



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council



LCDC

Coiste um Fhorbairt Pobail Áitiúil Lú
Louth Local Community Development
Committee

Louth Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2029

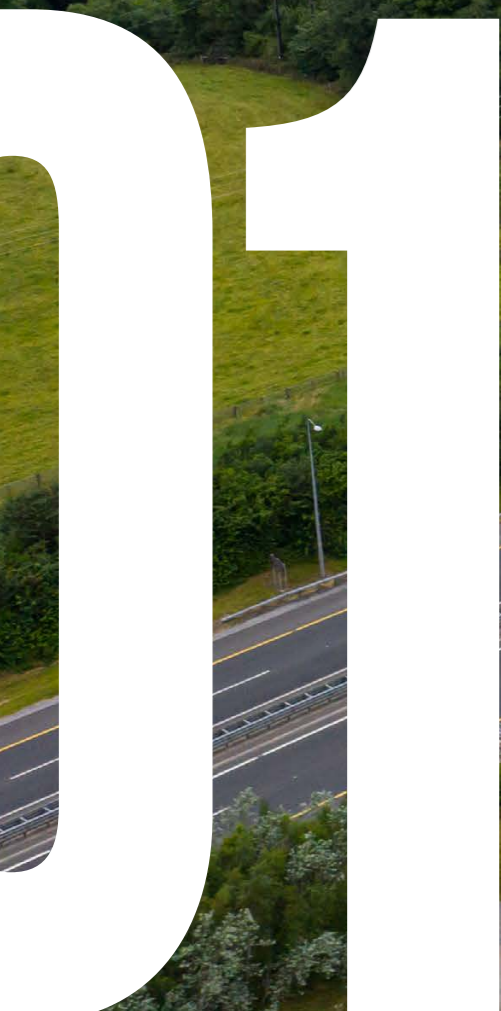
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1.1 Louth Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2029

This document represents Louth's new Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for the period 2024-2029. This new LECP fulfils the requirements as set-out in the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and has been developed in accordance with the guidance set out in the Local Economic and Community Plan Guidelines (2021).

The Louth Local Economic and Community Plan (2024-2029) is an integrated plan that will guide the county's economic and community development over the next 6 years. In doing so, it will look to assist in creating a county that is prosperous, sustainable and inclusive with an excellent quality of life.

The LECP has been prepared by Louth County Council in conjunction with the Louth Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for Economic Development and Enterprise Support, and the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). It has been informed by extensive consultation with communities across Louth, the private sector, education and training providers, government agencies and other key stakeholders. Achievements and lessons learned from Louth's previous LECP (2016-2022) have also been taken into consideration during the development of this plan.

The LECP includes high-level goals, objectives, and outcomes for the

6-year period (together these elements are known as the LECP Framework). In contrast to the previous iteration of LECPs, the actions are now part of a detailed two-year Implementation Plan that identifies action owners and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to assist with monitoring and evaluation. A revised and updated Implementation Plan will be developed for each subsequent two-year period up to 2029, to reflect progress made and take account of newly emerging policies and programmes.

The plan fully aligns with and supports existing strategies at the local, regional and national level. At a local level this includes the Louth Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Culture and Creativity Strategy and County Louth Volunteering Framework. The plan is also fully aligned with the County Development Plan (as varied), the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly's Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2019-2031

(EMRA RSES) and national plans such as the National Planning Framework (NPF) (2018), and the National Climate Action Plan 2023. Furthermore, given the current climate crisis, a core cross-cutting policy of the LECP are the UN's Sustainable Development Goals which underpin the new plan to ensure that sustainability and climate action are at the centre of Louth's development moving forward.

The high-level goals, objectives, outcomes and actions were proofed, in consultation with key stakeholders, to ensure they reflected and addressed cross-cutting priorities of sustainability, equality, poverty, rurality, age and disability, as outlined in the LECP guidelines. In doing so, it was also ensured that the LECP supports the public sector duty to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect human rights. The Public Sector Duty or Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty is a legal obligation under the **Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014**.

1.2 Purpose of this document

This document (the Louth LECP) comprises of the following chapters:

- An ambition for Louth developed from the views and feedback provided during the Consultation process reflecting a vision for the future as put forward by Louth's community and business interests, and various public sector organisations that operate within the county. (Chapter 2)
- A summary of key strategies and plans that the LECP supports, embodies and aligns with at a local, regional and national level. (Chapter 3)
- A summary of key findings from the socio-economic analysis of the county, in areas including demographics, the economy, housing, community and the environment. (Chapter 4)
- An overview of the Consultation process with information on the consultation conducted and key findings identified from the analysis by theme. (Chapter 5)
- An analysis of the county's key strengths, constraints, opportunities and threats (SCOT Analysis) as Louth moves towards 2029. (Chapter 6)

- High-level goals, objectives, actions and outcomes for the 6-year period between 2024-2029 that were developed from findings of the analysis and consultation (Chapter 7)
- An initial 2-year implementation plan outlining specific prioritised actions (along with action owners and KPIs) to assist in achieving the high-level goals, objectives and outcomes. An overview of the approach to monitoring and evaluation of the new plan. (Chapter 8)



1.3 LECP Format

The Louth LECP has been developed in accordance with the guidance set out in the Local Economic and Community Plan Guidelines (2021) (fig. 1.1). The LECP comprises of two distinct elements. These are:

- The **LECP Framework** covering the 2024-2029 period which consists of the high-level goals, the objectives, actions and the outcomes. The high-level goals establish the strategic direction of the Louth LECP in relation to both economic and community elements. The objectives identify more specific areas to address. The actions are the activities that need to be carried out to realise the objectives. Finally, the desired outcomes represent key targets for the 6-year period.
- The **Implementation Plan**, which is for an initial 2-years, includes the prioritised actions and KPIs that will help to achieve the goals, objectives and outcomes for Louth. The Implementation Plan will be reviewed and revised every 2 years.

The change to the format of the LECP process is a positive development that provides additional flexibility so that the plan can adapt to address new issues and needs as they arise over the 6-year period. It also allows Louth County Council to identify actions that may not be progressing or achieving the envisaged impact and replace them with new actions that better suit the county's needs in the subsequent implementation plans. Key to realising the benefits of this enhanced flexibility and the overall success of the plan will be clear, concise and regular monitoring and evaluation of progress on the LECP's actions.

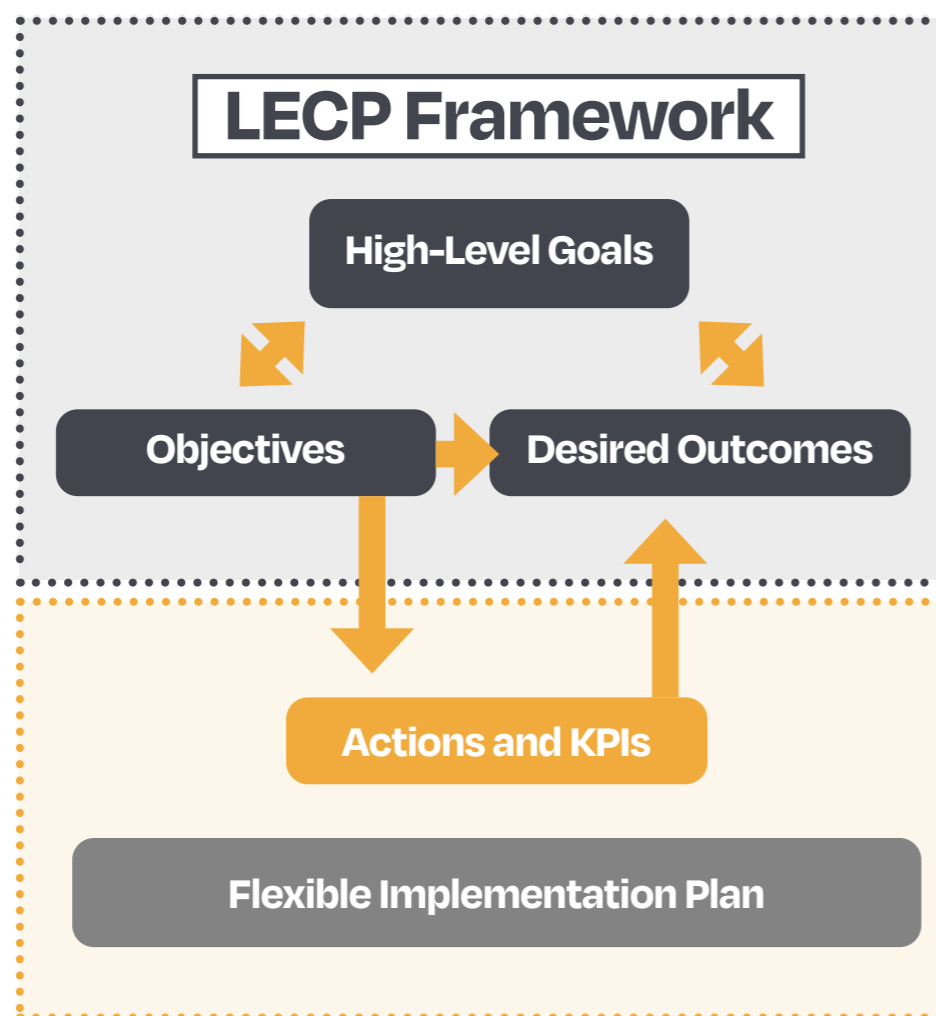


Figure 1.1: LECP Framework and Implementation Plan

1.4 Preparation of the plan

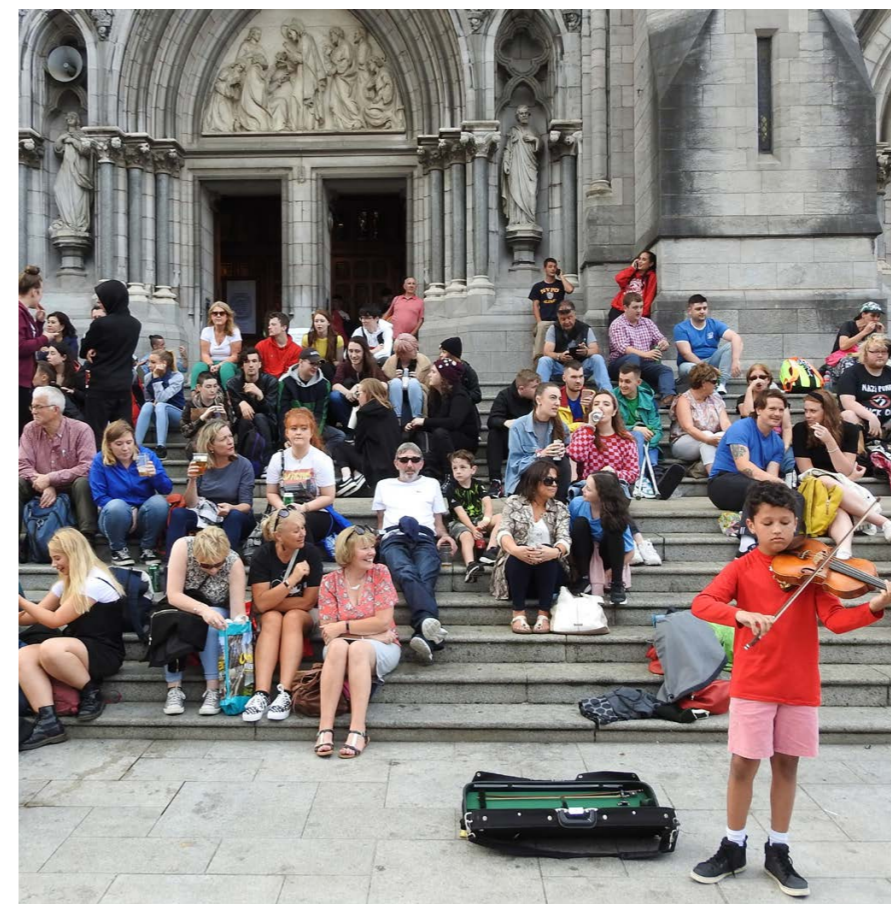
The plan has been developed through the following stages:

1. Preparation – The first stage in developing Louth's new LECP was the collation and analysis of socio-economic data from relevant sources (e.g. CSO data) and a review of existing policies and strategies in relation to the context and alignment of the plan. This information was then used in the development of the Socio-Economic Statement which included five draft high-level goals. The Socio-Economic Statement was then put forward for public consultation to generate discussion and ideas for the new LECP.

2. Consultation – During this stage an extensive range of public and stakeholder consultation was conducted. This included written submissions on the draft Socio-Economic Statement, two online surveys (community and business sector), workshops, and a few key stakeholder interviews. Views, ideas and suggestions were received from the public, community representative groups, local government, state agencies, education providers and the private sector. Following the conclusion of the initial round of intense consultation, the draft high-level goals were revised to reflect the views provided by the community, private sector and other key stakeholders.

3. Development of the Objectives, Outcomes and Actions – During the third stage, the objectives and outcomes for the 6-year period were developed along with the actions for the initial 2-year implementation plan. These elements were developed from the findings of the analysis of data and the consultation process in stage 2. They were also informed by a second short period of consultation with key stakeholders. This was conducted to aid the prioritisation of actions for the Implementation Plan. Proposed action owners/enabling agencies were further consulted with on the objectives, outcomes and actions to ensure buy-in and alignment of views and ambition. The goals, objectives, outcomes and actions were checked to ensure that they covered the crosscutting priorities of sustainability, equality, poverty, rurality, age, and disability outlined in the LECP guidelines, as well as for alignment with local, regional and national policy.

4. Finalise Plan – Following approval of the Objectives, Outcomes and Actions, input from the Regional Assembly and Municipal Districts was sought and incorporated into a Draft LECP. A Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening report and Appropriate Assessment Screening report were also conducted following completion of the draft plan. The plan was then revised and finalised following the receipt of feedback. Subsequently, Louth's new LECP was formally approved by Louth County Council on 19/02/2024.



1.5 Responsibilities in developing the LECP

While extensive consultation with the community and private sector was carried out in the development of the new LECP, in line with and even beyond the LECP Guidelines, the following responsibilities were assigned for the development of the plan:

- Louth County Council LECP Advisory Steering Group (ASG): The ASG provided oversight for the overall development of the LECP
- Local Community Development Committee (LCDC): The LCDC was responsible for the preparation of the community elements of the LECP
- Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for Economic Development and Enterprise Support: The SPC was

responsible for the preparation of the economic elements of the LECP

- Regional Assembly: The Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly was consulted for inputs to ensure consistency and alignment with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031 (RSES).
- Municipal Districts: The municipal districts of Drogheda, Dundalk and Ardee were consulted for input and consistency in relation to the economic and community elements of the plan.



1.6 An Integrated and Collaborative Approach

This LECP covers both community and economic development as required by the LECP guidelines. However, in contrast to the previous iteration, the community and economic elements are not separated into different sections. Instead, the goals, objectives and actions have been developed using an integrated approach reflecting the cross-cutting and interlinked nature of economic development and community wellbeing.

The **community elements** of the plan have been developed and approved by the Louth LCDC. It includes goals, objectives and actions related to

enhancing inclusion, public transport, wellbeing and health, education and training, the culture and creative sector and sustainability. The **economic elements** have been developed and approved by the Louth SPC for Economic Development and Enterprise Support. It includes goals, objectives and actions related to improving the business environment, urban and rural regeneration, attracting investment, training and skills, supporting existing businesses and sustainable tourism development. As outlined in the subsequent chapters, the new LECP has been developed to be a shared plan that will require collaboration between

key stakeholders from across different sectors for it to be a success. This will include Louth County Council, the public, the private sector, community and voluntary groups, education and training providers, and other key stakeholders that provide vital services in the County. It is through this collaborative effort that this plan will succeed in addressing the needs of all the community and businesses, and enhance the county as a place to live, work and invest.

1.7 Overriding Status of the Plan

Implementing this plan will involve Louth County Council helping to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate stakeholders in their activities in a way that is consistent with existing and emerging plans setting out public policy for sustainable development, including that relating to the economy, communities, infrastructure, land use tourism and environmental protection and environmental management.

This plan is situated alongside this hierarchy of statutory documents that has been subject to environmental assessment/screening for environmental assessment, as appropriate, and forms the decision-making and consent-granting framework. The plan does not provide consent or establish a framework for granting consent and will not be binding on any decisions relating to the granting of consent.

As previously noted, the plan fully aligns with the provisions of the existing National Planning Framework, Ireland 2040, National Climate Action Plan 2023, Housing For All 2021, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031 and the current County Development Plan (as varied), all of which have been subject to legislative requirements relating to public consultation and environmental assessment/screening for environmental assessment. As such, the plan is wholly subject to the requirements of the provisions set out in these documents, including provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents, including through SEA and AA processes, and does not introduce any alterations or additions to those provisions.

In order to be realised, projects included in this plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sectors) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework. It is a specific provision of this plan to ensure that all of the provisions from the County Development Plan (as varied) identified as mitigation in the accompanying Screening for SEA and AA reports shall be complied with throughout the implementation of this plan.



Ambition for Louth

02

2.1 Ambition for Louth

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2.1 Ambition for Louth

The wide-ranging function of the LECP means that it has the potential to positively impact all those who work, live in, and visit the county. As such, the development of the LECP has provided an opportunity to frame an ambition for the county and its development over the next number of years. The ambition, outlined below, is based around the understanding obtained from the research conducted in the development of the LECP and importantly, through views provided during the consultation process with key stakeholders, the community and the private sector. It is not outlandish. It builds on solid foundations and reflects reality.

Taking the findings from the analysis and consultation into account, the following ambition has been developed:

For Louth to continue to sustainably develop its **advantages** in location and infrastructure to create accessible economic **opportunities** which will allow **all its inhabitants to thrive** in vibrant, welcoming communities.

The ambition provides a unified path forward reflecting how many of the goals, objectives and actions are interconnected and, in some cases, interdependent, contributing both to the wellbeing of the economy and the community.



Overview of Policy Framework

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3.1 Policy Overview – Context and Understanding

This section provides a brief overview of some of the key policies at international, national, regional and local level that are influencing the development of Louth and to which the new LECP is aligned with. Given the importance of the UN Sustainable Development Goals to the new plan, the SDGs are expanded on in slightly more detail below. The reviewed policy documents helped to inform and guide the direction of this LECP and its key elements of goals, objectives, desired outcomes and actions (fig. 3.1).



From the review of relevant policies and strategies some of the key areas that the Louth LECP could draw upon and align with included:

Community

- Providing a high quality of life through compact and sustainable growth of settlements, associated services and amenities.
- Strengthening local communities to help reverse and address urban and rural decline.
- Capitalising on Louth's existing quality of life, natural amenities and cultural heritage to galvanise its strengths as a place to live and work.
- Ensuring the continued revitalisation of town and village centres to create vibrant settlements across the county.

Economic

- Generating economic growth and diversification of local and regional economies, including through supporting SME and micro business creation.
- Advancing development of infrastructure to support emerging employment sectors and to embrace new ways of remote and flexible working.
- Encouraging population growth in settlements of all sizes, supported by job creation and enhanced employment opportunities.

