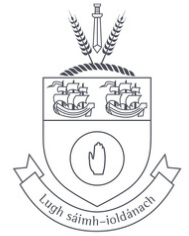


Pre-Draft Strategic Issues Paper



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

For the New
Louth County
Development Plan
2027-2033

Introduction

Louth County Council is commencing the review of the existing and preparation of a new County Development Plan. The plan making process will review and build on the progress made under the current Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied) and will set out the direction for the future growth of the County over a six-year period from 2027-2033.

The publication of this Issues Paper marks the beginning of the plan making process and is the first stage of public consultation.



What is a County Development Plan?

The County Development Plan sets out the overall vision and strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County. It consists of a Written Statement, Maps, Appendices, Record of Protected Structures, and Environmental Reports that sets out the policy framework and parameters against which development proposals are assessed.

The Plan is required to be consistent with national and regional planning and development policies and guidelines.

The making of the County Development Plan is a 'reserved function' and is the responsibility of the elected members of the Council. In the making of a Development Plan, the elected members are restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, statutory obligations and national and regional documents.

Planning and Development Act 2024

The Planning and Development Act 2024 was signed into law in October 2024. Chapter 5 of Part 3 of this Act details the statutory process of the preparation and making of a Development Plan and the information required to be included in same. Under this legislation the duration of a Development Plan would be 10 years.

At the time of writing, this section of the Act had not commenced therefore the review of the County Development Plan is being carried out under the legislative provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

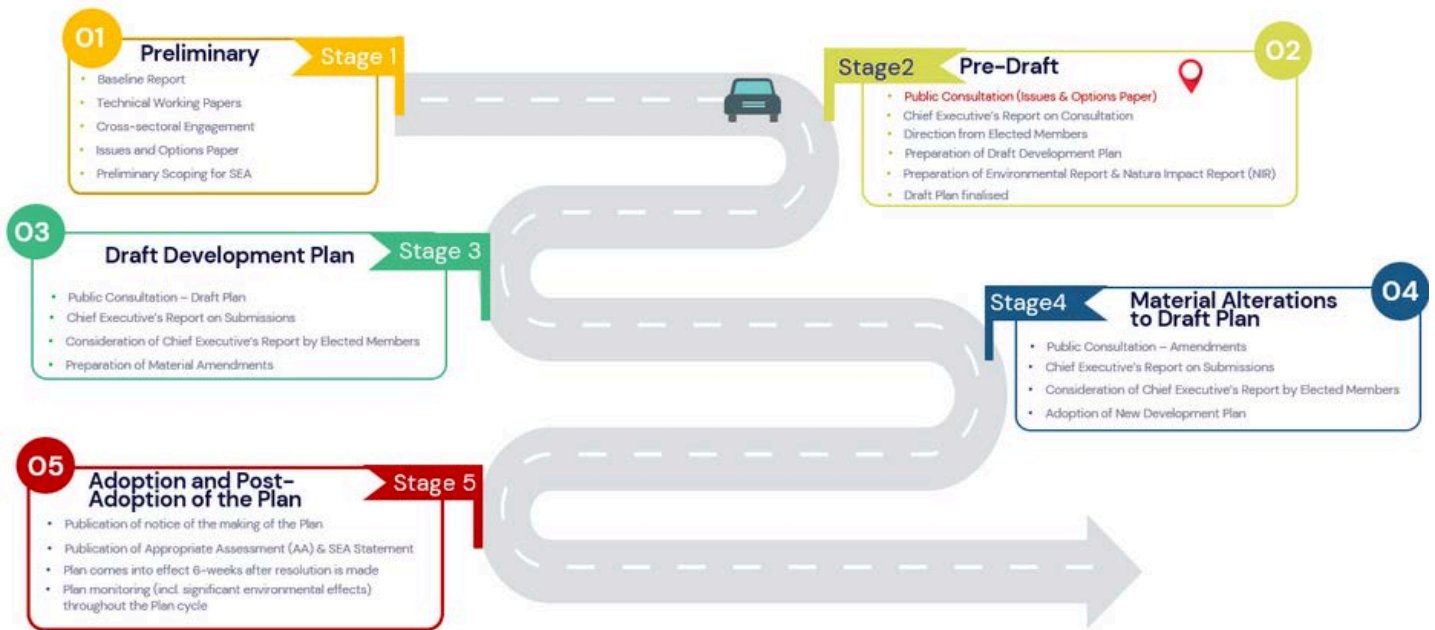
Stages of the Development Plan

There are five stages involved in the preparation of a Development Plan. These are set out in Figure 1 overleaf.

The preparation of the Issues Paper forms part of the 'Stage 1 Preliminary' element of the process. During this and the subsequent stages, as outlined overleaf, the Planning Authority will consult with the public to encourage and facilitate public participation in the preparation of the new Development Plan.



Figure 1 Stages of a Development Plan



Purpose of the Issues Paper

As outlined above, the preparation of the Issues Paper forms the first stage of the preparation of the next Louth County Development Plan and provides an opportunity for public consultation at stage 2. The purpose of this document is to explain the Development Plan process (what is involved and the different stages of the plan making process) and to set out the importance of public involvement and engagement for the future growth and development of the County. The Issues Paper sets out a range of key themes and issues which we consider should be included in the new County Development Plan. During this Pre-Draft stage the public are invited to offer their suggestions and ideas to help shape the future of the County. The new Plan should reflect the needs and ambitions of all communities in County Louth, so it is essential to have a say right from the start.

Louth County Council welcomes the views of individuals or groups on the content of the new Development Plan. We would like to hear views on the main issues facing County Louth.

As the preparation of the plan progresses there will be further opportunities to participate in the process, and we would encourage you to take every opportunity to play your part.

The Vision for County Louth (as per the LCDP 2021-27)

Promote County Louth, in particular the Regional Growth Centres for Dundalk and Drogheda, as uniquely attractive places in which to live, work, visit and do business and where the quality of employment and educational opportunities, natural and built environment, cultural experiences and provision of inclusive communities are all to the highest standards, while transitioning to a low carbon and climate resilient society.

