purposes when the criteria for designation are met and that each site designated is provided with conservation objectives. These sites, acting as a network across all member states, are identified as Natura 2000 sites².

Article 6 of the Habitats Directive is concerned with the management and protection of Natura 2000 sites. Paragraphs (1) and (2) require that member states take appropriate conservation measures to maintain and restore habitats and species for which Natura 2000 sites have been designated, and avoid activities which may significantly disturb species or deteriorate habitats that are protected in that network.

6(3) and 6(4) set out the procedure to be followed when planning new developments that might affect a Natura 2000 site. New development can extend to a project or plan and each is required to ascertain whether it is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site(s). Where a significant effect(s) are likely to occur then the plan or project must undergo Appropriate Assessment (AA).

Responsibilities on member states under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive to designate and manage the Natura 2000 network and co consider the impact of plans and projects on that network are supported by Commission guidance on interpretation and implementation matters:

- *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, European Communities, 2000;
- *Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, European Communities, 2002;
- *Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC Clarification of The Concepts of: Alternative Solutions, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall Coherence*, Opinion of the Commission, January 2007.

² In this document Natura 2000 sites are referred to as such or European sites.

2.2 National Provisions for Natura 2000 and AA

The Birds and Habitats Directives have been transposed into Irish law. The primary sources of the transposition of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directives are:

- The European Communities (Birds and Habitats) Regulations 2011. These consolidate the EC (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 to 2005 and the EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010³, and
- Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, is concerned with development projects and land use plans and sets out the obligations of planning authorities in their role as the competent and proposing authority.

Designated areas of protection to form part of the Natura 2000 network in the Republic of Ireland are called Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). Statute provides that the designation of such areas is itself subject to a process to final confirmation by statutory instrument. However, from first identification of these European sites they are provided with conservation objectives. In this way even candidate or proposed European sites hold the same status as sites that are confirmed, and are subject to the same consideration for AA in the plan making process.

SACs are designated as they hold Annex 1 habitats or Annex 2 species as set out in the Habitats Directive. In the Republic of Ireland, SACs exist for 59 types of Annex 1 habitats and 26 Annex 2 species. Within each of those Annexes priority habitats and species are set down. In Ireland, there may be 16 priority Annex 1 habitats but no priority species protected under SACs. According to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), SACs in Ireland cover around 13,500 km² which translates to 16% of the country's land area. However, as an island, only about 53% of that designated area is land.

SPAs are selected for designation because they are areas used by Birds Directive annexed birds. In Ireland, there are SPAs for 33 Annex 1 birds. There are currently proposed or confirmed 154 SPAs recorded in Ireland.

In Ireland the responsibility for the designation and management of the Natura 2000 Network lies with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht through the NPWS.

2.3 AA Guidance

The Irish government has provided guidance on implementation matters of Article 6 and the matter of Appropriate Assessment (AA).

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities*, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009 (updated 2010)⁴.

³ Proposals to update and consolidate the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 were made for public consultation 27.11.2014. On 25th March 2015, The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 were made to commence 1st April 2015.

⁴ In Northern Ireland guidance is continued in: *The Appropriate Assessment of Plans in Northern Ireland - A guide to why, when and how to do it*, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Dodd A.M., Cleary B.E., Dawkins J.S., Ferry C.D. and Williams G.M. (2008)



3.0 STAGES OF APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT (AA)

European guidance⁵ proposes four stages to Appropriate Assessment repeated here:

Stage One: Screening — the process which identifies the likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant;

|_ STAGE 1 _____

Stage Two: Appropriate assessment — the consideration of the impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site’s structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts;

|_ STAGE 2 _____

Stage Three: Assessment of alternative solutions — the process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site;

|_ STAGE 3 _____

Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain — an assessment of compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed (it is important to note that this guidance does not deal with the assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest).

|_ STAGE 4 _____

The EC guidance notes that the above stages are iterative; *“Each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. If, for example, the conclusions at the end of Stage One are that there will be no significant impacts on the Natura 2000 site, there is no requirement to proceed further.”*

4.0 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT (AA) SCREENING

Stage 1 AA Screening is itself an iterative process further described defined in Irish guidance⁶ as a process that *“involves consideration of the plan or project and its likely effects, and of the Natura 2000 sites and their ecological sensitivities, and the likely interaction between these.”*

The guidance goes on to identify four steps to Stage 1 of the AA process: AA Screening; each of which follows.

4.1 AA Screening Step 1: Description of Plan or Project

The Draft Louth Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) is a 6 year Plan required to be made under the Local Government Reform Act 2014. Ministerial Guidance defines the purpose the LECP is to set out the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the

⁵ The Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, European Communities, 2002

⁶ Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009 (updated 2010)

relevant local authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders. The Plan area extends across the entire area of county Louth.