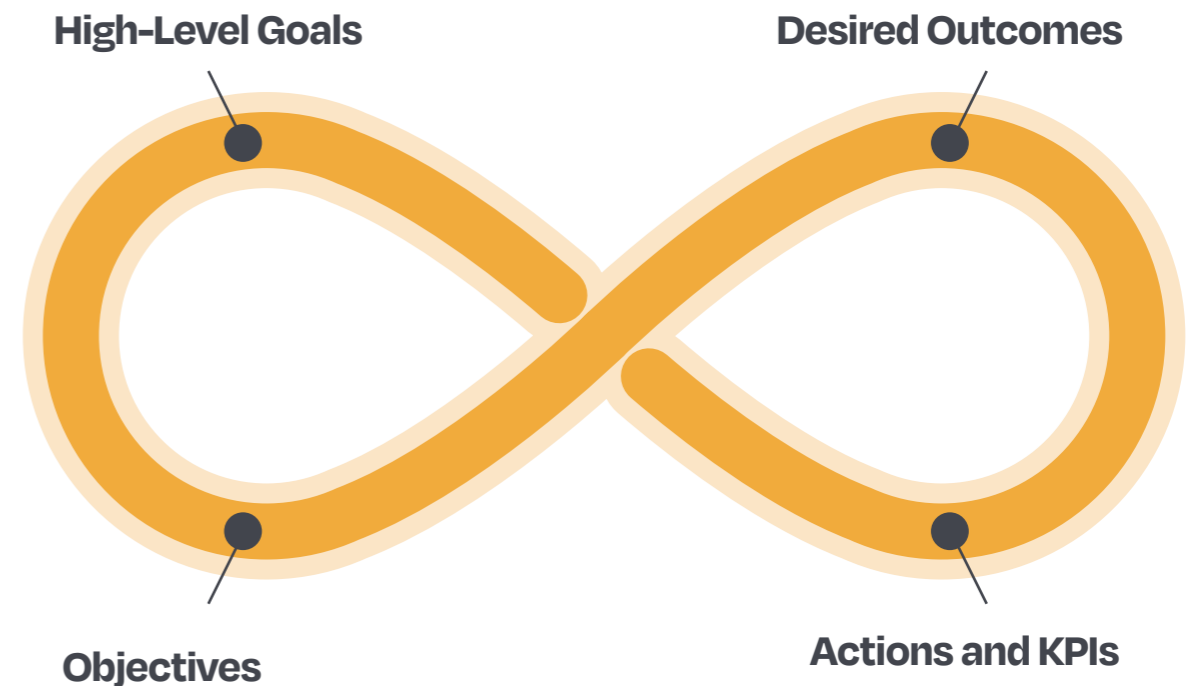


Figure 3.1: Key elements of the LECP

3.2 International Policy



2030 Agenda – UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals

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



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

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

13 CLIMATE ACTION

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

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

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

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

SDG 13: Climate Action

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

3.3 National Policy



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) aims to shape growth and development in Ireland over the 17 years to the year 2040. The NPF draws upon lessons learned from the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 and provides a framework for the sustainable development of Ireland's existing settlements, as an alternative to an uncoordinated "business as usual" approach to development. As a framework document it lays out the process by which more detailed planning documents must follow, including the relevant RSES and County Development Plans. The Strategy also contains a range of National Policy Objectives (NPOs) providing a wider context for targeting future growth across the country. National Policy Objective 44 is of particular relevance to County Louth: 'In co-operation with relevant Departments in Northern Ireland, to further support and develop the economic potential of the Dublin-Belfast Corridor and in particular the core Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry network and to promote and enhance its international visibility.'

National Development Plan 2021 - 2030

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

3.4 Regional Policy

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the EMRA

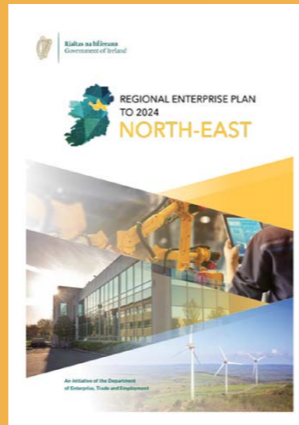
The RSES for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly provides an overarching framework to achieve development while creating a sustainable and competitive region. The RSES primarily aims to support the delivery of the programme for change set out in Project Ireland 2040 - the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan 2021-2030 (NDP). In doing so it seeks ensure that access to quality housing, travel, and employment opportunities is provided to all. As the regional tier of the national planning process, it will ensure coordination between the City and County Development Plans (CCDP) and Local Enterprise and Community Plans (LECP) of the twelve local authorities in the Region in achieving the objectives of Project Ireland 2040. In the RSES, Drogheda and Dundalk are designated at two of the region's three Regional Growth Centres. The RSES pays particular attention to facilitating the development of the Dublin-Belfast Corridor. It is identified as one of six growth enablers for the region. The other five enablers are: sustainable growth raths to allows towns to become more-self-sustaining; commensurate population and employment growth in key towns with compact housing development; 'catch-up' investment to support places that have experienced significant population growth; diversification and specialisation of local economies; and promotion of the region for tourism, leisure and recreational activities.



North-East Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024

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

The Plan contains five strategic objective areas relating to matters such as promoting the region as a place to do business, being an exemplar in the digital economy, supporting SMEs in the region, mainstreaming climate action in enterprise, and developing existing and emerging growth sectors.



3.5 Local Policy

Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2027

The Louth County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 sets out the proposed policies and objectives for the development of the county over the 6-year plan period. The Development Plan seeks to promote Louth and its Regional Growth Centres of Dundalk and Drogheda as a destination to live, work, visit. The Plan covers all aspects of life within the county including settlement strategy, housing, community development, employment and economic growth, tourism, transport, heritage, the environment, culture, infrastructure, natural resources, and climate action. Within this context, the Plan provides Development Management Guidelines for the county setting out how to achieve and to deliver the plans ambition over the lifetime of the Plan.

Of particular importance to the 2021 - 2027 Development Plan is the implication of Drogheda and Dundalk's designation as Regional Growth Centres in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. The strategic importance of Dundalk and Drogheda to the future development of the whole county is illustrated in the County Development Plan's vision: 'Promote County Louth, in particular the Regional Growth Centres of Drogheda and Dundalk, 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'

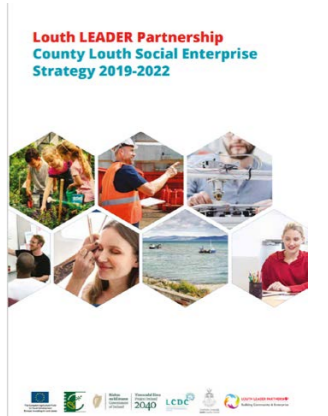
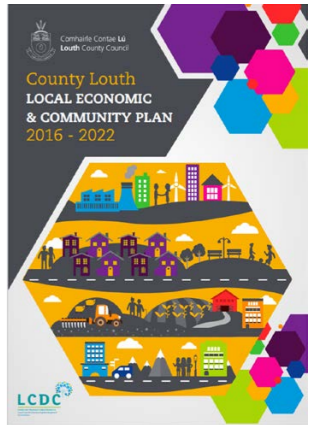
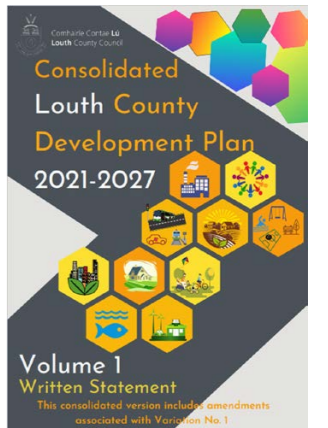
Care has been taken to ensure that this LECP complements and supports the vision and various elements of County Development Plan (as varied).

Louth LECP 2016 – 2022

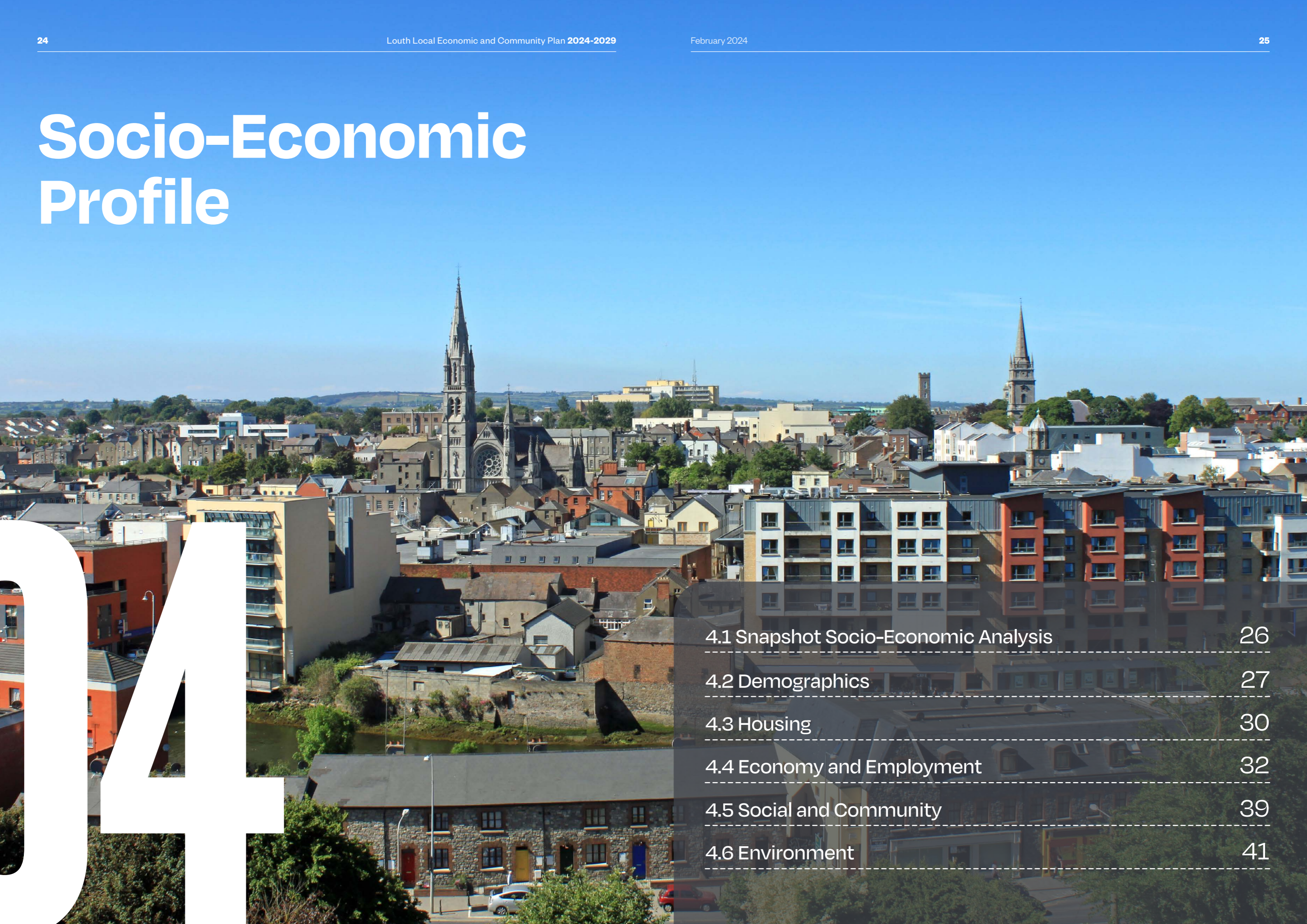
The previous iteration of the Local Economic and Community Plan for County Louth identified goals, objectives and actions to promote and support economic and community development within County Louth. The Plan was focused on achieving the county vision: "Louth will be a prosperous, proud, safe, and inclusive county where people want to live, work, visit and invest, and where there is equal opportunity for all." We have reviewed this document for lessons to take forward into the new LECP as well as the areas that can be built upon in the new plan to support the goals and ambitions of this edition of the LECP.

Louth Social Enterprise Strategy 2019 – 2022

The County Louth Social Enterprise Strategy 2019 – 2022 conducted by the Louth LEADER Partnership aims to produce a skilled, confident, and diverse social enterprise sector that is recognised for its contribution to social, economic, and environmental in County Louth. The plan lays out three objectives to improve awareness of social enterprises in the county, grow and strengthen the sector, and better measure the impact of the sector. The plan makes clear that social enterprises are a vital part of economic life in the county supplying employment, vital services, and supporting the integration of the most marginalised in society. The role of social enterprises has been considered in the construction of this study.



Socio-Economic Profile



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4.1 Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis

Detailed socio-economic analysis has been carried out to inform the development of the LECP. This included analysis across key themes such as population (demography), housing, the economy, education, health and wellbeing, infrastructure and the environment (fig 4.1). This analysis, along with the consultation, has allowed for the identification of specific Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats (SCOT) which have influenced the development of the goals, objectives, outcomes and actions (Chapter 5).

The findings from the socio-economic analysis are outlined below. The analysis has primarily utilised 2022 and 2016 Census data. Additional data from the SEAI, Pobal and GeoDirectory has been incorporated where available and relevant.

Some of the specific needs for Louth identified from the analysis that are addressed through the LECP include:

- Providing supports to those from a disadvantaged background so they are better able to take advantage of the strong economic opportunities being created in Louth.
- To continue to support efforts that the county's towns are vibrant, attractive places to be in, with strong economic and social functions.
- To support efforts to create an adequate supply of new housing while maintaining affordability.
- Continuing to develop Louth's education and training ecosystem to help support learning, enterprise and innovation.
- To continue to develop Louth's infrastructure so that it can take even more advantage of its strategic location between Dublin and Belfast, on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.

- To take full advantage of the presence of two designated Regional Growth Centres in the county (i.e. Drogheda and Dundalk).



Figure 4.1: Key elements of the socio-economic analysis

4.2 Demographics

County Louth is the smallest county in the province and the State in terms of the area. As per Census 2022, it is home to 139,703 residents. It is the 14th largest county in terms of population size.

Population Density - Louth is a densely populated county with a density of 169 individuals per sq.km.

Age Profile - Louth has a younger population (average age 38.2 years in 2022) compared to the state average (38.8 years) with the largest age groups in the 40-44 age bracket (figures 4.2 & 4.3). In 2022, over half (52.3%) of the population was under 40 years old, lower than the national average. Louth has 3.3% percentage of individuals aged 80 and over compared to the national average of 3.5%.

Aging Population - In the period 2016-2022 the average age in Louth has increased by 1.8 years, reflecting a wider trend of both declining birth rates and

declining natural population increases. Between 2016 and 2022, age cohort groups between 0-9 years and 25-39 years experienced a decrease.

Population Growth - Between 2016 and 2022, the county's population increased 8.4% (10,819) (fig. 4.5). This is compared to population increases of 5% in Donegal, Kilkenny, and Tipperary and 14% in Longford. Of the county's total population growth, 46% (4,968 individuals) can be attributed to natural increase, which accounts for the surplus of live births over deaths. The remaining 54% (5,851 individuals) is the result of positive net migration into the county. In the RSES, Drogheda and Dundalk are designated at two of the EMRA region's three Regional Growth Centres. Both towns are targeted for significant growth up to a population of 50,000 by 2031. In 2022, Dundalk's population was 43,112 and Drogheda had a population of 44,135.





Figures 4.2 & 4.3: Population overview

Ethnicity & Nationality Distribution

- According to the 2016 Census, Louth's population is predominantly White Irish (83%), followed by Other White, White Irish Travellers, and individuals of Black or Asian descent (fig. 4.4). The majority (88.5%) of Louth's population consists of Irish nationals, with Polish and UK nationals being the next largest foreign national groups.

Household Structure

- A household is a person or people who regularly live together. As per the 2022 Census, County Louth had 49,424 private households, which increased by 3,976 households from 2016, surpassing the national growth rate of 8.1%. The average household size was 2.80 persons, slightly higher than the national average of 2.74 persons. Single-person households accounted for 22.7% of total households, similar to the previous years and slightly below the national average of 23.1%.

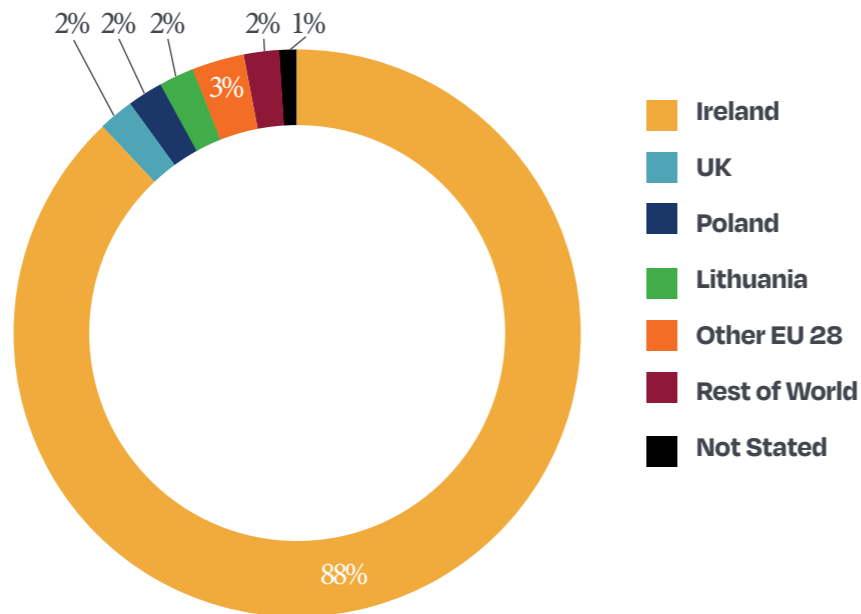


Figure 4.4: Usually resident population by nationality

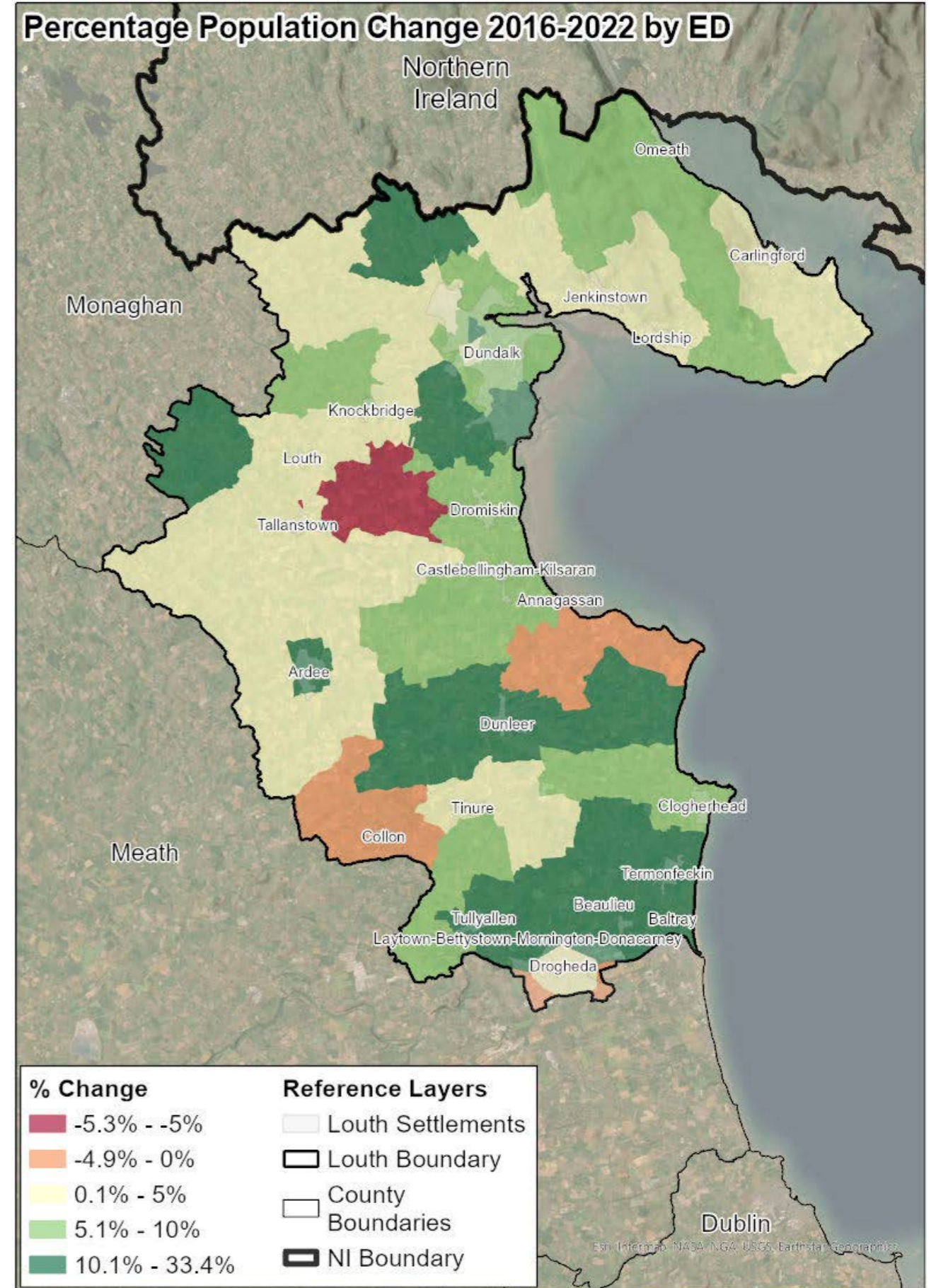


Figure 4.5: Population change by Electoral District

4.3 Housing

Population growth in both Louth and across the country has created significant challenges in terms of housing provision. Construction has not kept pace with population growth since the 2008 financial crisis, leading to affordability and availability issues. Despite this, as a largely urban county, Louth has seen a significant rise in housing developments in recent years (fig. 4.6). Focus on the housing choices available to older people is required. Elderly households might benefit from downsizing and relocating nearer to urban amenities.