What is your vision for County Louth?

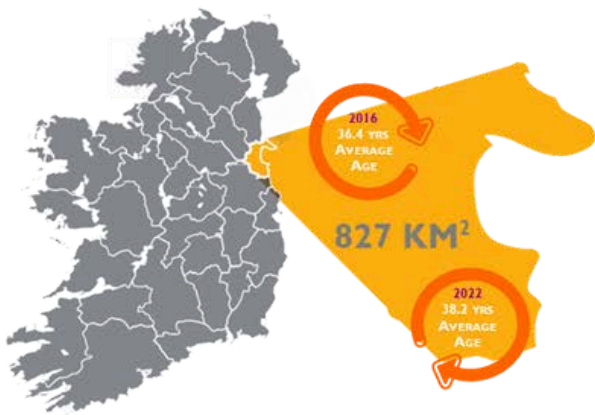
As part of this process, we are seeking your views on the vision for the future of County Louth

It's your County. Have your say!

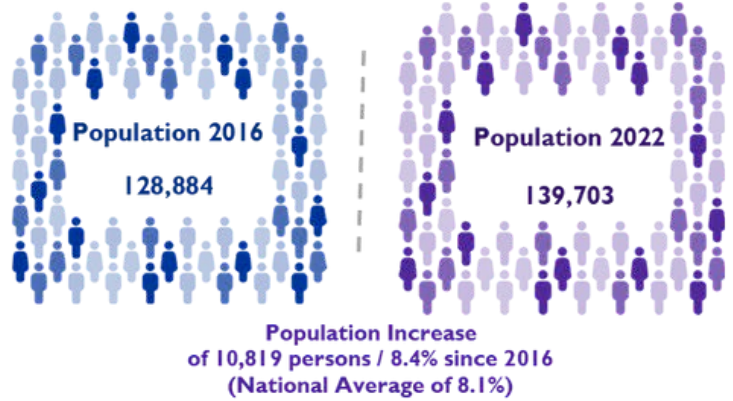
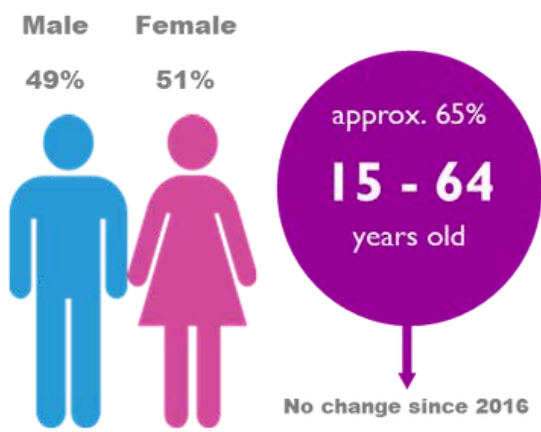


Key Facts and Figures

Figure 2 Key Facts and Figures (Census 2016 & 2022)



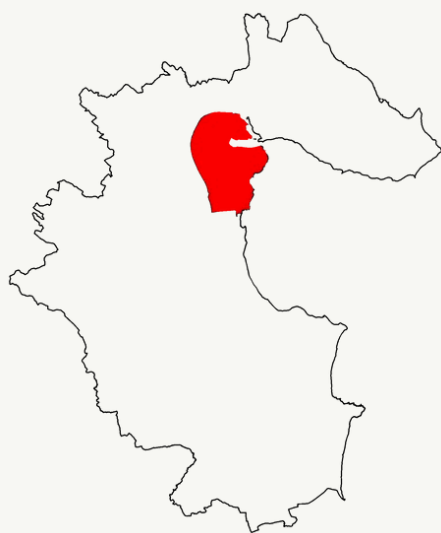
Population by Town		
Town	Population 2016	Population 2022
Drogheda (Louth & Meath)	40,956	44,135
Dundalk	39,004	43,112
Ardee	4,928	5,478
Dunleer	1,822	2,143



County

County Louth experienced an 8% increase in population since 2016, growing from 128,884 to 139,703 in 2022. This is in line with national growth of 8%. The housing stock grew by 7% from 51,399 to 54,842, with the number of vacant dwellings decreasing by 9% from 3,952 to 3,582. At a County level 3,824 residential units were completed since the LCDP 2021-27. This figure is recorded from its adoption in Q4 2021 to the most recent CSO dataset available in Q2 2025.

The workforce also grew from 50,300 to 59,140, an increase of 18% over the period. Unemployment figures lowered by 28% from 10,100 to 7,242, with the labour force participation rate at 60% compared to 61% nationally. The County has a high total resident working population of 47,239 and a daytime working population of 41,473. Due to commuting outside of the County, a net loss in the working population of 5,766 people is experienced daily.



Dundalk

Dundalk's population increased from 39,004 to 43,112 (10.5% or 4,108 persons) between 2016 and 2022. The town's housing stock grew 6.8% over the period from 16,351 to 17,470 and experienced a 23% decrease in vacant properties, from 1,472 to 1,132. 1,108 residential units (29% of total number of units for the County) were completed in Dundalk between Q4 2021 and Q2 2025.

There were 17,211 resident workers in the town in 2022, with 14,209 jobs, giving a job ratio of 0.83 (a decrease from 0.99 in 2016). Dundalk experiences a net gain in working population of 473 people daily, with a daytime working population of 14,209 and total residents with a fixed place of work numbering 13,736.

Drogheda

Drogheda's population grew 7.8% over the 2016-2022 period, from 40,956 to 44,135. In 2016 Drogheda had 16,034 housing units, growing by 7% to 17,160 in 2022. The number of vacant housing units increased slightly over the period from 1,057 to 1,107. In Drogheda, 1,837 residential units (48% of total number of units for the County) were completed between Q4 2021 and Q2 2025.