In the first instance, AA guidance asks if the plan is necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site and if it is not, then the screening process continues. In this instance, the Draft LECP is not for the management of a Natura 2000 site and thus the remainder of this section is given over to the succeeding screening steps.

*“As the framework for the economic development and local/community development of the local authority area...”*⁷ the Draft LECP does not direct land use policy for the county. *“It is required to complement the City/ County Development Plans that set important statutory frameworks in relation to, for example, appropriate locations for new development such as business parks, retail development and industry. The LECP needs to be consistent with the broad locational policies of the Development Plan and not present alternate or competing proposals that would lead to inconsistency.”*⁸ Land use policy and objectives for County Louth, after regional and national policies, are contained in the extant land use Development Plans and Local Area Plans:

- The Louth County Development Plan 2015 – 2021;
- Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan 2011-2017;
- Dundalk and Environs Development Plan 2009-2015;
- Louth County Council, Dunleer Local Area Plan 2010 – 2016;
- Louth County Council, Ardee Local Area Plan 2010 – 2016.

The provisions of these development plans have been observed in the preparation of the Draft LECP in order that the integrated priorities, goals, objectives and actions of the Draft LECP accord with the stated policy and land use intentions of the authority. In this way, the LECP as proscribed, supports the stated land use policy of the county.

4.2 AA Screening Step 2: Natura 2000 Sites

County Louth contains six Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and five Special Protection Areas (SPAs) set out in table 1 below. Figures 2 and 3 are copies of the mapped locations of same from the County Development Plan.

Louth Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)		Louth Special Protection Areas (SPAs)	
Ref. No.	Name/Location	Ref. No.	Name/Location
002306	Carlingford Shore	004026	Dundalk Bay
000453	Carlingford Mountain	004078	Carlingford Lough (shared with County Down UK9020161)
000455	Dundalk Bay	004091	Stabannan and Braganstown
001459	Clogherhead	004080	Boyne Estuary (shared with Co. Meath)
001957	Boyne Coast and Estuary (shared with County Meath)	004232	River Boyne and River Blackwater (shared with Co. Meath)
002299	River Boyne and River Blackwater (shared with County Meath)		

Table 1 European sites (SACs & SPAs) occurring in County Louth

⁷ Guidelines on Local Economic and Community Plans, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, By circular LG 1/2015 / AL 1/2015 January 2015 and at para. 3 by Community Division of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, June 2015