Housing Stock Growth - As per the recent Census 2022 results, between 2016 and 2022 Louth added 3,443 new housing units, bringing the total housing stock to 54,842.

Construction Trends - According to Census 2022 results, 39.6% of Co. Louth's housing stock in 2022 was built between 1991 and 2010. This represents a slightly higher figure than observed at State level (39.1%). Meanwhile, in 2022, 8.9% of Co. Louth's housing stock was built between 2011 and 2022 which is higher than the State average (7.8%).

Housing Stock Growth Rate - As per Census 2022, Louth's housing stock growth rate (7.3%) exceeded the national housing stock growth rate of 6% between 2016 and 2022. The county ranked 11th amongst local authorities in terms of housing construction during that period.

Housing Unit Types - According to GeoDirectory's June 2022 report, apartments in Louth account for 4.9% of the housing units, while detached houses make up 24%, which is the second lowest rate in the country. Terraced housing has the second highest rate at 32%.

Housing Tenures - As per Census 2022, owner-occupied housing with no mortgage comprises 34.4% of total housing tenures in Louth, followed by owner-occupied housing with a mortgage at 32.2%. Rented housing from a private landlord stands at 15.1%, which is broadly in line with national figures.

Housing Vacancy Rate - As per the preliminary results of the 2022 Census, Louth county has a housing stock vacancy rate of 6.8%, which is the sixth lowest in Ireland. There were 3,675 vacant units in the county, accounting for 2.2% of national vacancies. The top reasons for vacancy in Louth were rental property, other reasons/not stated, renovation, deceased, and for sale.

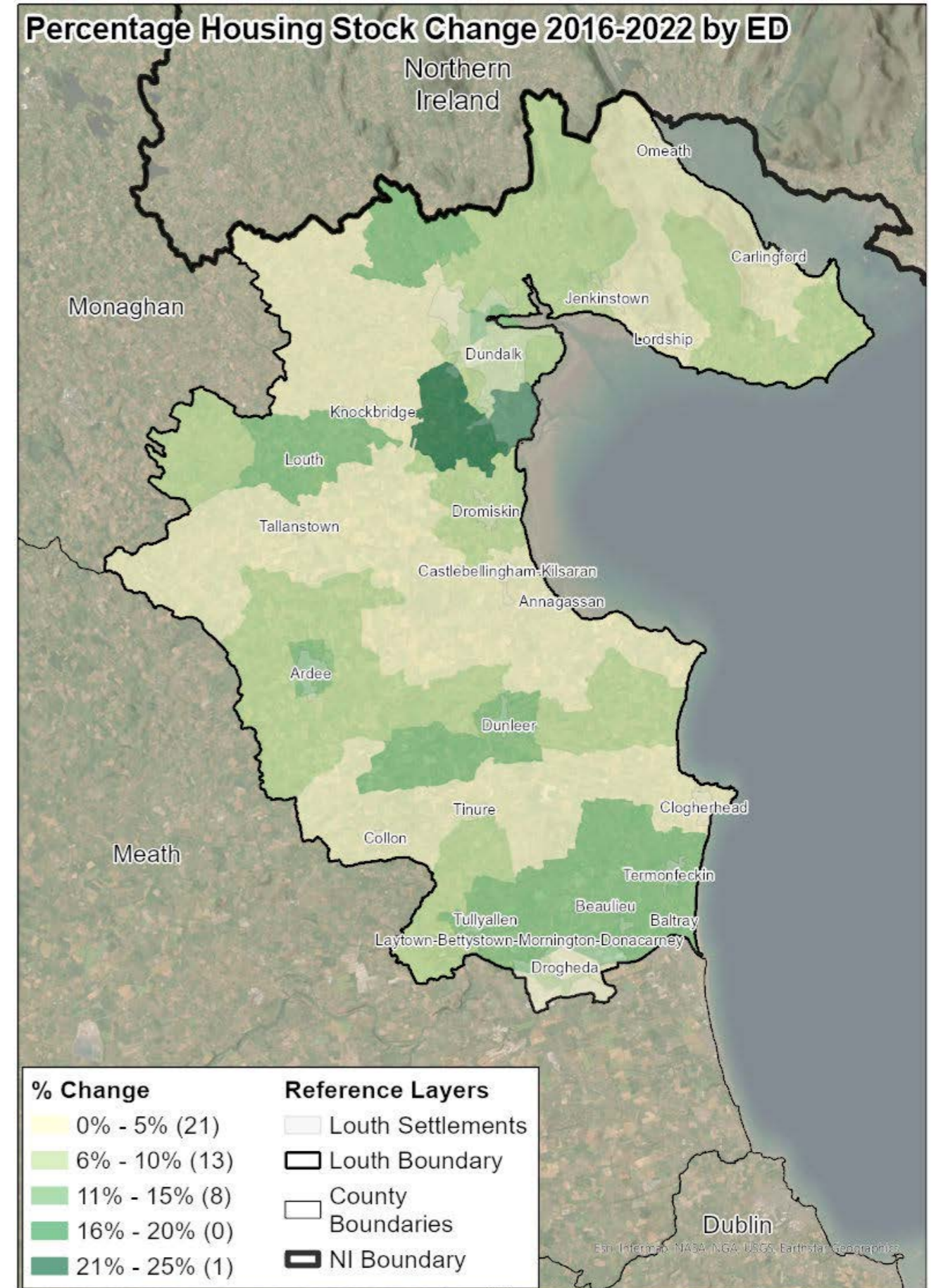


Figure 4.6: Percentage housing stock change by electoral district

4.4 Economy and Employment

County Louth's strategic location on the East Coast of Ireland, between Dublin and Belfast, ensures a high degree of connectivity to key economic hubs through airports, ports, and road and rail infrastructure. As a result, the county is well positioned to attract both domestic and foreign investment, as underlined by the Dundalk and Drogheda's designation as Regional Growth Centres. High value sectors highlighted in the Louth County Development Plan (2021-2027) include biopharmaceuticals, retail, tourism, manufacturing, food and beverage production, financial services, ICT, health, and education.

Economic Contrast - Louth's economic opportunities are largely located in urban employment centres of Drogheda and Dundalk. Rural centres, in particular, face a range of challenges around unemployment and underused or neglected sites which are often compounded by a lack of public transport and the ongoing increase in the cost of living.

Key Industry Sectors - Louth's top three industry sectors in Census 2016 were Commerce and Trade (25.8%), Professional Services (23.9%), and Manufacturing Industries (11.8%).

Infrastructure - Key infrastructure underpinning Louth's economic activity, includes its educational institutions (e.g. DkIT), transportation links (e.g. M1 Motorway and Dublin-Belfast rail line), and port facilities at Drogheda and Greenore. Its proximity to Dublin Airport, Dublin Port and Warrenpoint Port adds to its strategic advantage. There is also the possibility of a deepwater port being constructed just to the

south of the county in Bremore. In 2023, the All Ireland Strategic Rail Review recommended significant improvements in speed and frequency on the Dublin-Belfast train line. Investment from Irish Rail and Translink is already taking place.

Importance of FDI and Large Firms - Foreign direct investment (FDI) and large firms play a crucial role in the county's economic prosperity, with IDA client companies providing employment to over 4,500 people in 2022.

Commuter Patterns - The High-level CSO Place of Work, School or College - Census of Anonymised Records (POWSCAR) data from 2016 indicates that approximately 5,700 people commute from Louth to Dublin and Northern Ireland (4,800 to Dublin and 900 individuals to Northern Ireland) (figures 4.7 & 4.8).

Enterprise Size and Business Vacancy - According to the 2020 Business Demography findings,

Louth ranks third in terms of the rate of large enterprises in the county. Approximately 34.5% of employment in the area is provided by companies with over 250 employees. Medium-sized enterprises (50-249 employees) and small businesses (11-49 employees) account for 18.9% and 25% of employment respectively. Micro-firms (10 or less employees), meanwhile, account for 21.6% of the county's employment.

Business Vacancy Rate - Louth holds the twelfth highest business vacancy rate in the country (14.4%). This information is based on the GeoDirectory Commercial Buildings Report for Q2 of 2022.

Disposable Income - Louth has the tenth highest disposable income per person (€21,671) in the country, slightly below the national average (€23,461), as per the 2020 National Accounts data.

Border Proximity - As per Census 2016, approximately one-third of the

Louth's population lives within 10km of the Northern Irish border.

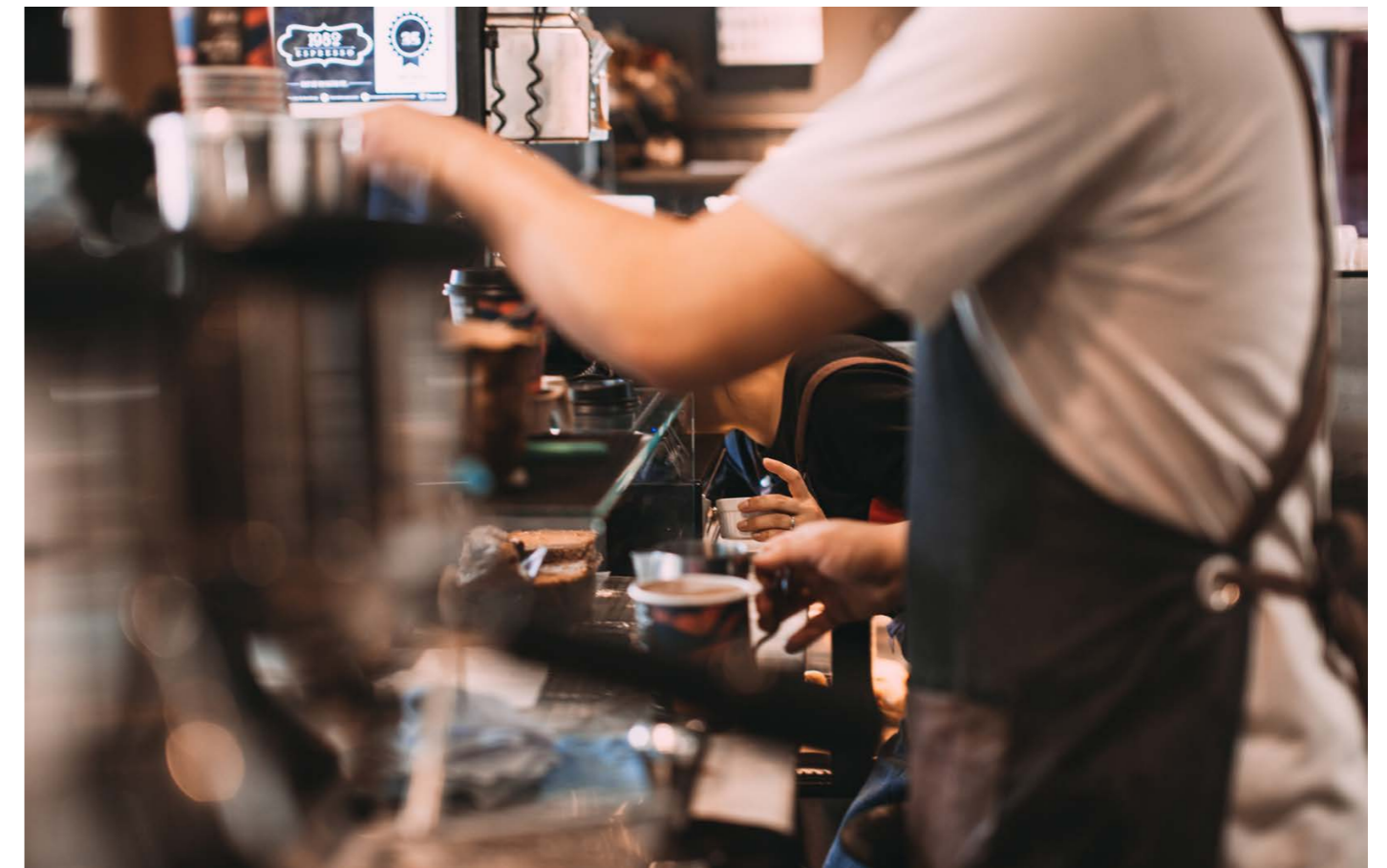
Gender and Employment - Census 2022 data indicates that women in Louth are more likely to be looking after the home/family than men, with slightly lower employment rates for women. Unemployment rates and rates of being-in-education are, however, similar between genders.

Third level education - DkIT as the county's only third level institute. According to its 2020 vision document, in 2019/2020 the institute had 4,529 student Full-Time Equivalents. Of these, there were 187 postgraduates. As part of DkIT's ambition to be designated as

a technical university, the aim is to raise the number of postgraduates to 457 by 2025/2026. Currently DkIT is composed of five schools (i.e.: School of Engineering, School of Business and Humanities, School of Health and Science, School of Informatics and Creative Arts, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching).

Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor - As stated earlier, Objective 44 of the National Planning Framework is of particular relevance to County Louth: 'In co-operation with relevant Departments in Northern Ireland, to further support and develop the economic potential of the Dublin-Belfast Corridor and in particular

the core Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry network and to promote and enhance its international visibility.' The economic importance of the corridor is reflected in the RSES and County Development Plan. In an effort to convert policy to investment, The M1 Corridor Project was created. It is a business-led initiative driven by local business groups, and spearheaded by Dundalk Chamber, Drogheda & District Chamber, and The Mill Enterprise Hub and Oriel Hub Enterprise Centre. The aim is to drive international investment into the region by highlighting the advantages it has as a superb location for business growth.



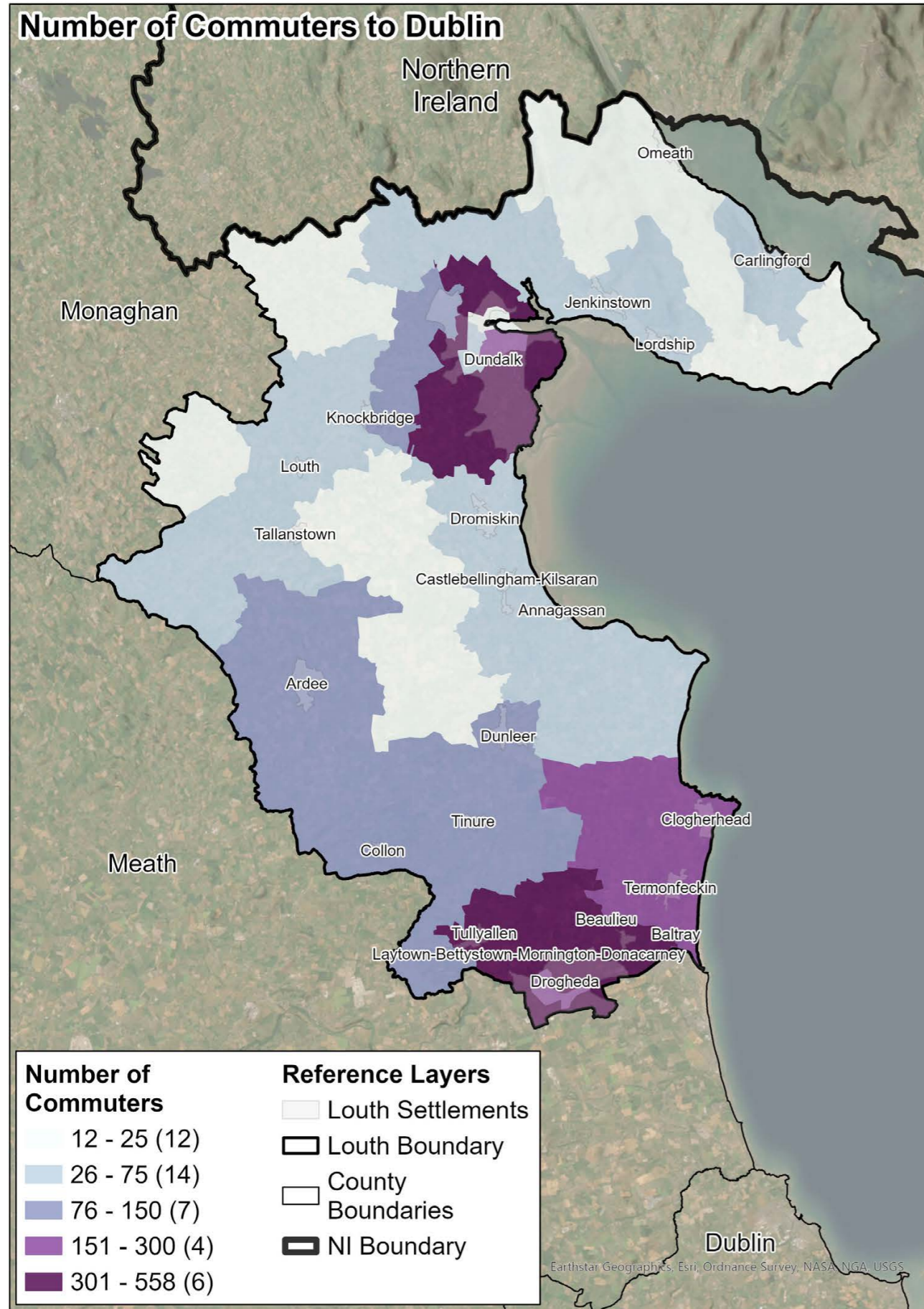


Figure 4.7: Commuters to Dublin by electoral district

(Source: CSO POWSCAR 2016)