According to Census data, the town experiences a daily net loss in working population of 1,015 people, with 15,354 total residents with a fixed place of work and a daytime working population of 14,339. The total jobs in Drogheda amounts to 14,339, with 19,252 resident workers resulting in a job ratio of 0.74, a slight decrease from 0.76 in 2016.



Ardee



Ardee's population grew from 4,928 to 5,478 between 2016 and 2022, a 11.2% increase. Housing stock grew by 12.6% between 2016–2022 from 2,002 to 2,254 units. In Ardee, 149 residential units (4% of total number of units for the County) were completed between Q4 2021 and Q2 2025.

There are 2,489 jobs within Ardee, with 2,223 resident workers– amounting to a job ratio of 1.12 (an increase from 0.93 in 2016). Ardee experiences a net gain of 751 workers daily (1,738 residents with a fixed place of work and a daytime working population of 2,489).

Dunleer

Dunleer experienced a population increase of 321 (17.6%) persons between 2016–2022, with the population increasing from 1,822 to 2,143 persons. In 2016 Dunleer had 719 housing units, growing by 14% to 818 in 2022. Six residential units were completed between Q4 2021 and Q2 2025 however permission has been granted for c.200 units, with a site of 70 units currently under construction. The town experiences a net gain of 213 daily workers (738 residents with a fixed place of work and a daytime working population of 951), with a job ratio of 1.08 (down from 1.10 in 2016).



Self-Sustaining Towns and Small Towns

Below the higher tier settlements there are five Self-Sustaining Towns (Carlingford, Castlebellingham/Kilsaran, Clogherhead, Termonfeckin, and Tullyallen). Of these towns, Castlebellingham/Kilsaran had the lowest population of 1,232 people with Clogherhead having the highest with 2,275 people. Termonfeckin experienced the greatest percentage increase in population over the 2016–2022 period at 25.6% (from 1,579 to 1,983). The combined resident workforce of the towns in 2022 came to 726, with 298 jobs in total. This gives a job ratio of 0.46, a small increase from 0.43 in 2016. The settlements have a combined housing stock of 3,533 (an increase of 6.2% since 2016), of which 232 (6.6%) were vacant.

Eight settlements are designated Small Towns and Villages, (Annagassan, Baltray, Collon, Dromiskin, Knockbridge, Louth Village, Omeath, Tallanstown). Of these settlements Baltray had the lowest population at 150 people with Dromiskin having the highest at 1,292 people. Omeath underwent the greatest population increase over the 2016–2022 period from 603 to 778 (29%). The settlements have a combined housing stock of 2,226 (a 6.3% increase since 2016), of which 129 (5.8%) are vacant.

Rural Nodes and Countryside

There are twenty-four rural nodes within the County, with the remainder of land being designated as open countryside. These areas had a combined population of 35,986 in 2016, growing by 4.8% to 37,720 people in 2022. The combined housing stock for these areas in 2016 was 10,872 and grew by 4.7% (509 units) over the period to 11,381 in 2022. Of these units, 813 were vacant in 2016, with 761 (7.6%) units vacant in 2022, a 6.4% decrease over the period.

A total of 724 residential units (19%) were completed in Louth's small towns and villages, rural nodes and in the open countryside between Q4 2021 and Q2 2025.



Strategic Policy Context

The County Development Plan sits within a hierarchy of plans and strategies at national, regional and local level.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the government's long-term, overarching strategic plan for shaping the growth and development of the Country to 2040. The First Revision of the National Planning Framework (NPF) was published in April 2025. The NPF is underpinned and partnered with the National Development Plan 2040, which outlines a programme of investment in infrastructure to support the implementation and delivery of the NPF. The National Development Plan Review was published in July 2025. Also in July 2025 new housing growth requirement figures were allocated to each Local Authority in the 'NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements' Section 28 Guidelines. These figures reflect the housing requirements as identified in the Revised NPF.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) of the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA) sets out the framework for the implementation of the NPF at regional level. County Louth is included within the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly.

Figure 3 below illustrates the position of the County Development Plan in the Planning System hierarchy. The County Development Plan and all other local policies and guidance must be consistent with national and regional policies, guidelines and objectives.



Figure 3

Key Challenges We Face!



Developing a Unique Identity

How can we build on the strengths of the County and build a unique identity?



Climate Action and Energy

What are the key actions we can take to reduce the impact of climate change and achieve the national target of net zero emissions by 2050?



Population Growth and Housing

1. How can we ensure Dundalk & Drogheda continue to fulfil their roles as Regional Growth Centres?
2. How can we achieve compact growth in our settlements?
3. How and where do we deliver housing to suit the needs of all?
4. How can we deliver housing and strike a balance between social/affordable and private housing?



Built Environment & Placemaking

1. How can we provide town centre living and improve the vibrancy of our towns and villages?
2. How can we deliver higher densities and compact growth while reducing urban sprawl?



Sustainable Movement

1. How can we improve mobility and accessibility for all throughout the County?
2. How can we reduce car dependency and transition to more sustainable modes of transport (cycling, walking and public transport)? What challenges and obstacles do we face in achieving this?



Economic Development & Employment

1. How can we provide high quality employment and economic opportunities at appropriate locations?
2. What types of employment opportunities do we require in Louth over the next 6 years and beyond and where should they be located?
3. How can this Plan contribute towards a strong and resilient economy?



Community, Recreation, Amenity & Social Inclusion

1. What type of community facilities would you like to see in your area?
2. Do you feel a sense of community in your area and how can we ensure inclusion for all?



Infrastructure & Utilities

1. How can we ensure that capacity constraints do not impact on the growth of our County?
2. What measures should the Plan put in place to ensure that the required physical infrastructure is in place to support people living and working in the County?



Natural Heritage & Biodiversity

How do we facilitate development in the County while ensuring that our natural heritage and biodiversity is protected?



Core Strategy

A Core Strategy is a medium to long term strategy for the spatial development of the County. It demonstrates how the development objectives of the Plan are consistent with national and regional policy.