⁸ *ibid.*, para. 20

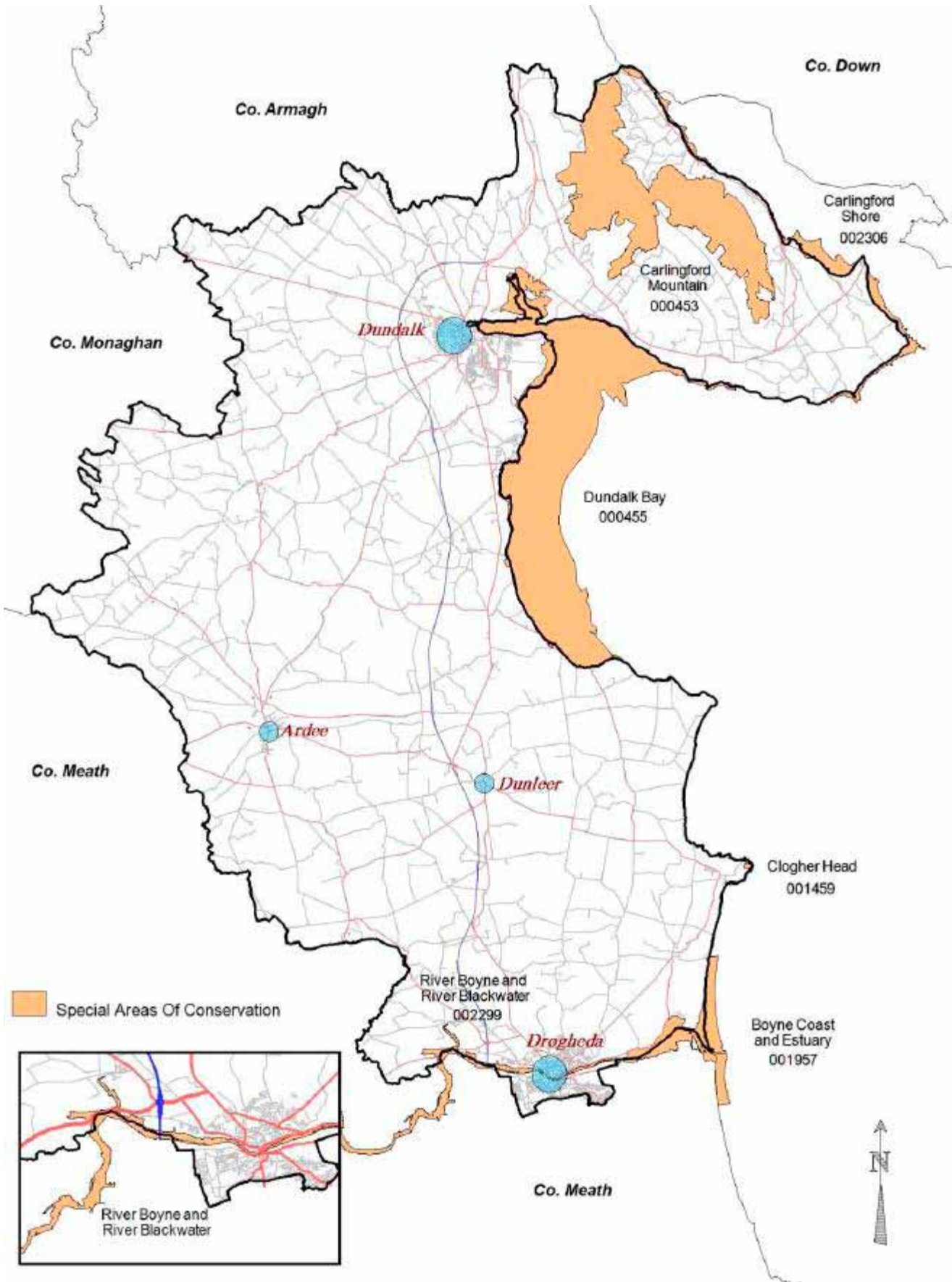


Figure 2 County Louth SACs. Repeat of Map 5.1 of the Louth County Development Plan 2015 – 2021