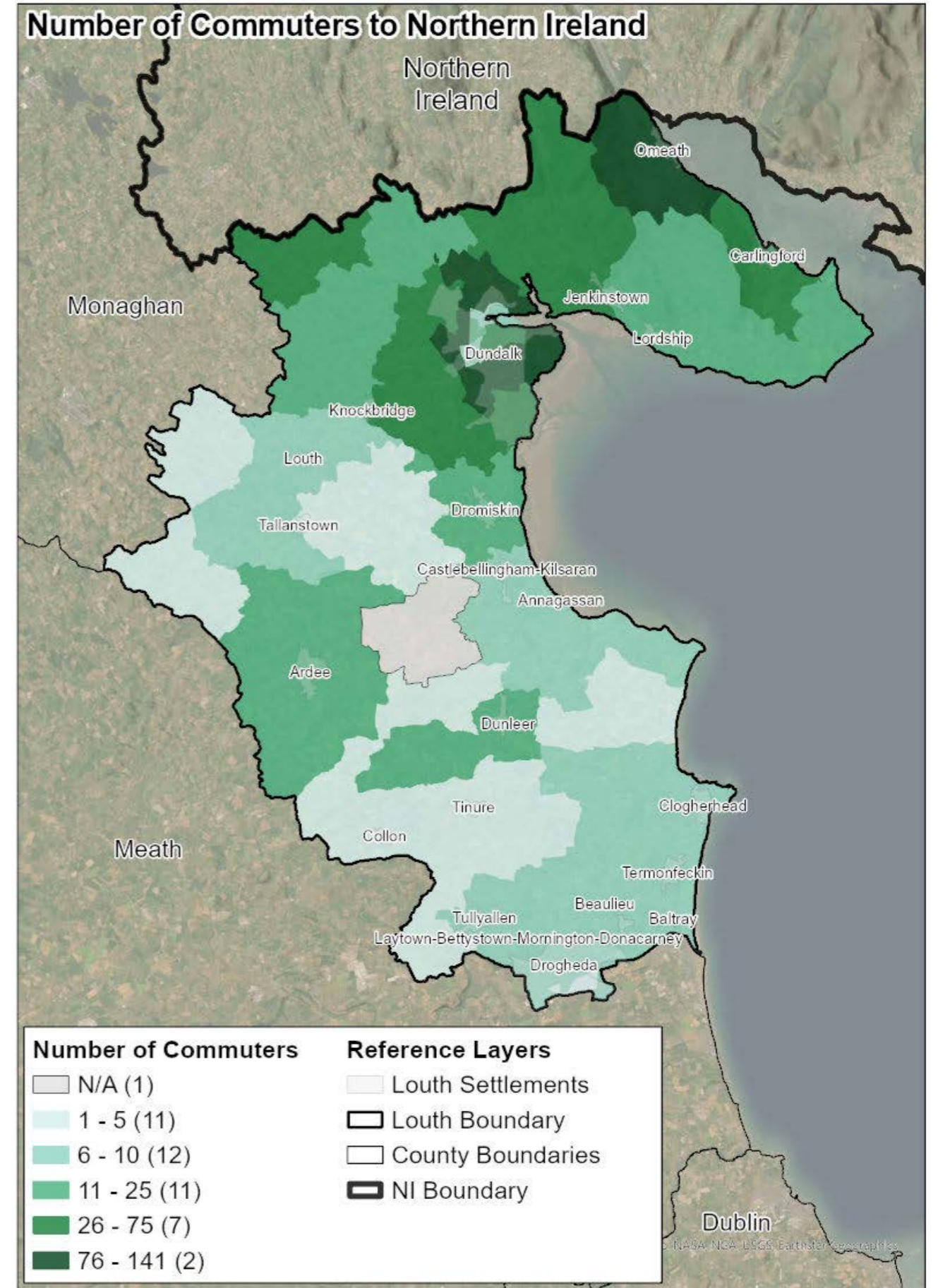


Figure 4.8: Commuters to Northern Ireland by electoral district

4.4 Economy and Employment contd.

Employment - From 2016 to 2022, the total population aged 15 years and over grew from 99,219 to 110,609 (+11.5%). Consequently, the employment rate for individuals aged 15 years and over rose from 50.7% to 53.5%, aligning with the national trend. Despite this increase, Louth still falls behind the overall state average, with only 56% of the population aged 15 years and over in employment in 2022.

The health and education sectors are significant employers (fig. 4.9). This includes two hospitals (Our Lady of Lourdes in Drogheda, Louth County Hospital in Dundalk), 11 nursing homes and the three key educational facilities (Dundalk Institute of Technology, Drogheda Institute of Further Education, Ó Fiach Institute of Further Education).

Population Aged 15 Years and Over in the Labour Force by Broad Industrial Group, 2011 to 2016

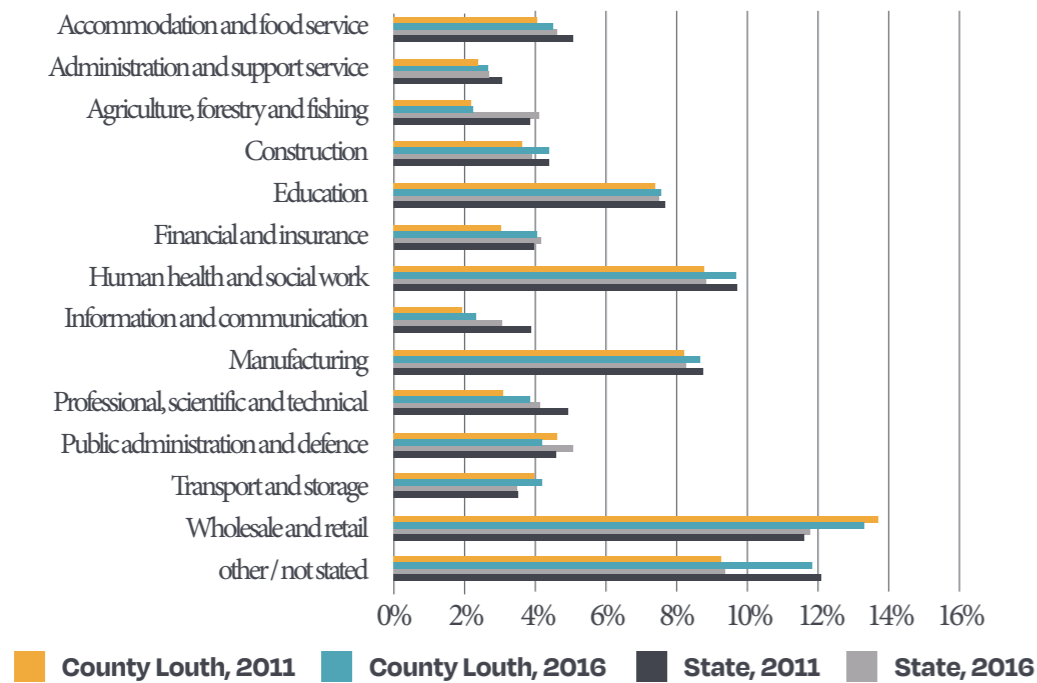


Figure 4.9: Labour force by broad industrial group

Unemployment - Louth has higher unemployment rates compared to the national average, but progress is being made, particularly in reducing the gender disparity (fig. 4.10). Between 2016 and 2022 rates decreased from 16.7% to 10.9%. Although youth unemployment has decreased by 40% since 2016, it remains notably higher than the overall county and country average. While the gender gap persists, it is narrowing, with male unemployment averaging at 11.2% and female unemployment at 10.5% in 2022.

Unemployment Rates By Age Group and Gender, 2016 / 2022

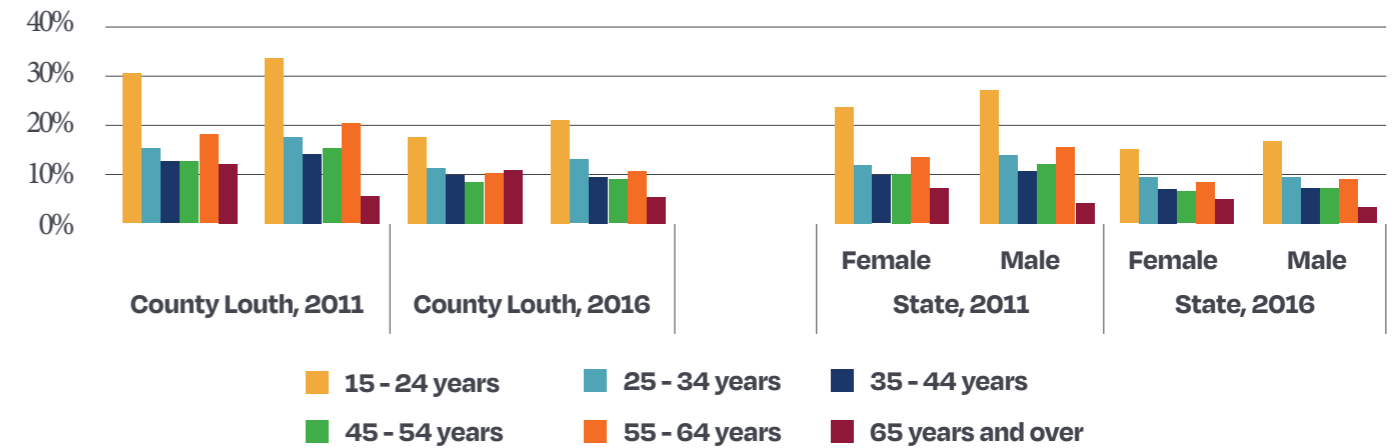


Figure 4.10: Unemployment rates

4.5 Social and Community

Percentage of Population Aged 15 Years and Older with a Third Level Qualification

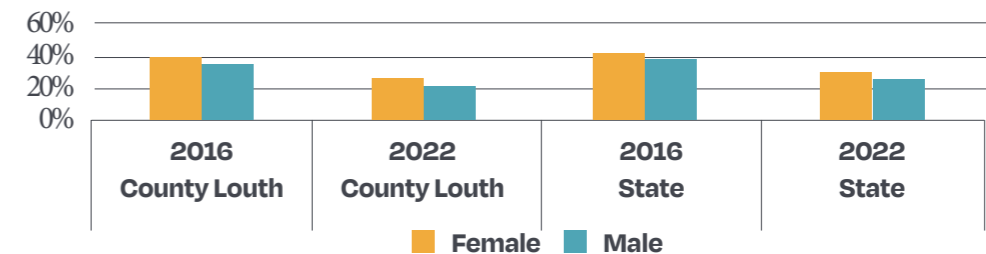
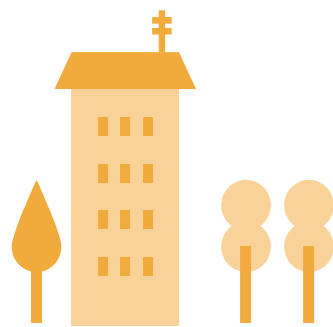


Figure 4.11: 3rd level qualification levels

Education Levels - According to Census 2022, tertiary education levels for the county's population aged 15+ is 38.7%, which is below the state average of 42.8% (fig. 4.11). Between 2011 and 2016, third level education levels in the over 15 year old cohort improved from 32.6% to 36% which was slightly below the state figure of 40% in 2016. Approximately 2.7% of the those over the age of 15 are classed as having no formal education.



Household Composition - Married couples with children account for 30.1% of households in Louth while Single-person households account for 22.7% of households. One-parent households, meanwhile, constitute 12.3% of households, as per Census 2022 data. The growth rate of number of households in the county (8.7%) exceeded the national average of 8.1% while the average household size in 2022 was 2.80 persons, slightly above the national average of 2.74 persons.

Ukrainian Nationals - According to the CSO, 2,073 Ukrainian nationals have arrived in Louth, out of a total of 84,613 in Ireland, as of June 6th, 2023.

Community Health - In the 2016 census, 58.2% of the population reported being in Very Good Health, and 28.1% considered themselves in Good Health. 1.5% of the population of the county considered themselves in Bad Health with 0.3% considering themselves in Very Bad Health. Importantly, these statistics do not account for the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the physical and mental well-being of the county.

Deprivation Index - In 2016, Louth had a POBAL Deprivation Index Score of -2.96, which was lower than that of the state (-1.74) and region (-0.84),

classifying the county as “marginally below average”. Louth experienced a significant improvement in its score between 2011 and 2016, with an increase of 1.01 points, making it the third-largest improvement in the country during that period.

According to the Deprivation Index Score for Electoral Divisions (EDs), 77.4% of the population in Louth live in areas classified as “marginally below average” or “disadvantaged”, while only 22.6% of EDs are categorized as “marginally above average” (fig. 4.12). Louth does not have any areas classified as Very Affluent or Affluent.

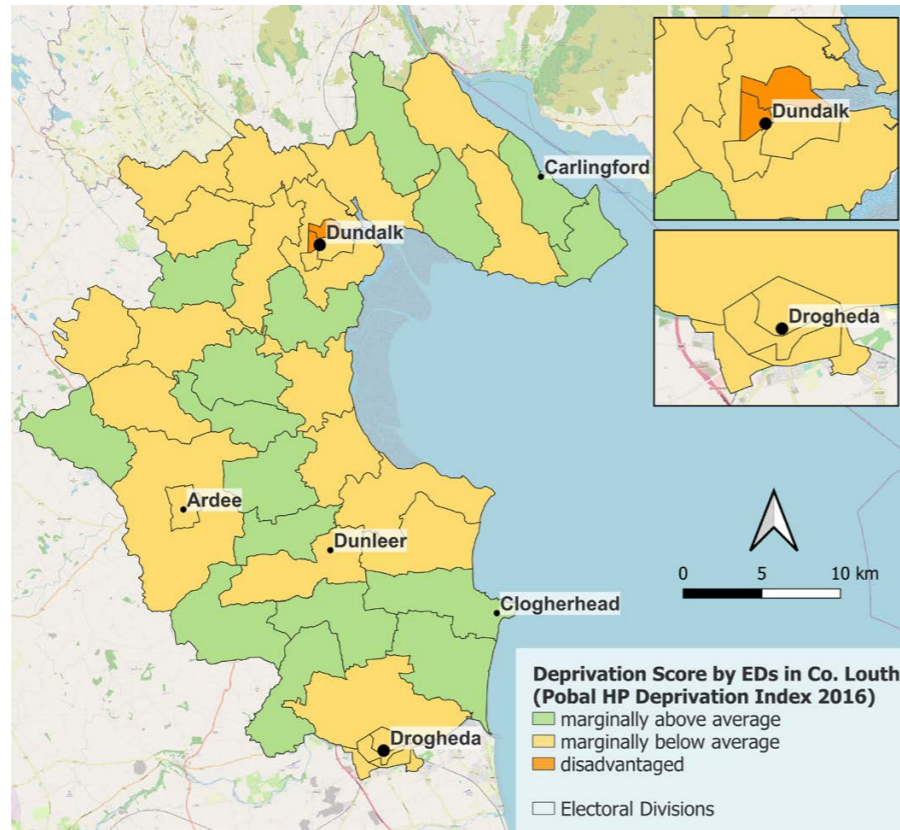


Figure 4.12: Deprivation scores

4.5 Social and Community contd.

Social Class- Between 2016 and 2022, there was an increase in the proportion of professional, managerial, technical and semi-skilled workers both at the county and national levels. In the same period there was a decline in the proportion of non-manual workers, skilled workers, and unskilled workers in the county and the state. The county has a lower proportion of professional workers and managerial and technical workers compared to the national level. These trends are reflected in the diagram adjacent diagram.

Crime - In line with the national trend, the number of recorded crimes in Louth peaked before the pandemic. From 2021 to 2022 total crimes recorded by Louth Garda Division increased by 4% (CSO, 2023).

Sports and Recreation - According to the Louth Sports Partnership, Louth has 54 Gaelic clubs, 45 Association Football clubs, 15 Athletics clubs, and 158 other clubs covering various sports and activities. Louth is the only county, apart from Dublin, with more than one club in the Irish top-flight League of Ireland.

Tourist Attractions and Heritage - Popular attractions in Louth include Old Mellifont Abbey, Millmount Museum, Carlingford Lough, and Beaulieu House and Gardens in Louth. Louth is part of Failte Ireland’s Ancient East brand and is implementing plans for Carlingford Vision ‘31 and heritage trail improvements. Other popular tourist attractions include Monasterboice, Droichead Arts Centre, Drogheda, An Táin Arts Centre, and the County Museum, Dundalk.

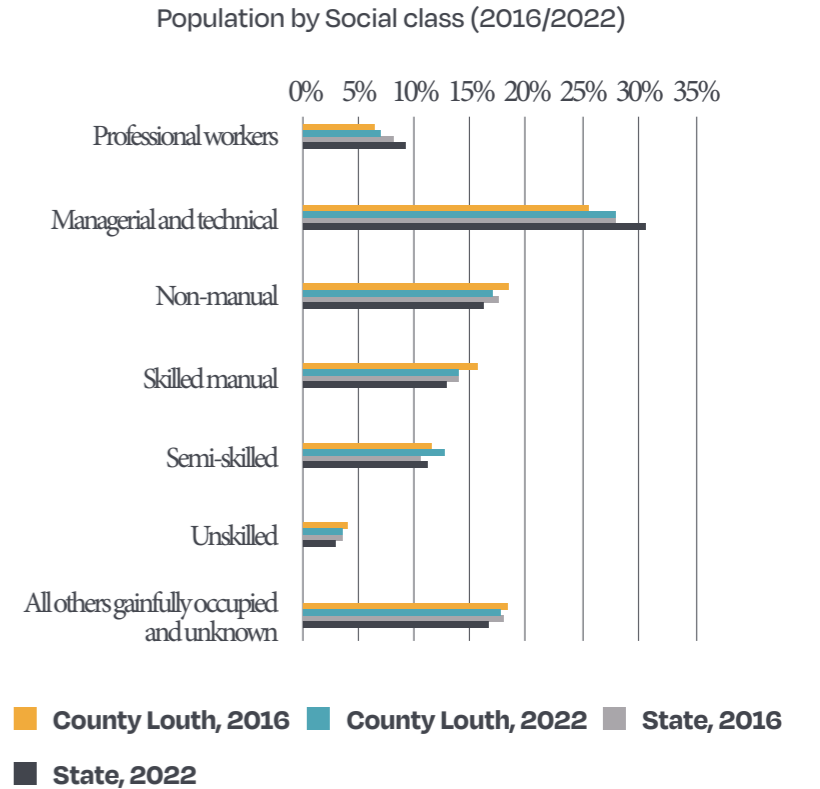


Figure 4.13: Population by social class

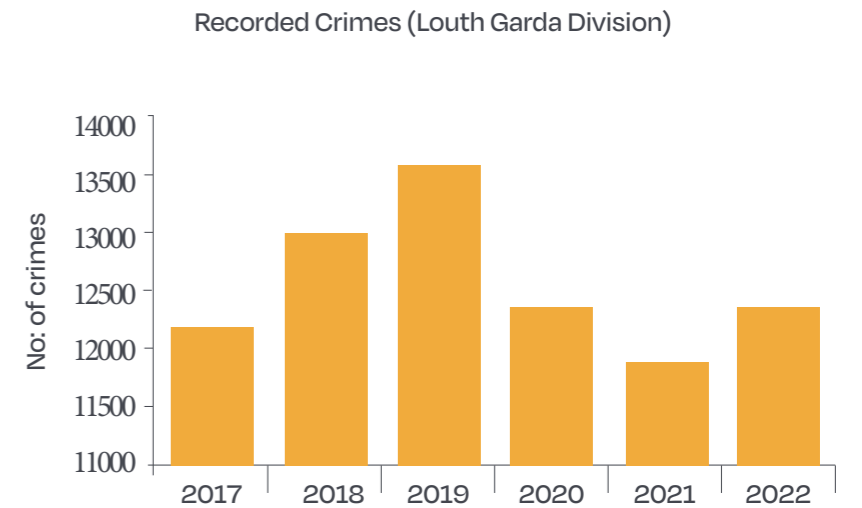


Figure 4.14: Recorded crimes

4.5 Social and Community contd.

Voluntary Activities - According to Census 2022 data, 12.8% of the population (17,851 individuals) are engaged in voluntary activities with most volunteers aged over 45. In terms of breakdown, sport, community, and social/charity activities are the most popular voluntary categories, with religion and politics being less common (figures 4.15 & 4.16). Younger age groups are generally more involved in sports, while individuals over 65 are engaged more in religious activities.