The central focus of the Core Strategy is on residential development and in ensuring that there is an acceptable supply of zoned, serviced land to meet projected demand for new housing over the lifetime of the Plan. Lands should be sited in the right location, thereby ensuring that new homes can be built with supporting facilities and services.

Table 4.2 of the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region sets out the settlement hierarchy for the Region and includes a list of settlements designated as a City, Regional Growth Centre, or Key Town. The designation of all settlements below 'Key Towns' are to be identified as part of the Development Plan process. Louth's current Settlement Hierarchy is identified overleaf.

The population projections and housing requirements for the County will be based on the figures allocated to Louth in the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines published in July 2025, within which the annual housing growth requirement for Louth between 2025-2034 is 1,677 units.

As part of this public consultation process Core Strategy Options have been developed to get your thoughts on the growth strategy of the County during the next Development Plan period and beyond. Note that these options are for general discussion purposes and the Core Strategy in the Draft Plan to be published may differ from the options set out below.

01

Continue the same pattern of growth in the County as set out in the 2021-2027 County Development Plan with the population and housing allocations for all settlements.

02

Review the population and housing growth in each settlement during the 2016-2022 Census period and use these growth rates as a baseline for the projected population and housing growth in these settlements during the lifetime of the next Plan.

03

Increase the proportion of population and housing growth to be allocated to the Regional Growth Centres, Self-Sustaining Towns, and Small Towns and Villages from that in the current County Development Plan.

Key Questions

1. What proportion of the projected population and housing growth in the County during the life of the Plan should be allocated to Dundalk and Drogheda and do you think it should be the same for each settlement, given they are both designated as Regional Growth Centres and both have a population target of 50,000 by 2031?
2. What settlements in the County do you think have capacity for growth and what level of growth would you think is appropriate for these settlements?
3. Do you think the settlement hierarchy for the County as detailed in the 2021-2027 County Development Plan should be amended?
4. What measures can be taken to enable settlements in the County become more sustainable and deliver more compact growth?

People and Place

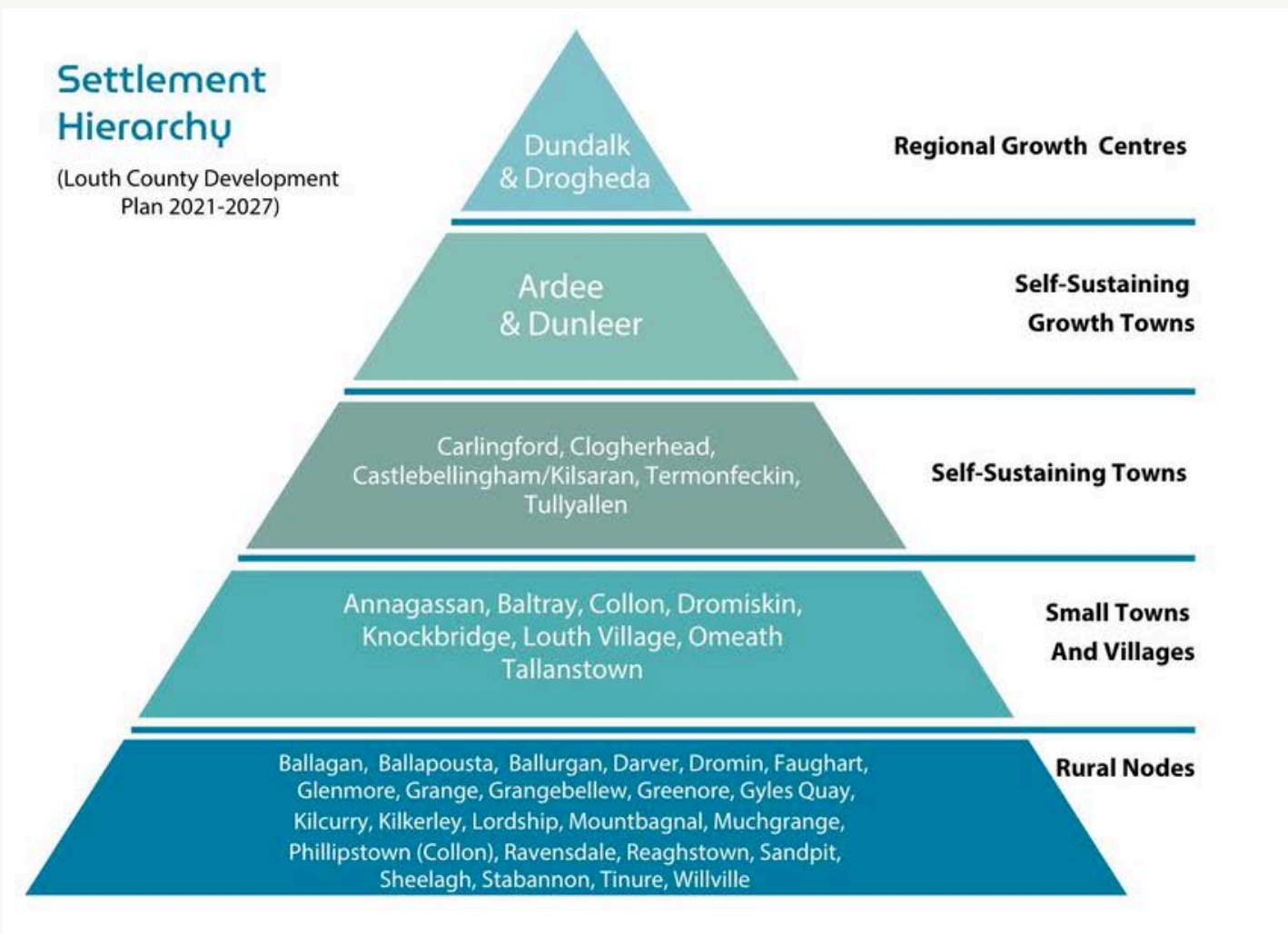
Census 2022 revealed that County Louth had a population of 139,703 people and that the County continued to experience high population growth over the inter-census period. This is reflective of its strategic location, availability of housing and employment opportunities, and its attractive, built and natural environment. It is anticipated that the County will continue to thrive over the next plan period.