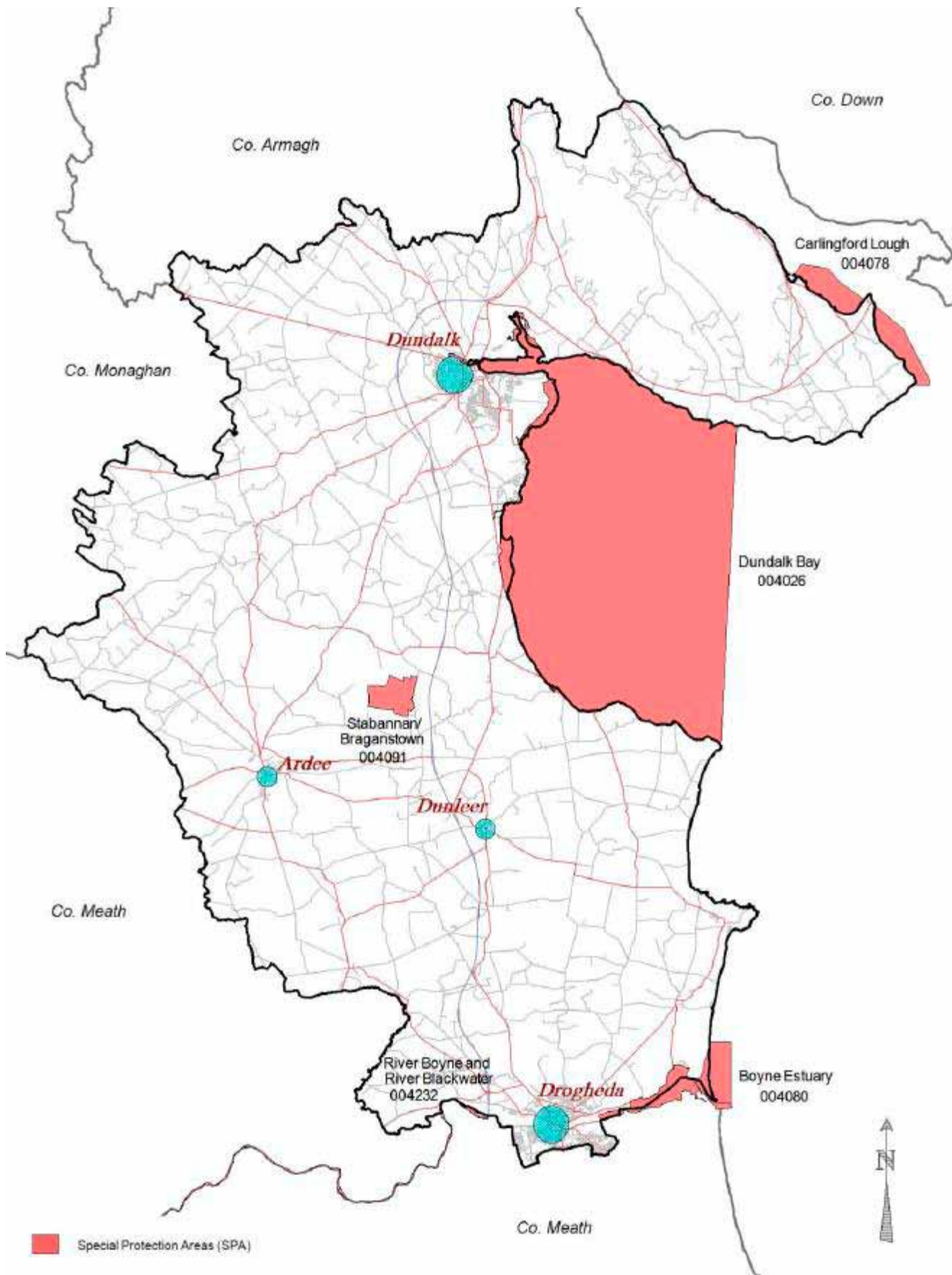


Figure 3 County Louth SPAs. Repeat of Map 5.2 of the Louth County Development Plan 2015 – 2021



A number of the European sites identified extend into neighbouring counties. Two of the six SACs occurring within Louth are shared: Boyne Coast and Estuary; and River Boyne and River Blackwater. Three of the five SPAs are shared: Carlingford Lough; River Boyne Estuary; and River Boyne and River Blackwater.

Current Irish AA guidance recommends distance of 15 kilometres (km) as the likely zone of impact of a plan or project. Figure 4 is a depiction of a 15km buffer zone around County Louth. County Louth shares boundaries with the counties of Down and Armagh that are administered by the Department of the Environment Northern Ireland, via the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) for the purposes of plan making and designating and managing the Natura 2000 network⁹. At January 2016 there were 54 formally designated SACs and 3 candidate SACs in Northern Ireland covering an area of 860 km², and 16 adopted SPAs covering 1,340 km² of land and sea¹⁰. Taken together, this is less than 20% of the area covered by equivalent European sites in the Republic.

The NIEA have provided a map indicating the European Sites occurring within 15km of County Louth repeated as figure 5. Table 2 lists the European sites occurring within the 15km buffer zone of County Louth that have not occurred within table 1 and find that a further 4 no. SACs and 1 no. SPA occur within the county buffer zone area, as here defined.

Louth Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)		Louth Special Protection Areas (SPAs)	
Ref. No.	Name/Location	Ref. No.	Name/Location
UK0030268	Rostrevor Wood (County Down)	004158	River Nanny Estuary and Shore (at Laytown, Co. Meath)
UK0016615	Eastern Mourne Mountains (County Down)		
UK0016620	Derryleckagh (County Down)		
UK0030277	Slieve Gullion (Co. Armagh)		

Table 2 European sites (Natura 2000 network) occurring within 15km buffer zone of Louth

⁹ Valuing Nature -A Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020, NEIA, July 2015

Actions relevant to Natura 2000 network and Carlingford Lough SPA shared with Co. Louth:

Action 17: Develop projects to refurbish Blue Circle Island and Green Island in Larne Lough and Carlingford Lough SPAs to ensure favourable condition by RSPB by 2020 (emphasis added)

Action 20 : Complete the SAC and SPA designation programmes by DoE by 2016 ('designation' of Natura 2000 sites here has the meaning in regulation of making by statutory instrument in RoI)

¹⁰ Classified Special Protection Areas (SPAs) & Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Community Importance (SCI) sites in the UK, 28th Jan. 2016, JNCC