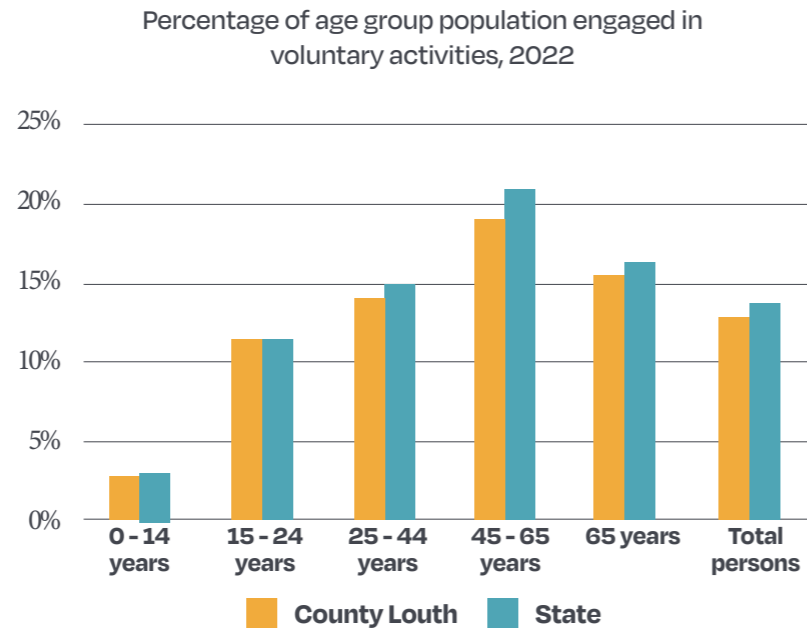


Figure 4.15: Overall voluntary activity by age

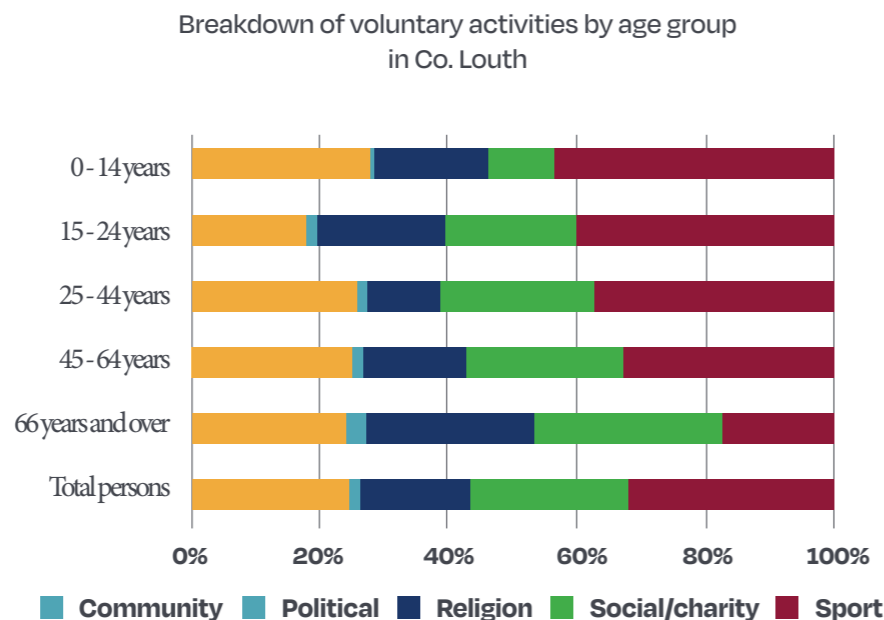


Figure 4.16: Voluntary engagement age breakdown by activity

4.6 Environment

Despite its relatively small size, County Louth is rich in land and marine-based natural assets. As the county seeks to meet its climate objectives, this presents a range of challenges and opportunities for the local population, particularly around work, lifestyle, and travel.

Private Transportation Reliance -

According to Census 2016 results, the county's residents relies heavily on private vehicles for transportation, with over 70% of commuters using cars, vans, or being passengers in cars. Only a small percentage commute by bicycle (2%), on foot (10%), or by public transport (6%).

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure - Despite its high number of commuters, the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) and associated infrastructure in Louth has been slow compared to neighbouring counties. Louth currently has 356 chargers, ranking 11th out of 12 counties in the region.

Renewable Energy Generation -

According to the SEAI, Louth has a relatively low capacity for renewable energy generation, with 5 wind and hydro electricity stations totalling 7 MW. This capacity places Louth at 23rd in the nation and accounts for only 0.2% of Ireland's total installed capacity. Despite this, Ireland's first major offshore wind farm, the Oriel Wind Farm scheme, is expected to be developed off Louth's coast. When fully operational the scheme has the potential to generate up to 330 megawatts (MW).

Sustainable Energy Communities-

Louth has 11 Sustainable Energy Communities, including specific areas such as Cooley Peninsula and Dunleer SEC, Tidy Towns, and Stephenstown Pound Trust.

Building Energy Efficiency- Louth shows good performance in some areas regarding energy efficiency, with 6 A2-rated and 14 A3-rated areas according to the SEAI's Median Domestic Building Energy Rating. However, there is room for improvement in the 206 areas with D or E ratings.

Mixed Non-Domestic Building Performance- The performance of non-domestic buildings in Louth varies, with 16 small areas scoring below an E2 rating and 10 areas achieving a performance level equal to or exceeding an A3 rating. The majority of areas fall within the B1 to C3 range, with some areas falling between D1 and E2.

Environmental Conservation Areas- Louth is home to six Special Areas of Conservation (Boyne Coast and Estuary, Carlingford Mountain, Carlingford Shore, Clogher Head, Dundalk Bay, and the River Boyne and

Blackwater SACs) and five Special Protection Areas (Boyne Estuary, Carlingford Lough, Dundalk Bay, River Boyne and River Blackwater, and Stabannan-Braganstown SPA).

Greenway Infrastructure- Louth features the highly popular Carlingford/Omeath Greenway. The county also has convenient access to the Boyne Valley Greenway, promoting sustainable, active transportation options.

Water Quality- In 2022, the county had three Blueflag beaches, including Clogherhead, Lurganboy and Shelling Hill/Templetown. According to the EPA data, the majority of its rivers have Good water quality (55.9%) with the rest having Moderate (29.4%) and Poor (14.7%) water quality.

Flooding Risks- Flooding poses a significant problem for the county's infrastructure and public/private property, arising from both freshwater sources (rain and river flooding) and saltwater (storm surge, coastal water intrusion). To address the historical flood risks in Dundalk and Ardee, the Council is currently engaged in the development of flood alleviation works.

SCOT Analysis



5.1 SCOT Analysis

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5.1 SCOT Analysis

A high level study into Louth's Strengths, Constraints, Opportunities, and Threats (SCOT) was conducted and several major points across each category were identified. The following section refers to the county's perceived strengths and opportunities.

Strengths - can be understood as the advantages of Louth in the present day.

Constraints - can be understood as the challenges facing the county at present.

- ### Strengths
- Location on the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor is a driver for investment, growth and skilled employment,
 - Strong relationship with hinterland and cross-border towns (esp. Newry).
 - Strong transport links: M1 and Dublin-Belfast railway.
 - Proximity to Dublin and Belfast airports.
 - Proximity to Dublin Port and Warrenpoint Port.
 - Presence of three ports: Dundalk, Drogheda and Greenore.
 - Presence of two regional growth centres (i.e. Dundalk and Drogheda).
 - A strong domestic economy with potential for expansion.
 - Highly urbanised.
 - Strong uptake in higher density housing forms (incl. apartments, terraced houses) leading to compact growth.
 - The county has benefitted from established clustering/co-location policies (FDI in Dundalk, healthcare within Drogheda).
 - The county hosts a large number of FDI firms which account for 34.5% of the employment in often well paid, high skilled roles.
 - Presence of DkIT as the county's only third level institute. Complemented by further education providers DIFE and Ó Fiaich, both administered by LMETB.
 - Access to scenic areas incl. Carlingford Lough, Boyne Valley and many beaches.
 - Strong voluntary community sector and network of community groups.
 - Strong sporting achievements, as demonstrated by the presence of two League of Ireland football teams.

- ### Constraints
- Concentrations of deprivation in certain areas.
 - County's relatively lower level of educational attainment.
 - Issues with social integration and the limited accessibility of services.
 - Lack of adequate public transportation linking rural areas to main towns.
 - A high dependence on private motor vehicles which undermines efforts to meet climate targets and to reduce congestion/traffic.
 - An underdeveloped night-time economy and entertainment options in certain urban centres.
 - Perceived lack of safety and surveillance in some public spaces.
 - Limited accommodation options (esp. hotel beds) for visitors.
 - Somewhat undefined unique offering as a tourist destination.
 - Community groups issues around funding, retaining talent/staff and growing their services.
 - Lack of sports facilities in certain areas (incl. in rural areas and new estates) as well as a lack of alternative sporting options (i.e. other than GAA, soccer, etc.).
 - Perceived lack of awareness and promotion around the county's strengths.

5.1 SCOT Analysis contd.

The following section refers to the county's perceived opportunities and threats.

Opportunities - can be understood as the future strengths of a place or County. They represent the potential advantages available to Louth and its communities.

Threats - can be understood as the future constraints of a place or County. They represent the potential challenges facing Louth and its communities.

- ### Opportunities
- Deepening Louth's role as the workshop/service centre connecting Northern Ireland with the rest of Ireland.
 - Continue to develop the M1 Corridor investment initiative.
 - Louth offers an attractive standard of living for business and employees seeking to relocate.
 - Creation of relatively strong pipeline of housing attractive to businesses and people.
 - Young, energetic population.
 - Significant tourism potential as part of the Ireland's Ancient East proposition.
 - Dundalk IT's potential to grow further and provide more educational opportunities and improving industry linkages.
 - Supporting development of other educational establishments (incl. Ó Fiaich and Drogheda Institute of Further Education).
 - Improving resilience and capacity of community groups.
 - New infrastructure to help Louth capitalise on the growth of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor (e.g. DART expansion, improved rail connections with Belfast and Dublin).
 - Developing Dundalk and Drogheda's strong existing sectoral clusters and local niche industries.
 - Potential to develop new natural/green recreation spaces.
 - Developing a strong off-shore wind energy sector.
 - Employment through building retrofitting.

- ### Threats
- A localised/regional recession could have a negative effect in the county particularly given the importance of international trade.
 - Failure to adequately address social disadvantage and to promote meaningful integration could produce long-term challenges across social, education, and economic dimensions.
 - Lack of competitiveness and inward investment due to a shortage of housing and inadequate infrastructure.
 - Increased migration of the youth due to a lack of housing, educational, employment and lifestyle opportunities.
 - Increased pressure on port infrastructure due to capacity issues.
 - Vacancy and dereliction.
 - The increasing age dependency rate will put increased pressure on public infrastructure/services.
 - Unbalanced educational attainment within the county will lead to two speed economy.
 - An undefined identity for the county will limit tourism potential.
 - Climate change and its associated consequences on infrastructure, services and the built environment.

Consultation Findings

06

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6.1 Consultation Process & Findings

This Chapter summarises the various consultations which were undertaken as part of the analysis to inform the Louth LECP 2024-2029. The LECP has been developed in a collaborative and cooperative manner through engagement with a wide range of key stakeholders including the general public, Public Participation Network (PPN), community representative groups, County Council, state agencies, education providers and the private sector. The following was undertaken:

- Five face to face public consultation sessions in Carlingford, Dundalk, Ardee and Drogheda (68 groups/organisations represented. 230 total attendees of public events)

- Online business survey (66 responses)
- Online community survey (421 responses) (figure 6.1. contains some key findings from the survey)
- Individual meetings (online and in-person) with key stakeholders from the public, private and community sectors
- Two online workshops with key stakeholders to aid the prioritisation process for the implementation plan
- Written submissions

Following a review of groups/ organisations attending the public consultations it was noted that there was under representation from members of the travelling community. This was remedied through :

- Leaflet drop at Woodland Park Halting Site, Inner Relief Road, Dundalk
- St Anthony's Park Drogheda Traveler Specific Accommodation door to door survey carried out
- Naughton Close Dundalk Traveler Specific Accommodation door to door survey carried out
- Naughton Close Residents Association, community team assisted in preparation of LECP submission

6.1 Consultation Process & Findings contd.

A comprehensive promotion campaign was created to ensure that members of the community and key stakeholders were aware of the public consultation programme. The advertising and promotions campaign included :

- Communication to the public about the LECP, Public Consultation Options & LECP Surveys
- Promoted through Louth PPN Friday Communique (500+ community & Voluntary groups)
- Promoted on local Radio: Dundalk FM & LMF Community Diary
- Advertised in local Newspapers
- Shared with Elected Members and Oireachtas Members
- Promoted on LCC website under Latest news, Community & Economic Development Tabs
- Promoted through Louth Age Friendly Alliance and Louth Older People's Council
- Promoted on LCC Social Media Platforms

- Promoted in Healthy Ireland Newsletter
- Promoted through Louth Library Service

The aim of the engagements, in conjunction with the socio-economic analysis, was to identify key priorities and needs that could be addressed through the high-level goals, objectives and actions of the plan and reflected in the desired outcomes. This includes community elements related to areas such as service provision and social inclusion and economic elements related to areas such as developing the green economy (e.g., renewable energy and retrofitting) and attracting new investment. Two later online workshop sessions were held with key stakeholders to help prioritise the various actions for the first implementation plan.

The extensive consultation exercise was, therefore, designed

to identify opportunities and needs as well as secure vital buy-in from key stakeholders who would be the drivers and champions of specific actions of the Implementation Plan. In doing so, the public participation process generated a sense of shared ownership for the high-level goals, and secured the buy-in of key stakeholders, including the public.

The targeted engagement process brought together key stakeholders from a wide range of fields including government agencies, the private sector, community and voluntary groups, the environment, health, education, creative sector, heritage, tourism, as well as younger and older groups. Examples of representative groups which were involved include the HSE, DkIT, Chamber of Commerce (Drogheda and Dundalk), Irish Wheelchair Association, the Sports Partnership, Comhairle na nÓg and Louth Local Development.

Views on key objectives to create a sustainable and prosperous future for the people of Louth

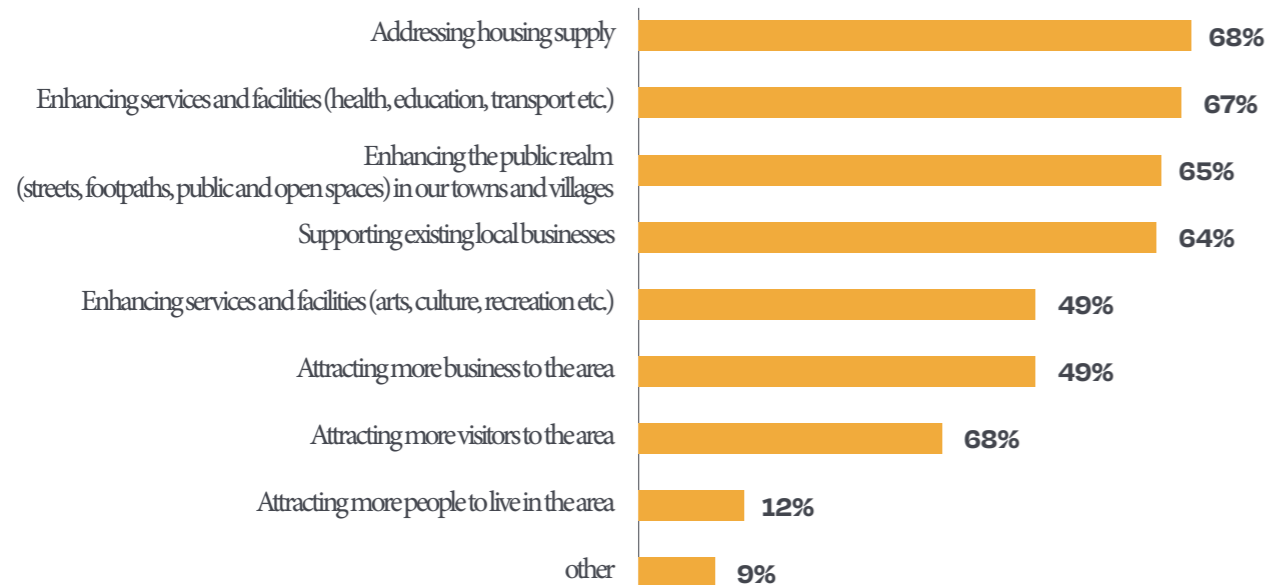


Figure 6.1: Louth's Key Objectives as communicated in the community survey

6.2 Key Themes from the Consultation

All written submissions and survey responses were collated and reviewed as part of the consultation analysis as well as the key points raised during the workshops. The combined analysis of the different strands of the consultation identified several key themes aligned to economic and community needs. A sample

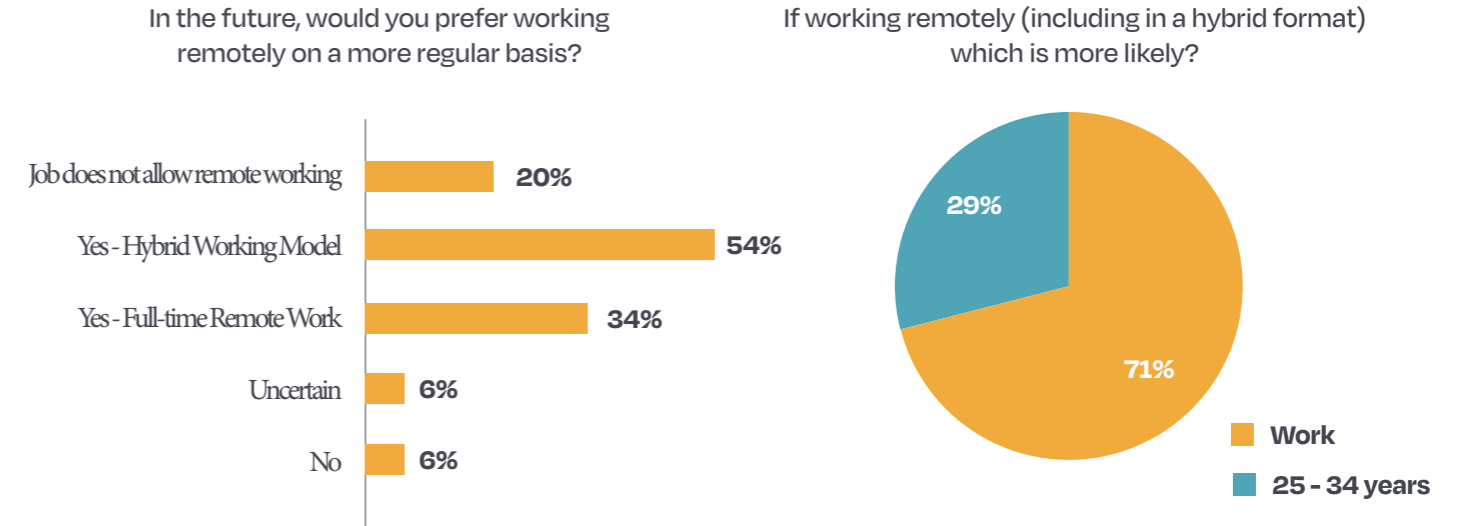
'snapshot' of points under these themes are outlined below. The findings of the consultation have been used to assist in the identification of what the county needs and its key strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats. Similarly, ideas and suggestions put forward by the community and other key

stakeholders have been incorporated, both directly and indirectly, into the goals, objectives, key desired outcomes, and actions.