The 2022 Census also revealed that Louth has the two largest towns in Ireland, Drogheda being the biggest with a population of 44,135 followed closely by Dundalk with a population 43,112.



Future population growth projections in the Development Plan will align with the projections set out in the revised National Planning Framework (NPF). The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA) projects that Dundalk and Drogheda will grow to a 'city scale' of at least 50,000 people by 2031 thereby consolidating their key roles as Regional Growth Centres.

The distribution of population growth throughout the County will be influenced by the settlement strategy. It is essential that the Plan provides a future pipeline of well-located serviced land to meet the housing needs of all Louth's residents. Census 2022 revealed that 73% of Louth's population reside in the urban area. Louth's Regional Growth Centres are supported by a network of settlements. The development plan process requires the identification and classification of settlements based on the local context. The existing settlement structure for Louth is outlined below.



In Ardee and Dunleer there are large parcels of land identified for employment uses while in the smaller settlements the quantum of lands available is more modest. The presence of Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT), which is the leading third level education provider in the North Leinster-South Ulster region, provides businesses in the County with access to a talented and educated workforce whilst also providing opportunities for collaboration in research and development. Having regard to these combined pull factors, this Issues Paper seeks to open conversation regarding economic delivery for the County by asking the views of residents and key stakeholders with the aim of further enhancing and stimulating local job creation and economic investment.

Key Questions

1. What strengths and challenges does the County face in terms of employment and economic delivery?
2. What improvements to infrastructure is required in Louth?
3. How can the Plan ensure Dundalk and Drogheda strengthen their role as principle centres for economic investment along the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor?
4. How should the Plan promote recent cross border initiatives? (new hourly train service to Dublin/Belfast, Narrow Water Bridge)?
5. How does the Plan stimulate indigenous startups alongside attracting Foreign Direct Investment?
6. What impact has remote working had on County Louth?

Retailing and Town Centre First

Advancements in technology has meant retailing is no longer solely restricted to towns and villages, with almost any product now available at the click of a button. This has had a significant impact on the retail sector of our town centres with dereliction and vacancy now a prevalent sight. As technology has advanced and adapted so too should our town centres. The Plan should promote our settlements as vibrant destinations to live, work and visit. Improved public realm, increased residential options, diversity of businesses, local identity, enhanced public transport and connectivity all play a role in this objective. Therefore, this paper asks the following questions:

Key Questions

1. What are your primary reasons for visiting the town centre and what detracts you from visiting? What improvements would make you more likely to visit?
2. How can we encourage the reuse of vacant properties and address dereliction?
3. What type of business offerings would you like to see? Should retail be the primary offering or should attractions/entertainment concepts be promoted?
4. How can we encourage more people to live in the town centre?
5. How can the night-time economy be developed and enhanced?
6. What role should out-of-town retail and business offerings have within the County?

With the enhancement of our towns comes improved quality of life, economic growth, community pride and increased visitor numbers

Possible issues to explore



Movement and connections

- Accessibility
- Ease of Movement
- Traffic and parking



Nature and Landscape

- Climate
- Public Realm/landscaping
- Scenery/setting
- Civic spaces



Land uses and Economy

- Mix of uses/housing
- Variety of shops
- Employment/Services
- Capacity for growth



Social Community and Culture

- Events/attractions
- Tourism
- Community spirit
- Safety



Built Form

- Quality
- Streetscapes
- Heritage
- Vacancy rates/dereliction

Rural Development & Natural Resources

County Louth benefits from picturesque seascapes and landscapes, mountains ranges, wetlands, estuaries, loughs, and extensive high quality farmland. The importance of rural development and the communities that it supports within the County is recognised; however this should not be to the detriment of our environment and landscape. Therefore, this Issues Papers seeks the views of how both can be balanced to deliver sustainable solutions for all.

Key Questions

1. How do we achieve a sustainable balance between granting one-off housing in the countryside while maintaining the rural character of the countryside and protecting prime agricultural land?
2. How can the Plan improve the siting and design standards to ensure buildings integrate more appropriately?
3. How can the Plan support and manage our natural resources and rural industries?
4. What type of development should be located within the rural area? Should certain forms of development be excluded entirely from any area?
5. What degree of protection should our countryside be afforded and how can we promote it for the enjoyment of everyone, whilst ensuring it is not damaged?
6. What services are required in the countryside to support vibrant rural communities?



Source -<https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/our-rural-future.pdf>

Transport, Connectivity & Movement

The strategic location of Louth along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor provides excellent transport links to these cities via the motorway, national roads, and inter-city rail line. There is also a strong network of regional and local roads that provide connectivity between settlements within the County and key service centres in the wider region.

As the population of the County continues to grow, alongside its attractiveness as a location for economic investment and employment related development, it is critical that there is a high level of correlation and integration between land use and transport planning. Continued investment in transport related projects including roads, active travel and public transport infrastructure and services will assist in maintaining economic competitiveness and connectivity within and between settlements.

The completion of Phase 1 of the Port Access Northern Cross Route in Drogheda and the Mount Avenue Link Road in Dundalk have enabled the release of strategically located lands in both settlements for development.

The Railway Order for the DART+ Coastal North Project was granted in August 2025. This will facilitate the extension of the DART Network from Malahide to Drogheda and will significantly increase passenger capacity on the Northern Rail Line.

The introduction of hourly Enterprise Rail Services between Dublin and Belfast at key parts of the day has also improved rail connectivity in the County.

There are a number of active travel projects also being advanced in the County which will seek to improve walking and cycling infrastructure and promote sustainable transport.

Key Questions

1. How can the Plan promote integration of land use and transport?
2. How can we reduce car dependency and best promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport?
3. Do you think our greenways and cycleways are successful and what improvements / upgrades would you suggest?
4. How can the Plan improve transport and connectivity for all including older, disabled or marginalised people?
5. Do we need additional park and ride facilities in proximity to the motorway?
6. How can rural transport and accessibility be improved?