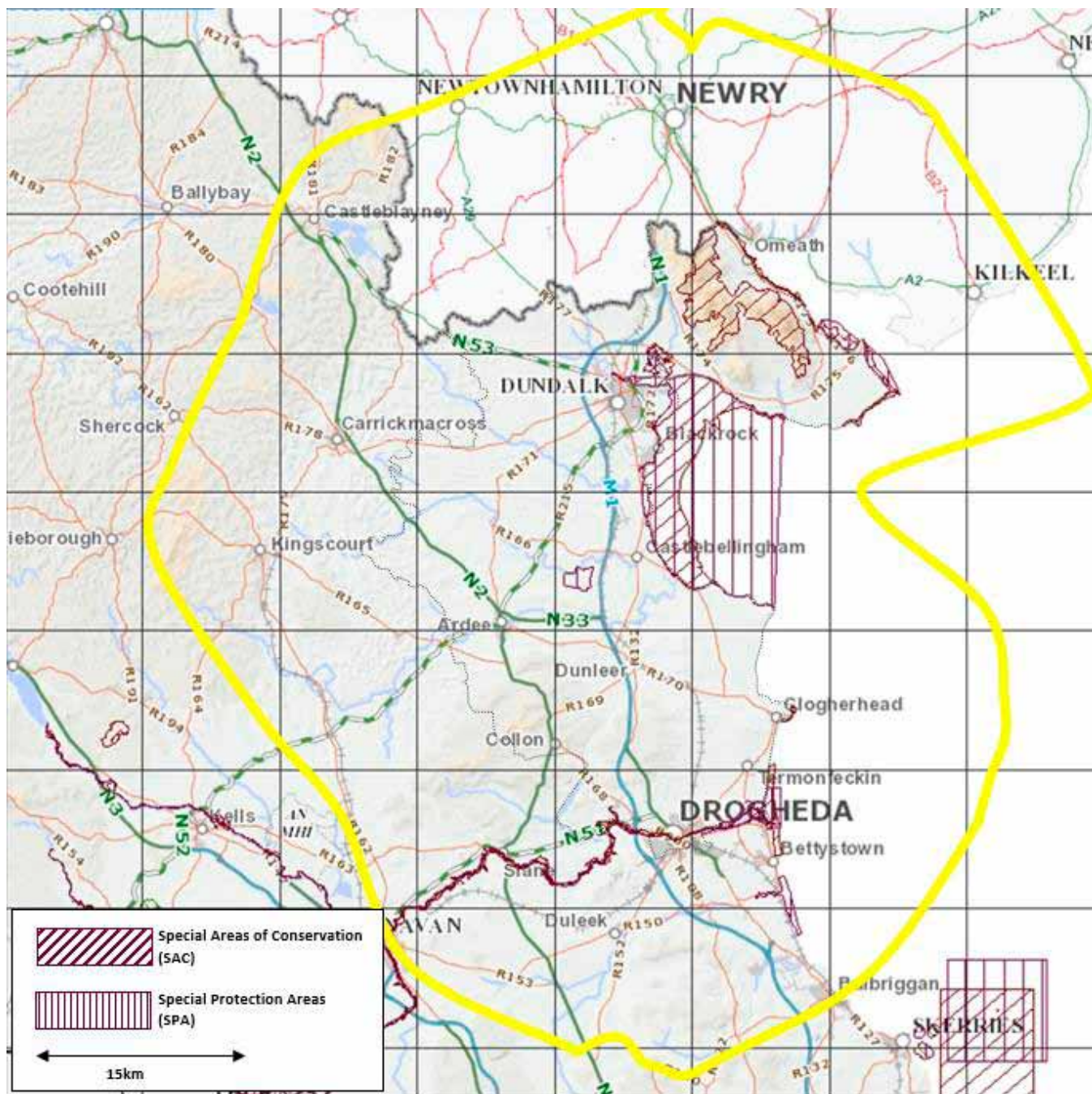


Figure 4 15km buffer zone around Louth indicating presence of European sites (underlying information from NPWS map viewer)