6.2.1 Economy, Employment, and Housing

- Despite various developments across the county, the lack of accommodation, particularly affordable rental and purchase housing, was regularly mentioned. The issue was highlighted as undermining the county's ability to attract investment, to grow its population and to adequately sustain and service its communities.
- Tourism across the county was seen as being unbalanced, with certain parts such as Carlingford attracting more visitors than others. Additionally, the type and quality of tourism sector economic opportunities was highlighted as being of importance. The wider industry is also restrained by a lack of accommodation options.
- Participants highlighted the important role which DKIT, LMETB, Drogheda Institute of Further Education and Ó Fiaich Institute of Further Education play in creating the talent base needed to meet employer requirements and upskill the community for jobs of the future.
- Areas of interest for economic development which were mentioned included fintech, IT, agri-food, as well as the green economy (e.g. renewable energy and retrofitting apprenticeships) (fig. 6.2).
- The county's location on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, it's strong cross-border ties and its rich industrial heritage were mentioned as distinct advantages for the county.
- A related issue identified was the ability of Louth to both retain and attracting its workforce, especially younger talent. Creating vibrant town centres, with a strong a night life economy will help in this regard. Participants also emphasised the need for accessible, meaningful and flexible employment opportunities, along with the need for necessary local transport, working hubs and childcare supports (figure 6.3 & 6.4).

6.2.1 Economy, Employment, and Housing cont.



Figures 6.3 & 6.4: Working at home vs working remotely. Answers taken from community survey.

6.2.2 Infrastructure and Accessibility

In terms of rural economic development and job creation, which is the most significant for the future of Louth?

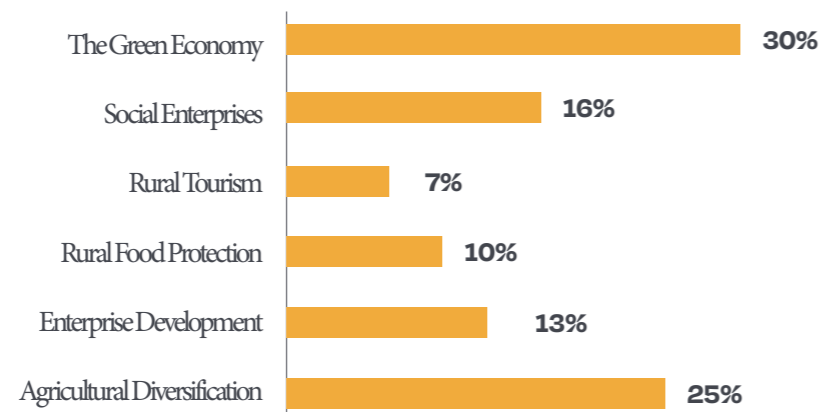


Figure 6.2: Rural economic development and job creation. Answers taken from community survey.

- Louth's location on the eastern coast, including its road and rail connection to Dublin and Belfast, and its large population catchment were mentioned as being a strategic advantage for the county. For some participants, the high level of accessibility presents challenges since visitors may easily 'by-pass' the county.
- The shortage of public transport options and frequency was highlighted as an area that needs significant improvement throughout the county, particularly in relation to connecting the towns with rural areas (including the Local Link Bus service).
- The consultation also identified a key desire and need for safe, sustainable and active transport and associated infrastructure throughout the county. Participants mentioned the need for more well-segregated cycleways, greenways, and pedestrian paths, along with disabled parking spaces. Aligned with the national trend, digital connectivity is identified as an important need for Louth. It is vital to remove any broadband blackspots (fig. 6.5).

In terms of rural infrastructure and social inclusion, which is the most significant for the future of Louth?

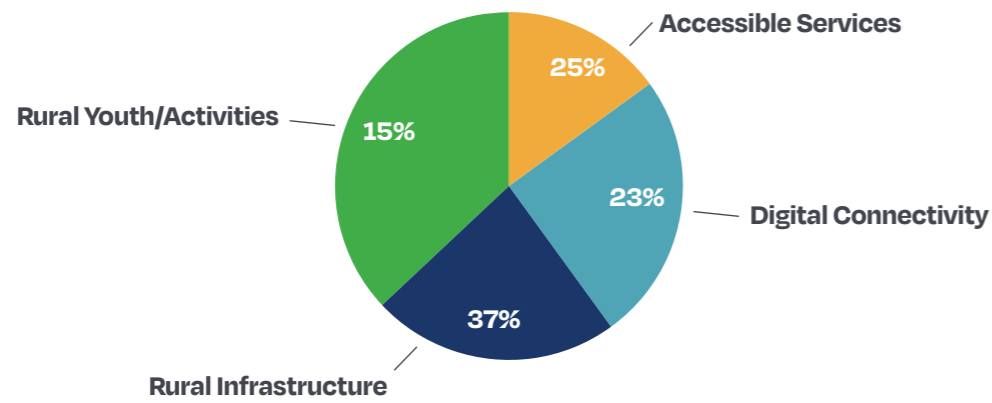


Figure 6.5: Rural infrastructure and social inclusion. Answers taken from community survey

Which of these green initiatives would you see benefitting Louth the most?

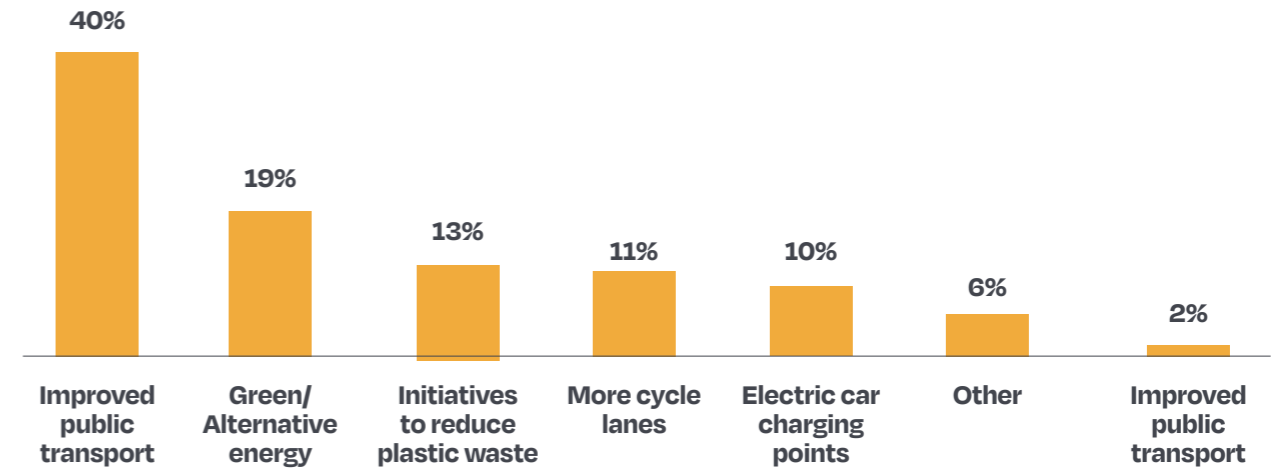


Figure 6.7: Green initiative suggestions from the community survey

6.2.3 Environment and Sustainability

- There was a high level of concern around the impacts of climate change (fig. 6.6). As a result, the importance of protecting the natural environment and the threat posed from climate change (including flooding, coastal erosion, and the degradation of land and marine ecosystems) was highlighted by participants.
- The importance of protecting the county's biodiversity was also highlighted. Suggestions included rewilding and restoration of ecosystems and the development of community gardens.
- Shared and active mobility options (incl. Greenway development) were identified as mechanisms for reducing the county's over-reliance on private car ownership, while at the same time reducing rural isolation and improving community development and employment opportunities (fig. 6.7).
- Suggestions to develop Louth's green economy included: the promotion of retrofitting apprenticeships and linkages with education providers, the development of the eco-tourism and agri-tourism industries, and support for a range of community initiatives (e.g. Tidy Towns, Sustainable Energy Communities).

What is your view about the impact of climate change on Louth?

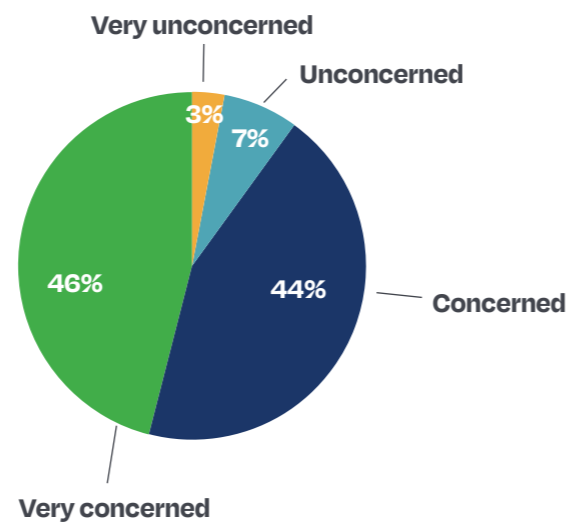


Figure 6.6: Views on the impact of climate change on County Louth from the community survey



6.2.4 Community and Quality of Life

Louth's active heritage, culture and arts sector was mentioned as a key strengths of the county – particularly regarding its contribution to community well-being and inclusion.



- The county is highly successful in sports considering on its small size (including two League of Ireland clubs). However, there is still a need for sports amenities and facilities, as well as alternative recreational options.
- There is a need to address youth mental health issues – in particular to ensure education and engagement between parents, educators, and experts.
- The participants highlighted the county's greatest assets, such as its people, its infrastructure, and natural amenities (e.g. beaches and riverways areas) which are integral to Louth's high quality of life (e.g. Carlingford Lough, Boyne Valley) (fig. 6.8).
- Ensuring inclusive and healthy communities should be a key ambition for the LECP. To enable this, strong engagement will be needed with vulnerable groups. This includes: younger and older

- people, people living with disability, minority groups (Travellers, Roma, and migrants), as well as isolated individuals and groups, and those on low incomes.
- There is a strong culture of volunteerism which benefits the wider community. According to respondents, this should be nurtured and supported in the new LECP, including the county's achievements around its 'Age Friendly' strategy.
- Areas of disadvantage continue to be present to different degrees across different parts of the county. Multi-dimensional efforts will be needed to address and reduce poverty (incl. education, sports, culture and arts).
- Service requirements identified include the need for improved public transport options, more affordable childcare (necessary to improve education and employment options of women) and guaranteed access to healthcare and counselling services for those who require them.



What is Louth's greatest asset?

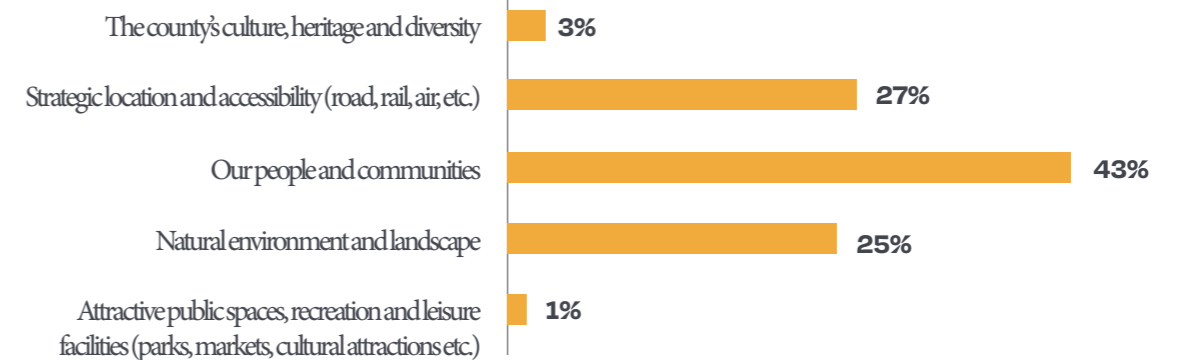
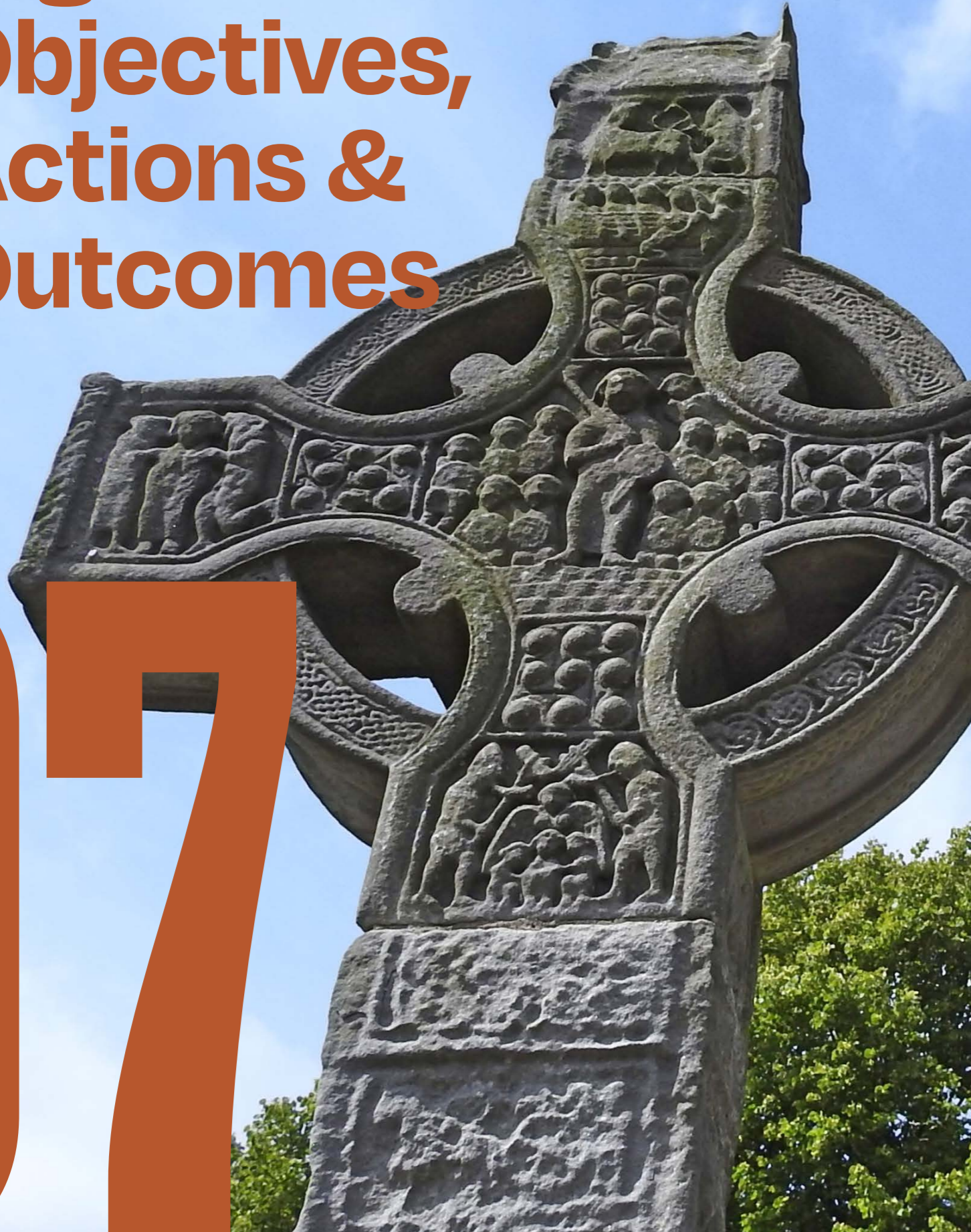


Figure 6.8: Louth's greatest assets as answered in community survey

High-Level Goals Objectives, Actions & Outcomes



High Level Goals	58
Goal 1: Louth will work with all communities to help them reach their full economic and social potential.	60
Goal 2: Louth will continue to develop entrepreneurship and the economic opportunities afforded by the county's strategic location.	65
Goal 3: Louth will foster healthy, inclusive, diverse, creative and resilient neighbourhoods.	69
Goal 4: Louth will actively lead on increasing the county's climate resilience, sustainability and biodiversity.	75
Goal 5: Louth will have engaged, empowered, dynamic, resourced and connected communities.	80

High Level Goals

Louth County Council together with the LCDC, SPC for Economic Development and Enterprise Support and other key stakeholders have developed five high-level goals with associated objectives, actions and desired outcomes to assist in guiding the direction of the county over the 2024-2029 period. Their development has been informed from the findings of the socio-economic analysis, stakeholder and public consultation, and the review of existing policies at local, regional and national level.

The five High Level Goals align with the suggested Themes in the LECP Guidelines:

- Health and Well Being (High Level Goal 3)
- Economic Development (High Level Goals 1, 2 & 4)
- Community and Local Development (High Level Goals 1 & 5)
- Climate Action (High Level Goal 4)

As outlined in the following chapter, the goals, objectives, actions and outcomes cover both economic and community elements as required by the LECP guidelines. They have been designed to positively contribute to the economic and community development of Louth and are aligned with the overall ambition for a inclusive, prosperous and sustainable county.

The high-level goals, objectives, actions and outcomes support the crosscutting priorities outlined in the LECP guidelines. They also support the public sector duty to promote

equality, prevent discrimination and protect human rights. Crosscutting priorities addressed in this LECP include: sustainability, equality, poverty, rurality, age and disability.

The sections that follow outline each high-level goal, along with the associated objectives, actions and desired outcomes (related to the goals and objectives) in more detail. The alignment of each action with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is indicated.