Water, Energy & Communications



Water

Uisce Éireann is Ireland's national water utility, responsible for providing, developing, and maintaining water and wastewater services across the country.

The provision of adequate water and wastewater infrastructure that has the capacity to meet the needs of future population and businesses in our County is vitally important if we are to continue to attract economic investment and achieve our growth and population targets in a sustainable manner. This is particularly important for the designated Regional Growth Centres of Dundalk and Drogheda. The Council will continue to work closely with Uisce Éireann in identifying and addressing constraints in water services infrastructure.

Key Questions

1. How can we ensure that developments do not contribute to the deterioration in water quality including ground water, rivers and coastal waterways?
2. How can we ensure that capacity constraints do not adversely impact on the growth of our County?

Energy

The provision of a secure, reliable, and efficient energy transmission and distribution infrastructure to power and heat homes and businesses, and fuel transport, is of critical importance to the continued economic, social, and cultural development of the County.

To ensure the electricity and gas network has the capacity to meet the growing demand, the County Development Plan will support proposals by energy providers that will strengthen and support the network and associated transmission infrastructure, increase capacity and improve security of supply.

Ireland has set the target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030. In order to achieve this an overhaul of our critical infrastructure is required, with energy production the most impactful. Solar, wind, geothermal, hydropower and biomass will help to achieve this, with our County having the ability to utilise both land and sea. The Council also recognises the impact that such renewable projects can have on the community and the requirement to strike a balance between these concerns with the need for projects.

Key Questions

1. Are there any constraints in energy infrastructure that are restricting growth and investment in the County?
2. What investment is required in the energy infrastructure in the County to meet the needs of the projected increase in population and ensure security of supply for potential investors?
3. How should Louth secure renewable energy production whilst balancing the needs and concerns of communities?
4. Which renewable energy production form should be at the forefront? What role should our marine environment have in this regard?

Communications

The County continues to roll out its full fibre and rapidly expanding 5G network, with 83% of households having access to the internet in 2022 (Census, 2022). As access to the communication network increases, so too does the possibility of homeworking and rural business creation.

Key Question

1. What forms of communication are necessary to facilitate day to day life, and encourage rural enterprise?

NDP 2025-2035 Investment:

- Transport €24.3 Billion
- Water €12.2 Billion
- Energy €3.5 Billion



Infrastructure unlocks opportunity, therefore the provision and implementation of such, is critical in the development of the County.

Climate Action & Flooding

Land use and spatial planning has a fundamental role to play in reducing our carbon footprint. Our climate is rapidly changing and the effects on the country and on our lives are becoming more evident.

Under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, Ireland has a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 (compared to 2018 levels).

At national level, the Climate Action Plan 2025 sets out a roadmap of actions to meet national climate objectives of transitioning to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. At local level, the Louth Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 is in place. This strategy combines both climate mitigation and adaptation into a unified five year plan.

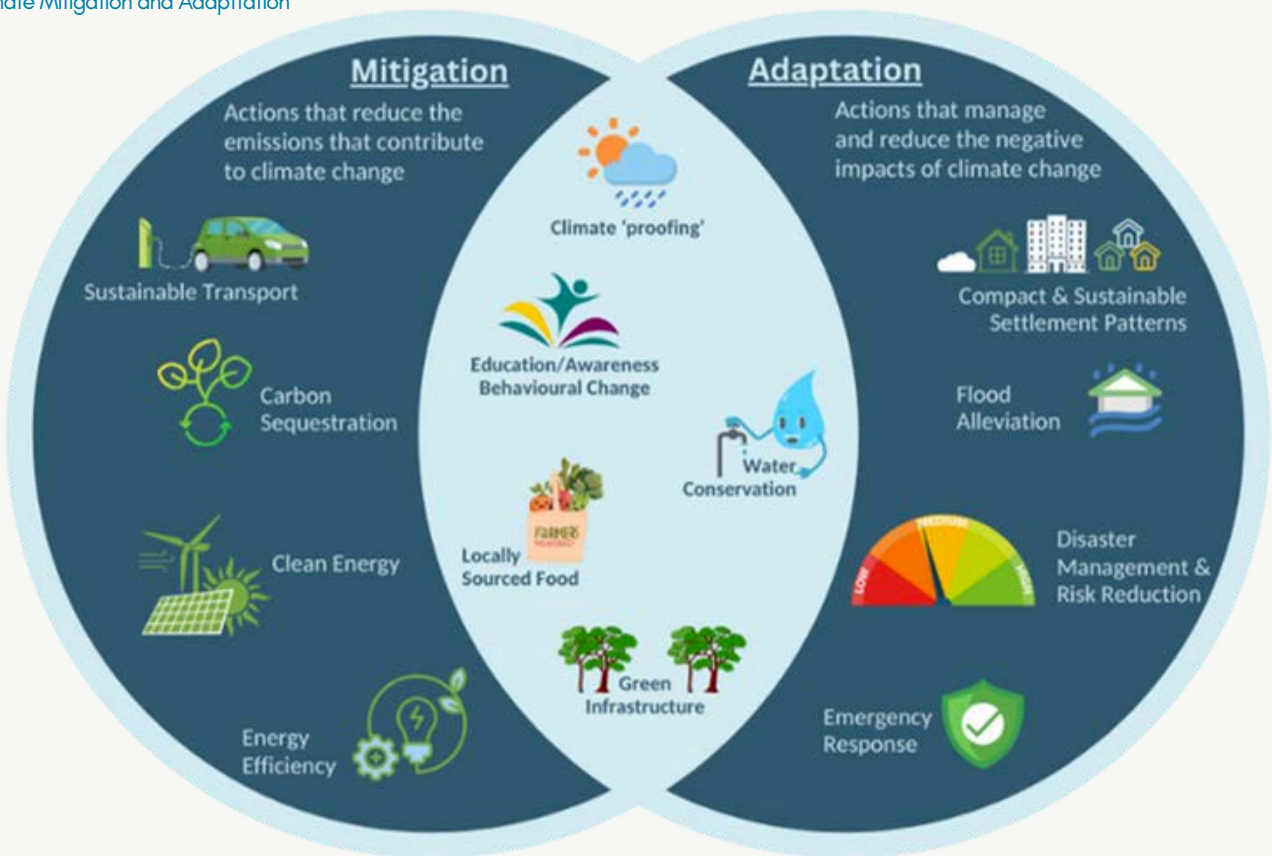
Louth County Council have set out its **VISION** for the future of County Louth:

- Louth will seek to be a net zero County by 2050;
- Louth will take advantage of opportunities which arise from the new normal;
- The people and businesses of Louth will rise to this challenge;
- No one will be left behind.