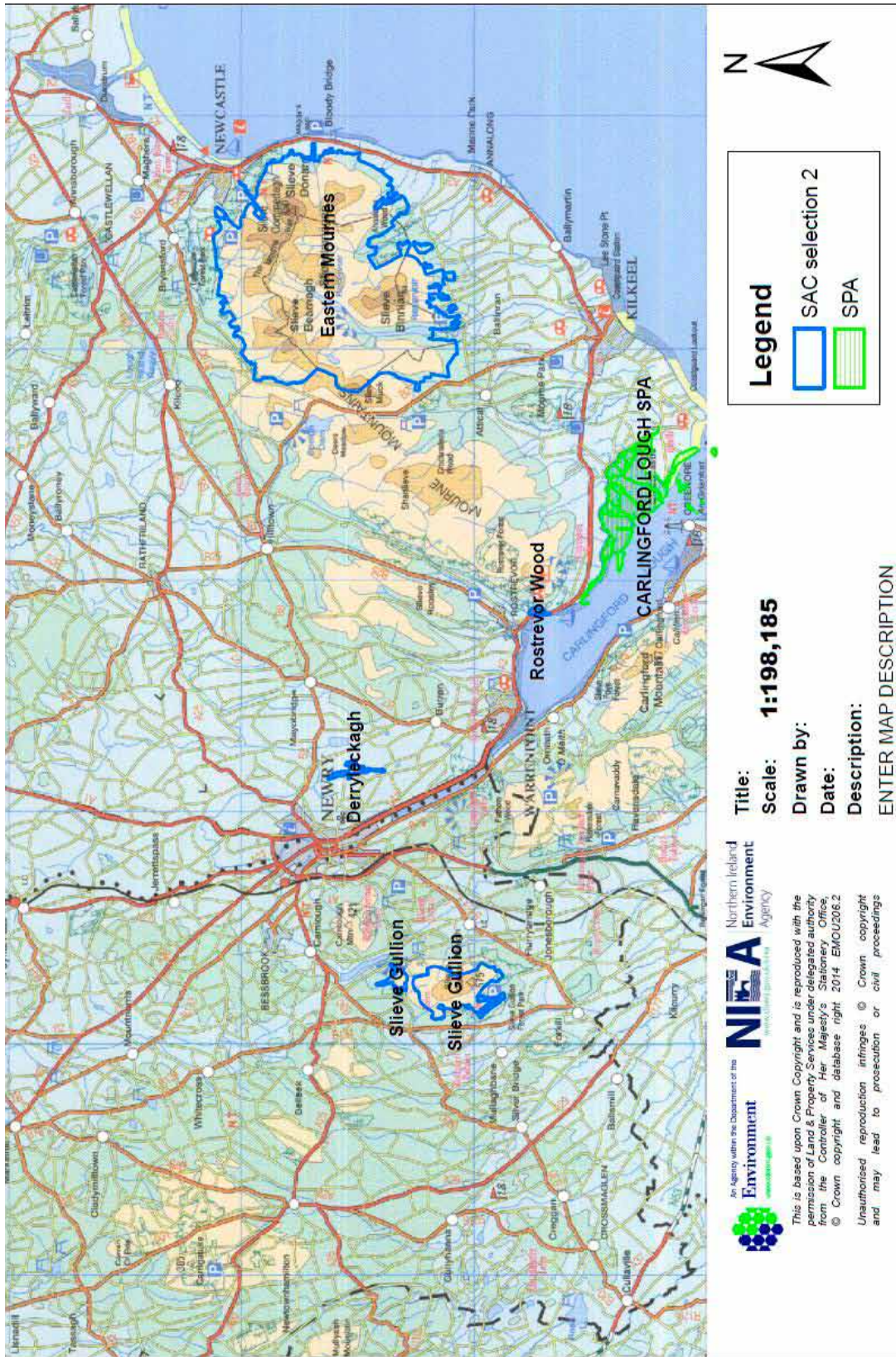


Figure 5 Map entitled N2K sites within 15km of Louth provided by Northern Ireland Environment Agency. Please note map not to scale.



In summary, County Louth for the purposes of plan consideration for AA screening identifies 10 no. SAC sites (only 4 no. are exclusive to the county; 2 no. are shared and 4 no. occur outside the county boundary). Within the same buffer zone are a total of and 6 no. SPA sites (2 no. are exclusive to the county, 3 no. are shared and 1 no. occurs outside the county boundary).

The annexed habitats and species for which each site is selected correspond to the qualifying interests of the sites; from these the conservation objectives of the site are derived. Table 3 sets out the Qualifying Interests or Special Conservation Interests, referred to as features of interest, of each of the European sites identified in table 1 and 2.

Ref. No.	SAC Name/Location	Features of Interest [EC Habitat Code]
000453	Carlingford Mountain, Co. Louth	Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]; Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani) [8110]; Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210]; Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220]
000455	Dundalk Bay, Co. Louth	Estuaries [1130]; Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]; Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]; Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]; Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330]; Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410]
001459	Clogherhead, Co. Louth	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]; European dry heaths [4030]
001957	Boyne Coast and Estuary, Co. Louth and Co. Meath	Estuaries [1130]; Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]; Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]; Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330]; Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410]; Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]; Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) [2120]; Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]
002299	River Boyne and River Blackwater, Co. Louth and Co. Meath	Alkaline fens [7230]; Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]; Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099]; Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106]; Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]
002306	Carlingford Shore, Co. Louth	Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210]; Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]
UK0016615	Eastern Mourne Mountains, Co. Down	Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]; Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands [6150]; Blanket bogs (* if active bog) *Priority feature [7130]; Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani) [8110]; Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220]
UK0016620	Derryleckagh, Co. Down	Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]; Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]
UK0030268	Rostrevor Wood, Co. Down	Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]
UK0030277	Slieve Gullion, Co. Armagh	European dry heaths [4030]

Ref. No.	SPA Name /Location	Features of Interest [EC Bird Species]
004026	Dundalk Bay, Co. Louth	Great Crested Grebe (Podiceps cristatus) [A005]; Greylag Goose (Anser anser) [A043]; Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046]; Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna) [A048]; Teal (Anas crecca) [A052]; Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos) [A053]; Pintail (Anas acuta) [A054]; Common Scoter (Melanitta nigra) [A065]; Red-breasted Merganser (Mergus serrator) [A069]; Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus) [A130]; Ringed Plover (Charadrius hiaticula) [A137]; Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140]; Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141]; Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142]; Knot (Calidris canutus) [A143]; Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149]; Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156]; Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157]; Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160]; Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162]; Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179]; Common Gull (Larus canus) [A182]; Herring Gull (Larus argentatus) [A184]



Table 3 contd...