The initial prioritised actions related to the goals are included in the 2-year Implementation Plan in Chapter 8. All of these measures are in line with the provisions of the existing 2021-2027 County Development Plan (as varied) and the wider planning framework (refer to "Overriding Status of the Plan" text at section 1.7). Finally, the Implementation Plan notes the designation of each objective as a Sustainable Community, Sustainable Economic or in some circumstances a combined Sustainable Social and Economic Objective.

Overall, there are 21 Objectives and 86 Actions		
High Level Goal	Objectives	Actions
Goal 1	5	23
Goal 2	3	11
Goal 3	6	21
Goal 4	3	15
Goal 5	4	16



Goal 1: Louth will work with all communities to help them reach their full economic and social potential.

Louth is a dynamic economy benefitting from its location, its people, and services. Louth's people come from a diverse range of backgrounds, cultures, and heritage. Ensuring that all members of community are able to live a life that is dignified and prosperous is, therefore, a key priority of this LECP. Communities across the country are facing similar challenges with high-levels of commercial vacancy, dereliction, and high cost of living. Combatting these challenges, consequently, requires innovative approaches, as well as a renewed commitment to proven programmes and actions that can deliver for all facets of Louth's society.

Objective 1.1: Support the provision of housing where appropriate across the county.

Need: With a growing population resulting from natural change and migration, there is a need for additional housing. The importance of supporting the provision of housing goes beyond meeting the basic social and economic needs of inhabitants. Louth's key economic competitive advantage is its location between Dublin and Belfast (i.e. Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor) and the infrastructure that crosses the county, connecting the two cities. For Louth to leverage this advantage and the associated M1 Corridor initiative, it must have a strong pipeline of housing. This will encourage employers to invest in the county, satisfied that employees will have a place to live. Fulfilling the need for housing is complicated by the growing diversity in household composition and occupant requirements.

Action 1.1.1. In line with the County Development Plan, continue to Deliver Housing for All, Louth Housing Strategy, North East Homeless Strategy and Louth Traveller Accommodation Programme and any subsequent plans.



Action 1.1.2. Continue to encourage and promote the adaptive reuse of existing structures for housing.



Action 1.1.3. Work to facilitate the continued creation of increased housing options for older people (e.g. rightsizing), people with disabilities and those with additional needs, to support the provision of independent and/or assisted living.



Key desired outcome

Housing provision to closely match demand

Goal 1: contd.

Objective 1.2: Address concentrations of disadvantage where they exist, in particular, children living in poverty and material deprivation.

Need: Like elsewhere in the country, there are concentrations of disadvantage in Louth. In the Pobal Deprivation Index the county is listed as being slightly below the national average. The most concentrated levels of disadvantage are in Dundalk. There are other small concentrations spread across rural and urban Louth. From the socio-economic analysis and consultation process the picture of a two speed economy emerged. Effectively, although there were strong economic opportunities in the county, a certain section of the population were unable to take advantage of these. The main reasons were insufficient education, skills and access to transport. Much of the disadvantage in Louth is intergenerational. As a result, a clear focus will need to be placed on breaking the cycle.

Action 1.2.1. Work with and assist state agencies, NGOs and community groups in the development of 'wrap-around' services in areas of disadvantage (e.g. creches, baby rooms, early special needs diagnosis, occupational therapy services, DEIS schools, counselling, youth clubs and youth mentoring).



Action 1.2.2. With a particular focus on DEIS schools, continue to support the development of after school homework clubs, preferably ones with an ability to provide hot meals in areas of disadvantage.



Action 1.2.3. Continue to support the provision of employment, training, and education programmes specifically targeted at early school leavers and those at risk of leaving formal education early.



Action 1.2.4. Continue to support the development of literacy, numeracy, household finance and nutrition education programmes for people living in disadvantaged areas.



Action 1.2.5. Investigate provision of additional transport services (i.e. feasibility study) linking areas of disadvantage to the county's main centres of employment, education centres and acute hospitals.



Key desired outcome

For Pobal Deprivation Index scores in areas of disadvantage to improve. That the skills and education of those from a disadvantaged background are improved so that they can take better advantage of economic opportunities.

Goal 1: contd.

Objective 1.3: Expand the capacity of education providers to meet the education needs of communities.

Need: For Louth to reach its full economic potential and attract even more commercial investment, the skills and education profile of the county needs to improve to a level where they near national averages. The improvement of the skills and education base in Louth is especially important to addressing issues around disadvantage. A key part of this endeavour will be supporting the development of existing third level and further and higher education providers within Louth. Beyond any personal or wider economic benefits realised from a more educated population, there are strong social rewards to be gained by engaging in education and life-long learning in general.

Action 1.3.1. Continue to support DkIT in its ambition to become a university.



Action 1.3.2. Continue to support the ambitions and plans of the county's higher and further educational providers to broaden their educational and apprenticeship offerings. This includes developing the range and depth of post-secondary education options. Work with relevant bodies and organisations to ensure that courses and apprenticeships match the needs and aspirations of the people of County Louth.



Action 1.3.3. Continue to support the provision of appropriate education for those with special and additional needs.



Action 1.3.4. Provide life-long learning opportunities in the county for community members to enrich themselves and their communities.



Action 1.3.5. Continue to support efforts by education providers to develop training programmes that are accessible digitally and/or in-person to people of all ages, backgrounds and capabilities.



Action 1.3.6. Improve community digital and IT literacy skills.



Key desired outcome

To improve Louth's education profile and skills base more in line with the national average.

Goal 1: contd.

Objective 1.4: Facilitate the provision of a vibrant social life.

Need: The benefits of a vibrant social life are several. Firstly, it increases the liveability of a place. Liveability, especially of towns is a factor in FDI decision making. Employees of multi-nationals want to live in culturally interesting places. Secondly, supporting a vibrant social life brings communities closer together and increases pride in place. Finally, employment is created. All of this helps to address several issues that were evident during research for this LECP, including: vacancy and dereliction and mental health.

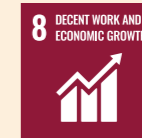
Action 1.4.1. Support the continued development of a vibrant and innovative arts and cultural scene across the county through the implementation of the Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027, the Louth Arts Development Plan 2022-2026 and any subsequent plans.



Action 1.4.2. Continue to support, where needed, community arts and sporting life across the county.



Action 1.4.3. Continue to support nightlife within the county by working with the Nighttime Economy Advisor in Drogheda and undertaking similar work across the county.



Key desired outcome

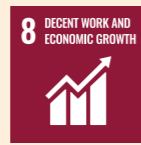
For Louth to have a more vibrant and exciting social scene.

Goal 1: contd.

Objective 1.5: Develop a Strong Tourism Sector.

Need: The tourism sector in Louth is focused on the two ends of the county (i.e. Carlingford/Cooley Peninsula and the medieval town of Drogheda/Boyne Valley). Regardless, Louth gets a proportionally low amount of overall national tourist revenue. A key issue is the inadequate level of tourist accommodation available. Aside from creating employment, a strong benefit of tourism is that it adds to the commercial viability of certain amenities and increases their provision. This includes restaurants, more dynamic museums and galleries, and the creation of additional rural trails. This in turn improves the quality of life for inhabitants.

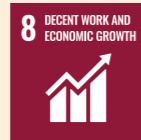
Action 1.5.1. Complete an evidence based County Tourism Strategy and continue to support efforts to research and deepen knowledge of Louth's tourism sector. This includes visitor numbers, distribution, and profiles (domestic and international), economic impact and environmental impact.



Action 1.5.2. Continue to support the provision of accommodation offerings that match the needs of targeted tourism markets.



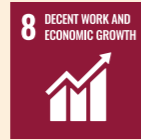
Action 1.5.3. Continue to support the development of existing tourist attractions and the provision of new tourist amenities/ attractions.



Action 1.5.4. Work with industry and training providers to ensure there is a pipeline of suitably qualified staff for accommodation providers, bars, restaurants and visitor attractions.



Action 1.5.5. Continue to build upon the Visit Louth brand and Sea Louth Scenic Seafood Trail, and take full advantage of the Discover Boyne Valley and Ireland's Ancient East propositions.



Action 1.5.6. Ensure issues related with sustainability are addressed appropriately.



Key desired outcome

More tourists, staying overnight and spending more.

Goal 2: Louth will continue to develop entrepreneurship and the economic opportunities afforded by the county's strategic location.

Situated in an area of cross-border economic importance and of picturesque natural beauty, Louth benefits substantially from its location. Carlingford Lough and the surrounding environs provides ample opportunity for sustainable and regenerative tourism while Dundalk and Drogheda, with their proximity to both Dublin and Belfast – along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor – are attractive locations to live and work. Building upon Louth's unique character, strengths and opportunities to create an even more successful county will require supporting innovation and expansion by entrepreneurs and existing businesses.



Goal 2: contd.

Objective 2.1: Help improve the ‘carrying capacity’ of the economy and develop an ecosystem that is highly attractive and supportive of indigenous businesses and FDI.

Need: As stated earlier, Louth’s key competitive advantages revolved around its location between Dublin and Belfast and the infrastructure that crosses the county connecting the two cities. This is complemented by the M1 Corridor Initiative. However, in order to deepen these advantages, a mutually supportive ecosystem conducive to commercial success is needed. This will add to Louth’s attractiveness and make it more robust to economic shocks. The ecosystem involves affordable housing, transport infrastructure, a trained workforce, research connections between industry and third level, broadband, liveable towns and amenities.

Action 2.1.1. Continue to ensure that landbanks and properties (including new and upgraded buildings) are zoned for use for enterprise and industry purposes and served by appropriate infrastructure (roads, water, waste water, utilities, broadband).



Action 2.1.2. Continue to work with relevant stakeholders to ensure there is adequate investment into Louth’s transport infrastructure (roads, rail, ports, DART).



Action 2.1.3. Continue to assist in the development of Third Level and Further and Higher Education and Training Providers, and encourage even more connections with companies operating in Louth to match required industry skills.



Action 2.1.4. Continue to build awareness of Louth’s quality of life which will help maintain a strong pipeline of both indigenous businesses and FDI. A focus should be on ensuring vibrant town centres, a high quality public realm, good accessibility to high quality amenities, and minimal traffic congestion, as well as the availability of quality housing and affordable childcare.



Action 2.1.5. Through the Louth Economic Forum continue to maintain strong relationships with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and other economic development stakeholders in the county (such as the SEAI) to ensure the changing needs of businesses continue to be met.



Action 2.1.6. Encourage greater cooperation amongst the two principal towns of Louth to attract investment (i.e. One Louth). Implement the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor initiative and encourage more cooperation with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.



Key desired outcome

Maintaining and improving a business friendly environment, conducive to success.

Goal 2: contd.

Objective 2.2: Develop a strong green economy.

Need: Much of the developed world, including Ireland, have committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. This has instigated a rapid increase in green associated business in agriculture, mineral extraction, manufacturing, energy, services and tourism. The sustainability macro trend presents both threats and opportunities to Louth. Although most of the county’s population live in urban areas, its area is still overwhelmingly used for agriculture. The sector is under significant pressure to reduce its emissions. There is also a large coast and the associated potential for off-shore wind which is already taking place (i.e. Oriel wind farm). Tourism is another area which can seek to leverage the natural attributes of the county to create environmentally sustainable commercial opportunities. Finally, Louth’s role as a workshop and service centre for Dublin and Belfast – thanks to its strategic location on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor – will need realignment to meet the challenge of change.

Action 2.2.1. Attract and support companies that are focused on high potential areas of the green economy (e.g. manufacturing and retrofitting).



Action 2.2.2. Continue to support the Agri business sector in diversifying into the green economy (e.g. renewable energy production, crops for biofuel, regenerative tourism).



Action 2.2.3. Continue to support companies in their journey to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and generate renewable energy.



2.2.4. Continue to support the communities of Louth to embrace the move towards a green circular economy and leverage that enhanced credibility and knowledge to attract more green investment. Part of this effort is encouraging communities and businesses to spend local and support local producers.



Key desired outcome

For the green economy to provide a substantial proportion of employment in Louth.

Goal 2: contd.

Objective 2.3: Find opportunities to improve entrepreneurship and business conditions in the county for SMEs and retail businesses.

Need: The economy is always shifting. Macro trends such as sustainability, changing demographics, and technology/AI means that SMEs and retail businesses must be agile and innovative to succeed. Retail in particular has been impacted significantly by the growth in online shopping and shifting commuter patterns. Indeed, although the planning policy context for retail in the county is provided by the retail hierarchy as contained within the RSES and County Development Plan, the Regional Assembly have recognised that the context within which the hierarchy was created has changed substantially and that a new retail strategy for the region is needed. For Louth, change means providing the environment for existing businesses and start-ups to grow. This is not only needed to provide the employment for a growing population but to add resilience to the county's economy and replace the jobs lost by the businesses that cease trading or reduce in scale. Finally, a strong retail function is needed for the revival of Louth's towns.

Action 2.3.1. Continue to assist members of the local business community in developing new business ideas and accessing relevant mentoring, training, financial and business supports. Particular attention is to be given to developing opportunities and capacity in technology and the green economy.



Action 2.3.2. Through training and awareness building of the available data sources (e.g. Census 2022) and commissioning of Louth focused research, support greater evidence based decision making amongst Louth's businesses.



Action 2.3.3. Continue to assist efforts to provide local businesses, entrepreneurs and social enterprises access to suitable and affordable enterprise premises/centres, hubs and incubation spaces.



Key desired outcome

That Louth becomes known as a place where innovative entrepreneurs are nurtured. More start-up companies based in the county.

Goal 3: Louth will foster healthy, inclusive, diverse, creative and resilient neighbourhoods.

Across Ireland, our population centres are facing a range of complex challenges, including urban and rural decline, economic shifts, and social isolation. Under Goal 3 of the LECPP, Louth County Council will work with all relevant stakeholders to build the necessary community capacity to ensure that Louth is a healthy, welcoming, and safe place to live.

Objective 3.1: Support the development of attractive communities within the county.

Need: Quality of life is more than just living in a nice home and having a good job. These are just two of the 11 indicators used by the OECD when measuring well-being. A core factor that impacts significantly on several quality of life indicators is the vibrancy of the community in which a person lives (i.e. civic engagement, community, environment, safety, life satisfaction). Continuing to improve the social and economic possibilities in Louth's towns and villages will play a central role in enhancing the happiness and well-being of the county's inhabitants.

Action 3.1.1. Continue to support innovative urban and rural regeneration activities that meet the challenges presented by changing social and economic trends.



Action 3.1.2. Continue to work with communities, property owners and other key stakeholders to use all the available tools (incl. funding, taxation) to reduce vacancy and dereliction.



Action 3.1.3. Continue to support and encourage a suite of festivals/events that celebrate multi-culturalism and encourage long-time residents to meet and engage with new communities.



Key desired outcome

Vibrant, adaptive and welcoming communities.

Goal 3: contd.

Objective 3.2: Increase physical accessibility to all within Louth's towns and villages and rural communities.

Need: Data from Census 2022 showed that 22% of people living in Louth had some form of disability (same as the national average). 8.4% of the population experienced a long-lasting condition or difficulty to a great extent or a lot (national average is 8%). These people deserve the dignity of being able to navigate independently as much as possible the services, towns and shops of the county in which they live. Aside from the social and health benefits caused by facilitating greater access, there is also a strong economic argument. Bringing more people into Louth's towns and villages will support local businesses and services.

Action 3.2.1. Public realm redesign is to follow best practice in the creation of new spaces accessible to all. Careful consideration will be needed in providing sufficient parking at appropriate locations for older people and those with mobility issues or additional needs. Accessibility to these sites via sustainable transport modes should also be improved where practical.



Action 3.2.2. Where appropriate, continue to support customer facing business, especially retailers, in increasing physical accessibility to their buildings.



Key desired outcome

Urban and rural communities where everyone can move around with dignity.

Goal 3: contd.

Objective 3.3: Work with national and local health agencies to support our people in improving their health and lifestyle.

Need: Louth has an aging society with 22% of inhabitants indicating some form of disability in Census 2022 (national average 22%). Overall, 51.9% of the County's inhabitants rated their health as being very good (national average 53%). In 2016, the number of those who reported their health as being very good was 58.2% (national average 59%). The CSO statistics do not take account explicitly of mental health issues. In 2022, a national survey from the charity Aware indicated a high level of depression and anxiety. No county breakdown was provided.

Action 3.3.1. Develop and implement a successor to the Midlands Louth Meath CHO Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan.



Action 3.3.2. Continue to support efforts to provide necessary public health and family services, so that they are both available and easily accessible (either by proximity or availability of public transport).



Action 3.3.3. Continue to support an evidenced-based approach to tackling substance abuse issues by working with local community groups and national health agencies.



Action 3.3.4. Collate and analyse data to determine gaps in the provision of socially inclusive care for marginalised and vulnerable members of the community.



Action 3.3.5. Continue to support the development of healthy eating and nutrition programmes. This is likely to be particularly important in areas of disadvantage, and for the Roma community and Traveller community. As part of efforts to encourage more healthy eating habits, continue to support the development of community gardens and allotments.



Action 3.3.6. Continue to support the development and implementation of a Mental Health and Well-being Plan and any subsequent plans.



Key desired outcome

Increased amount of community saying they are in good or very good health.

Goal 3: contd.

Objective 3.4: Increase the rate of participation in physical activity.

Need: According to the World Health Organisation the benefits of engaging in physical activity are multiple. These include helping to prevent non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and several cancers. The prevalence of these diseases tends to be worse in disadvantaged communities. Physical activity can also help maintain healthy body weight and improve mental health, quality of life and overall well-being. Finally, participating in physical activity – especially in a team scenario – encourages people to meet and helps bind the community together. Success in popular community sports increases pride in place.

Action 3.4.1. Continue to support efforts to increase the level of physical activity at all levels through the work of the Louth Sports Partnership, the County Sports Plan, the Recreation and Play Strategy, and engagement with local and national sports bodies. The County Sports Plan is to centrally incorporate the National Sports Policy.



Action 3.4.2. Work with relevant groups to expand the provision of minority sports in Co. Louth. This is especially important in rural areas and for migrants coming into Co. Louth.



Action 3.4.3. Continue to provide greater opportunities for physical activity that has zero cost to communities. Where possible, enhance activity levels through intelligent design – where activity is integrated into daily routines.



Key desired outcome

More people moving and getting healthier. Greater participation in sport.

Goal 3: contd.

Objective 3.5: Increase and enhance the usage of existing heritage assets (built and natural) and community infrastructure in order to improve community mental and physical health.

Need: Visits to heritage sites (built and natural), museums and galleries have been shown to improve mental health. Visits to natural heritage sites have in particular been shown to also improve physical health. Access to the vast majority of these places is free. Despite this, many may be poorly served by public transport or have poor accessibility for those who are physically impaired.

Action 3.5.1. Continue to support the continued development of the county's libraries, museums, archives and arts centres, and their associated educational and events programmes.



Action 3.5.2. Implement the County Heritage Plan.



Key desired outcome

Broader and deeper public interaction with heritage.

Goal 3: contd.

Objective 3.6: Support and promote social inclusion within the county with a particular focus on including the marginalised within the community.

Need: According to Census 2016, 10.2% of Louth’s inhabitants were non-nationals (national average 11.6%). There were also 772 members of the Traveller Community living in Louth. In Census 2022, the overall national figure for Travellers had increased 6%. According to the CSO, as of June 2023, 2,073 Ukrainian nationals had arrived in Louth, out of a State total of 84,613. Vulnerable and marginalised groups suffer worse health outcomes than the general population and struggle the most to access the health services they require.