Source: Louth Climate Action Plan



Climate change refers to the long-term changes in the earth's weather patterns or average temperatures. In Ireland this is demonstrated by rising sea levels, extreme weather events and changes in the ecosystem. The principal risks from climate change to Louth are coastal and river flooding, and coastal erosion. There are also likely to be impacts from periods of drought.



Climate Mitigation involves a human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of Green House Gas (GHG).

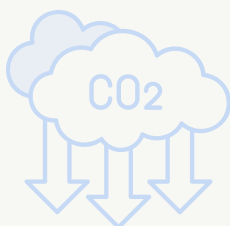
Climate Adaptation involves the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects.



The Louth Climate Action Plan seeks to deliver the actions and goals of the National Climate Action Plan at a local level. The County Development Plan will continue to support climate action and mitigation measures which will assist the County in adapting and becoming resilient to the effects of climate change and will incorporate the Vision, Objectives, and Actions of the Louth Climate Action Plan.

How will we achieve these objectives?

1. Good governance.
2. Through energy efficiencies and de-carbonising the Council's operations.
3. Promoting biodiversity & adopting green solutions to the functions of the Council.
4. Climate change - involving & resourcing communities to assist?
5. Waste recycling and using resources efficiently, minimising waste and reusing materials sustainably.



The National Climate Action Plan (CAP) sets out clear targets and a road map to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from five main contributing sectors. These are:
 - Energy - Agriculture - Transport - Industry - Built Environment



Flooding

Preventing and minimising the impact of flooding through flood risk management is an important element of creating a sustainable community. The Council, in partnership with the OPW are currently advancing flood relief schemes for the following locations:

- Dundalk and Blackrock and,
- Drogheda and Baltray.

In addition to the flood defence projects in Dundalk and Drogheda the Council will continue to work alongside the OPW in the planning and delivery of minor work schemes for new flood defence works and coastal erosion protection.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) will be prepared as part of the new development plan which will assess flood risk in the County.

Key Questions

1. What are the main environmental issues facing Louth and how can the Plan address these?
2. How can the Plan achieve a balance between the growth of the County and the protection of the environment?
3. How can the Plan best address climate change?
4. How can the Plan facilitate the transition to a low carbon society?
5. How can we increase awareness and help reduce the impacts of climate change in Louth?
6. How can we manage development in areas at risk of flooding?

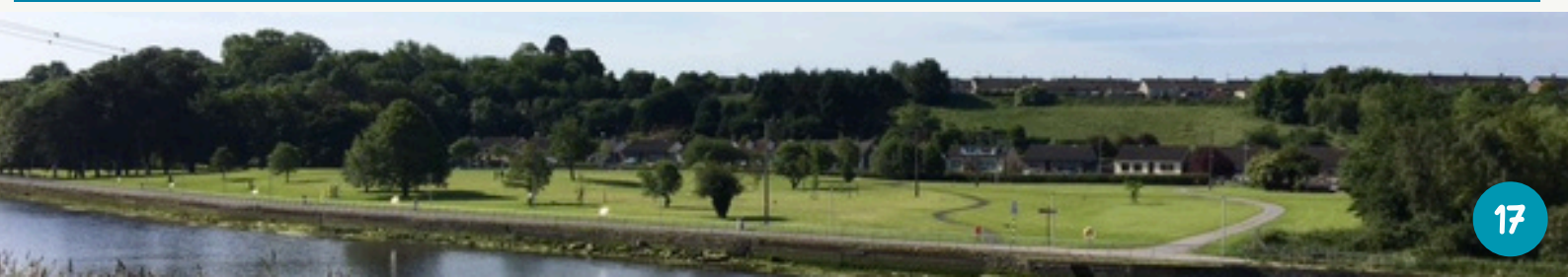
Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is an interconnected network of green spaces that help conserve natural ecosystems in both urban and rural locations. These green spaces include woodlands, coastlines, flood plains, hedgerows, urban parks and street trees. Assets involving water can also be referred to as 'blue infrastructure', which is captured under 'green infrastructure' in the Louth County Development Plan.

Green infrastructure assets offer areas for recreation and education, habitats for wildlife and also provide environmental services such as flood defences and/or absorption of air pollution. The implementation of nature based solutions is regarded as being an essential element of the successful implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation, alongside promoting good health and wellbeing within our urban environments. Therefore, the following questions are asked:

Key Questions

1. How should we include green solutions into the functions of the local authority?
2. How do we integrate green solutions within compact urban development?
3. What types of green infrastructure do we want to see developed in County Louth?
4. How can Louth County Council services best support the population of Louth to enhance the energy efficiency of the private housing and business premises stock ?
5. What measures should Louth County Council take to empower the population of Louth to embrace active travel projects and private car alternatives ?





Natural & Built Heritage

County Louth has a rich natural and built heritage which contributes substantially to its character and identity; the preservation and enhancement of which is critical to creating a better future for all. The natural heritage includes important ecological sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) which contain habitats with a wide diversity of plant and animal species, proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA), Trees and Woodlands, Geological Sites, scenic routes and views.

Built Heritage

In addition, the County also boasts a rich archaeological and architectural heritage, particularly in its many historic towns and villages including Drogheda, Dundalk, Ardee and Carlingford. Many of these buildings and monuments are designated as Protected Structures and/or are located within in Architectural Conservation Areas and/or within Zones of Archaeological Potential.