Ref. No.	SPA Name/Location	Features of Interest [EC Habitat Code]
UK9020161	Carlingford, Co. Down	Branta bernicla hrota (Canada/Ireland) [A674]; Sterna hirundo [A193]; Sterna sandvicensis [A191]
004080	Boyne Estuary, Co. Louth and Co. Meath	Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna) [A048]; Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus) [A130]; Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140]; Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141]; Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142]; Knot (Calidris canutus) [A143]; Sanderling (Calidris alba) [A144]; Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156]; Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162]; Turnstone (Arenaria interpres) [A169]; Little Tern (Sterna albifrons) [A195]; Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]
004091	Stabannan and Braganstown, Co. Louth	Greylag Goose (Anser anser) [A043]
004158	River Nanny Estuary and Shore, Co. Meath	Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus) [A130]; Ringed Plover (Charadrius hiaticula) [A137]; Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140]; Knot (Calidris canutus) [A143]; Sanderling (Calidris alba) [A144]; Herring Gull (Larus argentatus) [A184]; Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]
004232	River Boyne and River Blackwater, Co. Louth and Co. Meath	Kingfisher (Alcedo atthis) [A229]

Table 3 European sites occurring in Louth and within 15km of the county boundary (Features of Interest / Qualifying Features).
[NOTE: for ease of reference, sites are listed in sequential registration order]

4.3 AA Screening Step 3: Assessment of Likely Effects

The AA guidance provides a set of sample impacts and indicators in order to direct an assessment of likely effects and significance of a plan or project on European sites. The AA guidance further advises that a precautionary approach should be employed in assessing impacts and where uncertainty arises potential effects should be considered significant.

Table 4 records the conservation objectives and supporting documents for each of the European sites identified. Final collation of this information was in January 2016.

Table 5 sets out potential likely significant impacts of the Draft LECP on each of the identified European sites.

This assessment of likely significant impacts requires that the Draft LECP integrated priorities, goals, objectives and actions must be considered in combination with other plans and projects in order to determine if a cumulative effect will arise.

As stated at 4.1 the Louth LECP is intended to “complement” the existing County Development Plan and other strategies. In order to set and reach the economic and community goals of the Draft LECP, the actions set down in the LECP have had regard to stakeholder consultation in the making of the LECP and economic, social and community plans, policies and initiatives. In this way, the Draft Louth LECP seeks to stimulate socio-economic advancement of the county population by marshalling and advancing existing government policy and does not propose development, beyond that already envisaged in land use or economic and social development plans and strategies. Proposals set down in the Draft LECP have been screened out to avoid conflict or contravention of adopted policy. Therefore, the Draft Louth LECP, in combination with other plans and projects, will not give rise to development that will have an in-combination effect on European sites, beyond that already assessed in those land use plans.

SAC Name	Ref. No.	Standard Data Form	Site Synopsis	Conservation Objectives	Other Supporting Documents
Carlingford Mountain	000453	Sept. 2014	Version 22.08.2013	Generic 13.02.2015	A Preliminary Report on Areas of Scientific Interests in county Louth, An Foras Forbartha Teoranta, Fahy, 1972
Dundalk Bay	000455	Sept. 2014	Version 31.01.2014	Version 1 19.07.2011 (also for SPA 004026)	Dundalk Bay SAC Coastal Supporting Document, V1, 2011 (unpublished); Dundalk Bay SAC Marine Supporting Document, V1, 2011 (unpublished)
Clogherhead	001459	Sept. 2014	Version 11.10.2013	Generic 13.02.2015	National Survey of Conservation of Irish Seacliffs, 2011 (research paper)
Boyne Coast and Estuary	001957	Sept. 2014	Version 27.11.2013	Version 1 31.10.2012	Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC Coastal Supporting Document, V1, 2012
River Boyne and River Blackwater	002299	Sept. 2014	Rev13 06.01.2014	Generic 13.02.2015	Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC Marine Supporting Document, V1, 2012 (unpublished)
Carlingford Shore	002306	Sept. 2014	Rev13 27.01.2014	Version 1 15.07.2013	
Eastern Mourne Mountains	UK0016615	Dec. 2015		01.04.2015 (V2)	
Derryleckagh	UK0016620	Dec. 2015		01.04.2015 (V2)	
Rostrevor Wood	UK0030268	Dec. 2015		01.04.2015 (V2)	
Slieve Gullion	UK0030277	Dec. 2015		01.04.2015 (V2)	
SPA Name	Ref. No.	Standard Data Form	Site Synopsis	Conservation Objectives	Other
Dundalk Bay	004026	Sept. 2014	04.03.2002	Version 1 19.07.2011 (also for SAC 000478)	Dundalk Bay SPA Supporting Document, V1, March 2011 S.I. 310 of 2012
Carlingford Lough	004078	Sept. 2014	08.02.2004	Version 1 22.08.2013	Carlingford Lough SPA Supporting Document, V1, 2013 S.I. 464 of 2012
Carlingford Lough	UK9020161	Dec. 2015		None (generic default RSPB)	
Boyne Estuary	004080	Sept. 2014	31.03.2005	Version 1 26.02.2013	Boyne Estuary SPA Supporting Document, V1, 2013 S.I. 626 of 2011
Stabannan and Braganstown	004091	Sept. 2014	08.02.2004	Generic 13.02.2015	S.I. 546 of 2011
River Nanny Estuary and Shore	004158	Sept. 2014	01.06.2007	Version 1 21.09.2012	River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA Supporting Document, V1, 2012; S.I. 140 of 2012
River Boyne and River Blackwater	004232	Sept. 2014	25.11.2010	Generic 13.02.2015	S.I. 462 of 2012

Table 4 European sites occurring in county Louth and within 15km of the county boundary (Site data including Conservation Objectives, January 2016)¹¹

¹¹ Headings of Table 4 in format of Irish approach to recording of Natura 200 sites: Standard data Form, Site Synopsis and Conservation Objectives. UK European site data collected in UK Standard Data Forms and separate Conservation Objectives documents (UK underwent wholesale update of standard data forms and European site data reorganisation after 'UK Approach' to updating the UK's Natura 2000 Standard Data Forms, Interim document, December 2015)

Table 5 Potential Likely Significant Impacts of the Draft LECP, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, on each of the identified European sites.	00453 Carlingford Mountain SAC	00455 Dundalk Bay SAC	001459 Clogherhead SAC	001957 Boyne Coast & Estuary SAC	002299 River Boyne & River Blackwater SAC	002306 Carlingford Shore SAC	UK001615 Eastern Mournes SAC	UK001620 Derryleekagh SAC	UK003268 Rostrevor Wood SAC	UK0030277 Slieve Gullion SAC	004026 Dundalk Bay SPA	004078 Carlingford Lough SPA	UK9020161 Carlingford Lough SPA	004080 Boyne Estuary SPA	004091 Stabannan and Braganstown SPA	004158 River Nanny Estuary & Shore SPA	004232 River Boyne & River Blackwater SPA	
<p>Any impact on an Annex I habitat None predicted as no development outside of that envisaged in existing Development Plans</p> <p>Reduction in the area of the habitat or Natura 2000 site No impact envisaged as the integrated Priorities, Goals, Objectives and Actions of the LECP do not propose development or activities in contravention of extant land use plans. Any activities stimulated by the LECP will be subject to relevant licensing, permitting procedures by the relevant authority who will act as a competent authority for AA, if necessary, as part of that authorisation process.</p> <p>Direct or indirect damage to the physical quality of the environment (e.g. water quality and supply, soil compaction) in the Natura 2000 site None envisaged. LECP complements and supports the provisions of existing national, regional and local government policies and plans. Any impacts arising will be not as a result of the LECP and will be subject to the authorisation and environmental screening / consideration processes, including AA, associated with a new or intensified activity or land use which may result in disturbance to EC annexed species or habitats.</p> <p>Serious or ongoing disturbance to species or habitats for which the Natura 2000 site is selected (e.g. increased noise, illumination and human activity) None envisaged. LECP complements and supports the provisions of existing national, regional and local government policies and plans and any impacts arising will be not as result of the LECP and will be subject to the authorisation and environmental screening / consideration processes, including AA, associated with a new or intensified activity or land use.</p> <p>Direct or indirect damage to the size, characteristics or reproductive ability of populations on the Natura 2000 site None envisaged. LECP complements and supports the provisions of existing national, regional and local government policies and plans and any impacts arising will be not as a result of the LECP. They will be subject to the authorisation and environmental screening / consideration processes, including AA, associated with a new or intensified activity or land use.</p> <p>Interfering with mitigation measures put in place for other plans or projects No interference envisaged. The role of the LECP to compliment and enunciate the existing objectives of land use and Natura 2000 management plans supports all provisions of such plans, including mitigation or environmental improvement measures stated therein. The LECP will not therefore undermine mitigation measures of existing land use and environmental management plans nor AA processes of competent authorities in relation to intensified / new land uses or activities.</p>	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None



4.4 AA Screening Step 4: Screening Conclusion and Statement

The AA Screening Assessment has been carried out on the Draft Louth LECP 2016-2021. The European sites constituting the Natura 2000 network in County Louth, and within 15km of the county as the likely zone of influence of the plan have been identified. The qualifying species / habitats giving rise to European site status have been identified and conservation objectives of each of these European sites reviewed against the potential of the Draft LECP, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, to have likely significant impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

The AA screening concludes that there is no potential for significant likely effects on the identified Natura 2000 network likely zone of influence of the Draft Louth LECP 2016 – 2022, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. There is no requirement to proceed to State 2 (AA).

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Stage 1 AA Screening presented here has concluded that the Draft LECP 2016 -2022 shall not give rise to significant effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites. In accordance with the methodological guidance under Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, no further assessment is required.



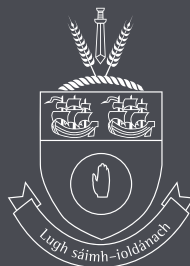


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