Louth's built heritage, linking the past to the present, is both rich and varied and manifested in the physical traces left in the landscape by previous generations in the form of archaeological sites and monuments, townscapes, historic buildings and vernacular structures.

This archaeological and architectural heritage is an intrinsic part of our identity, and of the character and attractiveness of the County. It contributes to the vibrancy and attractiveness of places where we live, work and play in addition to serving as a catalyst in attracting tourism and investment. Louth's heritage provides an opportunity to learn from the past, reinforce our sense of place and to serve as guardians for future generations.

We want to know your opinion on all built and natural heritage assets and archaeology in the County, and how they can be managed and protected for the enjoyment of future generations!

Key Questions

1. What measures should Louth County Council take to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity?
2. What would you like to see in the Development Plan in relation to Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland in your area?
3. What are the most important aspects of Louth's natural and built heritage worthy of protection?
4. How can we balance the protection of our heritage whilst providing for the development and future needs of the County?
5. Are there additional polices needed to safeguard the built and natural heritage of the County?
6. How can we best protect against the detrimental effects of climate change on natural heritage?
7. How can we encourage the sensitive reuse of redundant or derelict buildings, particularly for Protected Structures that have fallen into disrepair?
8. Are there areas in our towns and villages that should be designated as Architectural Conservation Areas?

Tourism, Culture & Art

County Louth has a strong tourism base which is primarily founded on our unspoiled natural environment and a wealth of historic towns and archaeological sites such as those in the Cooley Peninsula, Boyne Valley, Monasterboice and Mellifont Abbey, amongst others. The Council is currently developing a Tourism Strategy for the County which seeks to identify actionable recommendations. This Strategy will guide and stimulate tourism development and investment which can maximise national and international stays/visits to our County from market segments offering an economic return and in doing so grow the visitor economy in the County. This Issues Paper seeks to identify key areas in which the planning process can support this overall objective whilst protecting these tourist assets from overdevelopment.

Key Questions

1. What do you believe are Louth's main tourist assets?
2. What can Louth do to attract more domestic and international tourists?
3. Are there any potential tourist attractions you would like to see in Louth?
4. How can the Plan better promote our natural and cultural tourist assets such as the Cooley Mountains, Monasterboice?



Community, Recreation, Amenity & Social Inclusion

Louth County Council recognises the importance of high quality, inclusive and accessible spaces and resultant benefits they have to the population. As technology continues to consume more and more of our lives, the provision of community, sports, education, health, childcare and recreational facilities are becoming even more important. This Issues Paper seeks your views on what type of amenities and facilities should be provided, based on the principles of lifetime adaptability and universal design, in order to improve the overall health and wellbeing of our communities. The Plan will also be informed by the Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2029 which is an integrated document that guides the County's economic and community development.

Key Questions

1. Is the current provision of community facilities sufficient to meet the needs of all? If not, what type of community facilities are required?
2. Do you feel a sense of community and inclusion in your area? If not, how can this be improved?
3. What type of educational and recreational opportunities would you like to see in your area (please state location)?
4. How can we work with relevant stakeholders to ensure there are sufficient amenities and facilities, in the right places?

Environmental Assessment

Environmental assessments of the Plan are a crucial element of the process, assessing the potential environmental impacts of the implementation of policy objectives.

This will include Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA). The Plan can only be adopted if it will not adversely affect the integrity of a Natura 2000 Site.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) will provide an assessment of all types of flood risk within County Louth and will assist in making informed strategic land-use planning decisions and formulate flood risk policies.

Reports in relation to all of the above assessments will be available for public inspection in conjunction with the Draft Plan.

NOTE:

The Louth County Council County Development Plan Review will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under SEA Directive 2001/42/EC as transposed into Irish law under the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435/2004), as amended; and Appropriate Assessment (AA) under the EU's Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, as transposed into Irish law under Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011), as amended

Next Steps

Following completion of the pre-draft stage of public consultation the Forward Planning Team will commence the preparation of the Draft Louth County Development Plan.

This will be informed by stakeholder engagement and the submissions received under the pre-draft consultation.

The Draft Plan will be placed on public display, during which time there will be a further opportunity to make submissions and attend public consultation events.



Making a Submission

All submissions should include your name, address, and, if applicable, details of the organisation or group you represent. Further information & updates are available on Louth County Council's X (formerly Twitter) and at www.louthcoco.ie/en/publications/development-plans/

Please note that **requests or proposals for the zoning of particular land for any purpose cannot be considered at this stage of the process.**

The Forward Planning Team will be holding a series of informal public workshops, so you can come and talk to us directly about what you think the new County Development Plan should include.

Further details on the Issues Paper and how to make a submission are set out on the online consultation portal <https://consult.louthcoco.ie/>

Location	Date	Time
Carlingford Library, Newry Street, Carlingford A91 N226	Tuesday 14 th October	6pm - 8pm
Dunleer Library, Main Street, Dunleer A92 DRV0	Tuesday 21 st October	6pm - 8pm
Dundalk Library, Roden Place, Dundalk, Co. Louth A91 RC44	Wednesday 22 nd October	5pm - 7:30pm
Drogheda Library, Stockwell Lane, Drogheda A92 PY20	Wednesday 5 th November	5pm - 7:30pm
Ardee Library, Market Square, Ardee A92 XH22	Thursday 6 th November	5pm - 7:30pm

Where do I Send my Submission?

Via our online consultation portal
<https://consult.louthcoco.ie/>

Or In Writing:

Mr. Thomas Mc Evoy
Development Plan Review,
Forward Planning Unit,
Town Hall, Crowe Street,
Dundalk, Co. Louth.
A91 W20C

Submission subject line should read: **Development Plan Review**

Queries relating to this issues paper can be emailed to: louthcdp@louthcoco.ie

Submissions/observations can only be made between 23rd September 2025 and 21st November 2025

The deadline for receipt of all submissions is 4 pm on 21st November 2025

Submissions received after this date cannot be accepted.