Action 3.6.1. Develop and implement a successor to the Meath and Louth Joint Migrant Integration Strategy.



Action 3.6.2. Provide ongoing integration supports to International Protection Applicants, Programme Refugees and Beneficiaries of Temporary Accommodation to enable them to live independently in the community.



Action 3.6.3. Continue to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to ensure that vulnerable members of society (older people, migrants, people with additional needs, members of the Traveller community, members of the Roma community, people with substance misuse) can easily navigate public services.



Action 3.6.4. Continue to support the implementation of the national LGBT+ Strategies.



Action 3.6.5. Utilise the SICAP programme 2024-2028 to ensure that those most marginalised or at risk of poverty are supported.



Key desired outcome

Reduction in discrimination and reported hate crime.

Goal 4: Louth will actively lead on increasing the county’s climate resilience, sustainability and biodiversity.

Climate action, including mitigation and adaption measures, is a key consideration in today’s policy-making efforts with funding streams being shaped around the government’s priorities to protect and enhance natural assets for future generations. To ensure that Louth can lead and thrive in the area of climate action, it will be important for the county to be at the forefront of climate action. Climate mitigations will also be needed to address issues such as flooding and coastal erosion.



Goal 4:

Objective 4.1: Facilitate proactive climate mitigation and adaptation actions within the county.

Need: The principal risks from climate change to Louth are coastal flooding, river flooding and coastal erosion. There is also likely to be impacts from periods of drought. As part of global efforts, the Irish government has committed itself to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030. With an urbanised population, a dynamic economy, a large area given over to agriculture, and an off-shore wind resource, Louth will be significantly impacted by government policy as it seeks to reduce emissions.

Louth will need to be nimble in how it reacts to policy change and the move towards a green economy. There are opportunities both in the economy and to improve community health. However, there are also threats, and change will inevitably negatively impact some. Despite this, the policies and actions required to fight climate change mean that societal and economic change are inevitable. Regardless, even if global temperature rises are limited to 1.5degC or 2degC above pre industrial levels, physical mitigations and changes in land management will be required within the county to deal with the consequences of a changing climate.

Action 4.1.1. Implement the National Climate Action Plan, and develop and implement a local authority Climate Action Plan for County Louth.



Action 4.1.2. Work with relevant agencies to mitigate against the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. Where feasible and viable, apply nature based solutions to managing flooding and coastal erosion.



Action 4.1.3. Continue to support the appropriate retrofitting of the county's housing stock to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and heating fuel costs.



Action 4.1.4. Continue to support the appropriate retrofitting of all public structures, community buildings, business premises and farm buildings to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and heating fuel costs.



Action 4.1.5. Encourage the creation of Sustainable Energy Communities across the county and provide support where possible.



Action 4.1.6. Continue to support initiatives to reduce waste and increase the adoption of circular economy practices.



Action 4.1.7. Prepare and implement an electric vehicle strategy. As part of this ensure the sufficient provision of electric car charging facilities in Louth's towns and villages.



Key desired outcome

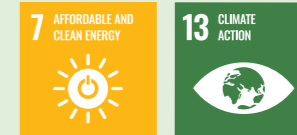
A county successfully and fairly adapting to climate change, and playing its part in reducing national greenhouse gas emissions.

Goal 4: contd.

Objective 4.2: Work to significantly increase the level of renewable energy generated.

Need: The international shift towards a green, renewable energy is now inevitable. According to the International Energy Agency, renewable energy will provide 35% of global power by 2025. Ireland's 2021 Climate Action Plan has an aim of reaching up to 80% of electricity being generated by renewable sources by 2030. The invasion of Ukraine has also increased awareness of energy security. Although Louth is Ireland's smallest county, it does have a considerable offshore wind resource. There are also opportunities for businesses and homes to produce their own energy – principally via solar panels. Micro-generation offers the possibility of mitigating against rising energy costs and even providing a small income. Large scale off-shore wind farms will create jobs during construction and afterwards when being maintained. The planning of off-shore wind farms will necessitate careful consideration in managing possible impacts to areas of outstanding natural beauty, fishing grounds and nature.

Action 4.2.1. Where appropriate, continue to support the micro-generation efforts of business owners, farmers, community groups and homeowners.



Action 4.2.2. Work with Eirgrid to ensure that the grid has sufficient capacity to handle increased supply, demand and variance.



Key desired outcome

Significant increase in renewable energy generated.

Goal 4: contd.

Objective 4.3: Protect and renew the environment of Co Louth.

Need: People today expect clean air and clean water. They want safe places to swim in and plentiful opportunities to experience nature. The EU Water Framework Directive requires all EU states – including Ireland – to achieve water quality of at least ‘good status’ in all water bodies by 2027, at the latest. In 2023, the EU voted through stringent new limits on air quality. This will take effect in 2035. During lockdown, visits to Coillte forest parks increased significantly. Issues around water quality are fundamental to the construction of housing, the expansion of industry and pressures on agribusiness to change its practices.

Action 4.3.1. Address issues relating to water quality in Co. Louth.



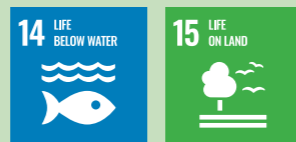
Action 4.3.2. Continue to support the maintenance and upgrade of water and wastewater treatment facilities as needed across the county.



Action 4.3.3. Work with the Agri business sector in their efforts to reduce carbon emissions, increase farm biodiversity and improve water quality.



Action 4.3.4. Deliver the actions within the Louth Biodiversity Plan 2021-2026.



Action 4.3.5. Where appropriate, work to restore habitats in agreement with landowners and those possibly impacted by restoration.



Action 4.3.6. Continue to support communities in their efforts to increase local biodiversity levels (e.g. improving habitats in gardens and green areas in housing developments).



Key desired outcome

Significantly improved land and water habitats.



Goal 5: Louth will have engaged, empowered, dynamic, resourced and connected communities.

As part of this LECP Goal, Louth's communities will be encouraged to take ownership of their local area, make more strategically astute decisions and increase cooperation both internally and with external stakeholders.

Objective 5.1: Continue to develop safe and connected communities (social, business, digital, and physical).

Need: For communities to be successful they must be nimble to positively react to the challenge of change (e.g. macro economic change, macro societal change, climate, local economic changes). To be nimble and adaptive, communities need strong physical, digital and social connections. This includes transport connections, broadband and adequate premises that meet the changing needs of businesses. However, it also means having community cores where all people can easily access and meet in safety to collaborate or simply enjoy each other's company.

Action 5.1.1. Continue to support the development of multipurpose community hubs to facilitate well-resourced and connected communities.



Action 5.1.2. Enhance sustainable transport connections (e.g. Local Link) from the county's towns to rural Co. Louth.



Action 5.1.3. Work to eliminate any remaining broadband blackspots within the county.



Action 5.1.4. Continue to support the delivery of the Louth County Council Active Travel (Program of works) and Pathfinder Program.



Action 5.1.5. Continue to support initiatives to prevent and mitigate against domestic, sexual and gender-based violence in accordance with 3rd National Strategy on Domestic Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Implementation Plan and any successor plans.



Key desired outcome

Safer communities that have strong transport and broadband linkages.

Goal 5: contd.

Objective 5.2: Strengthen the leadership capacity of local communities.

Need: The most successful communities are the ones that can analyse the challenges their place faces, come up with reasonable actions to address these issues, collaborate well both internally and externally, and obtain the necessary funding, while leveraging the community's volunteerism. To enable this to happen community leaders – both existing and emerging – across the county need support (i.e. training, mentoring, advice, data).

5.2.1. Provide greater training (i.e. around strategy, fundraising, social and economic trends, sustainability) and mentoring to community leaders to allow them to make better decisions that meet the changing needs of their communities.



5.2.2. Improve communication and information sharing between community leaders on matters that could impact their locality. This includes matters relating to funding opportunities, possible economic threats and opportunities, along with social and demographic changes.



5.2.3. Continue to support the delivery of the Drogheda Implementation Plan.



5.2.4. Continue to support the development and delivery of a mentoring programme for Tidy Towns, Residents Associations and Community Groups.



Key desired outcome

Effective local leaders that are numerous, dynamic and knowledgeable.

Goal 5: contd.

Objective 5.3: Support the community and voluntary sector and build their capacity to deliver support to the people of County Louth.

Need: Leadership is important but systems and volunteers are what makes a community group or small NGO resilient and enduring. Volunteer retention was regularly mentioned during consultation meetings. Issues around governance and funding also emerged.

During consultation it became obvious that there were geographic gaps in certain services which would typically be provided by the private sector. Where commercial viability is in doubt, social enterprises may be able to provide valuable services in rural or disadvantaged areas within Louth.

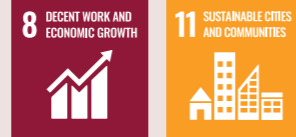
Action 5.3.1. Through implementing the Co. Louth Volunteering Framework, develop and carry out initiatives that encourage more people to volunteer and stay engaged in community activities over the long term.



Action 5.3.2. Work with community and volunteer groups to enhance their governance and funding.



Action 5.3.3. Continue to support the development and expansion of social enterprises within the county.



Key desired outcome

A more effective and resilient community and voluntary sector.

Goal 5: contd.

Objective 5.4: Continue to support an Age Friendly society that embraces all people in County Louth.

Need: The world tends to be designed by and for middle aged people. Typically, these people are able bodied, male, middle class and white. This had pushed either consciously or subconsciously the issues and concerns of younger and older people to the fringes of considerations. Things are changing and there is greater diversity of decision makers involved in the design of public realms and public services. Nonetheless, biases remain and there is a deep legacy of previous decisions.

Action 5.4.1. Develop and implement a new Age Friendly Strategy for Co. Louth.



Action 5.4.2. Continue to support the Age Friendly Programme to deliver a suite of ageism awareness initiatives.



Action 5.4.3. Work with the Louth Children and Young People's Services Committee to support services that are coordinated, responsive and meet the needs of children, young people and families in Co. Louth.



Action 5.4.4. Continue to support the work of Comhairle na nÓg and other youth services in Co. Louth.



Key desired outcome

A better place for older and younger people to live in.

Implementation Plan

8



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8.1 Approach

This chapter outlines the initial implementation plan for the LECP. It includes specific actions that will contribute to the achievement of the goals, objectives and outcomes highlighted in the previous chapter. However, there has been an important change in comparison to the previous iteration of the county's LECP with added flexibility built into its design. While the LECP itself covers a 6-year timeframe out to 2029, the Implementation Plan will be reviewed and revised every 2 years as the plan progresses. As such, consideration has been given in the development of the initial Implementation Plan to actions which can be progressed within that timeframe.

This new, more flexible approach provides the Council with an opportunity to identify actions that may not be achieving the desired impact and revise or replace them in subsequent Implementation Plans with initiatives that may be more suited to achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the LECP. Similarly, an opportunity now exists to update the Implementation Plan to address issues that emerge over the timeframe of the LECP, meaning that it can remain relevant and aligned to changing circumstances in the county. Finally, actions that are deemed to be the most impactful but also onerous to implement may be built upon and carried over into successor Implementation Plans. Key to realising the benefit of this more flexible approach, will be the monitoring and evaluation of progress in relation to the actions of the Implementation Plan.

The initial Implementation Plan contains 31 prioritised actions which support the 5 goals, 21 objectives and associated desired outcomes. The actions cover both economic and community elements with many of the actions interlinked and contributing to a few objectives

and goals. Key stakeholders and agencies that will lead and enable the implementation of the actions have been identified along with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and funding sources to aid the monitoring and evaluation of progress.

Consultation

The 31 prioritised actions primarily emerged during two stakeholder engagement sessions undertaken in September 2023. The 31 actions were chosen from the 86 overall actions that make up this LECP. The purpose of these sessions was to prioritise actions for each objective and better understand issues that may arise during implementation. The results of the two workshops were reviewed by KPMG staff. In certain cases, some additional actions have been included to address areas of strategic importance missed during the consultation sessions.

Policy Alignment

Like the goals and objectives, the actions are aligned with a few existing strategies and policies including the County Development Plan (as varied), the RSES and the NPF. Furthermore, as noted in Chapter 1 of this document, the UN SDGs have been centre to the

development of the LECP and have underpinned the formulation of the actions in the initial Implementation Plan. As previously outlined, the goals, objectives, outcomes, and actions support the cross-cutting priorities outlined in the LECP guidelines as well as the public sector duty to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect human rights. Combined, the goals, objectives, outcomes and actions will work to enhance Louth as a more connected, inclusive, prosperous and sustainable county as it moves towards 2029.

Funding

Each of the 31 prioritised actions within this two-year implementation plan have been ascribed likely funding sources. These will assist the LCDC and other relevant stakeholders in completing the prioritised actions and realising the associated objectives.

Please note: details of funding programmes and amounts of funding available, set out this section are correct as of September 2023. These programmes are renewed and revised on a regular basis, with new funding streams also introduced.

8.2 Prioritised Actions

Goal 1: Louth will work with all communities to help them reach their full economic, social, and personal potential.

Objective 1.1	
Policy/Planning Framework	Community/Economic
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 10, SDG 11
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 1, NSO 3
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 3.3, RPO 4.11, RPO 4.19, RPO 9.3, RPO 9.5, RPO 9.18
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 1
	Louth will work with all communities to help them reach their full economic, social, and personal potential.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Community/Economic Development Objective (SC/EDO)
	Support the provision of housing where appropriate across the county.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action
	1.1.1. In line with the County Development Plan, continue to Deliver Housing for All, Louth Housing Strategy, Northeast Homeless Strategy and Louth Traveller Accommodation Programme, Housing Strategy for Disabled People and any subsequent plans.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	1.1.1. Lead: LCC (Housing, Planning/Forward Planning, etc) Partners: Identified Approved Housing Bodies, Credit Unions, Identified homeless service providers, HSE (Social Inclusion, Older Persons – ICPOP, Disability), PPN, Louth Traveller Movement, Dept. of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	1.1.1. 1 Continued delivery of Housing for All, Louth Housing Strategy, Northeast Homeless, Strategy Housing Strategy for Disabled People and Louth Traveller Accommodation Programme and any subsequent plans. 2 Increased no. of homes in pipeline (completed/under construction/planning stage/design stage). 3 Increase no. of social homes and affordable housing being delivered (i.e., completed/under construction/planning stage/design stage). 4 Decreased no. of homeless. 5 Increased no. of Traveller accommodation homes in pipeline (completed/under construction/planning stage/design stage). 6 Creation of support programme for refugees as they transition to permanent accommodation. 7 Increased and supported access to Housing Adaptation Grant Funding (i.e., to allow persons to adapt/upgrade and remain in their own homes, as ability levels change).
Potential Funding Sources (example)	Croí Cónaithe, Housing Aid for Older People Grant, Dept. of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Age Friendly, Affordable Purchase, Social Housing, Traveller Accommodation Budget), Homeless Housing Assistance Payment Scheme, Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund

Objective 1.2	
Policy/Planning Framework	Economic
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 4, SDG 10
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 3, NSO 10
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 4.16, RPO 4.24, RPO 6.27, RPO 9.18, RPO 9.19
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 1
	Louth will work with all communities to help them reach their full economic, social, and personal potential.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Economic Development Objective (SEDO)
	Address concentrations of disadvantage where they exist, children living in poverty and material deprivation.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action(s)
	1.2.2. With a particular focus on DEIS schools, continue to support the development of after school homework clubs, preferably ones with an ability to provide hot meals in areas of disadvantage.
	1.2.4. Continue to support the development of literacy, numeracy, household finance and nutrition education programmes for people living in disadvantaged areas.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	1.2.2. Lead: LCC Partners: TUSLA Education Support Service, Louth's DEIS schools, LMETB, CYPSC, HSE, Dept. of Education
	1.2.4. Lead: LMETB Partners: FET partners, CYPSC, National Adult Literacy Agency, HSE (Health and Well-being, Older Persons), MABS, LCC, Louth Library Service
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	1.2.2. 1 Feasibility investigated for creating a pilot programme where a small number of DEIS primary schools have high quality homework clubs where a hot dinner is provided.
	1.2.4. 1 Analysis/review of data to ascertain the education needs of people living in disadvantaged areas and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds. 2 Based on results of analysis/review, training programmes created, supported or expanded. 3 No. of people with improved knowledge of nutrition and financial management. 4 No. of people with improved literacy and numeracy. 5 Elicit feedback to ascertain impact.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	Tusla Bursary Scheme, LMETB, Dept. of Education, Dept. of Further and Higher Education, National Training Fund, LCC, Dept. of Social Protection

Objective 1.3	
Policy/Planning Framework	Economic
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 4, SDG 10
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 3, NSO 10
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 4.16, RPO 4.22, RPO 4.24, RPO 6.27, RPO 9.18, RPO 9.19, RPO 9.20, RPO 9.21, RPO 9.22
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 1
	Louth will work with all communities to help them reach their full economic, social, and personal potential.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Economic Development Objective (SEDO)
	Expand the capacity of education providers to meet the education requirements.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action(s)
	1.3.4. Provide life-long learning opportunities in the county for community members to enrich themselves and their communities.
	1.3.5. Continue to support efforts by education providers to develop training programmes that are accessible digitally and/or in-person to people of all ages, backgrounds, and capabilities.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	1.3.4 Lead: LMETB Partners: DIFE, Ó Fiaich, FET LMETB, DkIT, LCC, Louth Library Service, Louth Age Friendly Alliance
	1.3.5 Lead: LMETB Partners: DIFE, Ó Fiaich, FET LMETB, DkIT, LCC, Louth Library Service, TFI Local Link Louth Meath Fingal, Bus Éireann/CIE
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	1.3.4. 1 Review and analysis of data to better understand community education needs and wishes, including those of new migrant communities. 2 No. of new courses – including hybrid courses – devised based on the review/analysis.
	1.3.5. 1 Physical accessibility to no. of education sites improved as required. 2 Maintain public transportation linkages to DkIT, Ó Fiaich, and DIFE (no. of bus connections and frequency). 3 Digital accessibility of courses continually improved. 4 Ensure high awareness for target audience of Laptop Loan Scheme for students from a disadvantaged background. Enable enhanced digital accessibility generally. Explore funding potential. 5 No. accessing adult education increased.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	Tusla Bursary Scheme, LMETB, Dept. of Education, Dept. of Further and Higher Education, National Training Fund, LCC, Philanthropy

Objective 1.4	
Policy/Planning Framework	Economic/Community
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 3, SDG 8
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 3, NSO 5, NSO 7
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 6.4, RPO 6.17, RPO 9.24, RPO 9.25, RPO 9.26
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 1
	Louth will work with all communities to help them reach their full economic, social and personal potential.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Economic/Community Development Objective
	Facilitate the provision of a vibrant social life.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action(s)
	1.4.1. Support the continued development of a vibrant and innovative arts and cultural scene across the county through the implementation of the Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027, the Louth Arts Development Plan 2022-2026, and any subsequent plans.
	1.4.3. Continue to support nightlife within the county by working with the Nighttime Economy Advisor in Drogheda and undertaking similar work across the county.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	1.4.1 Lead: LCC (Arts Office) Partners: Fáilte Ireland, PPN, LLD, Louth Library Service, Louth Age Friendly Alliance, Economic Development, Creative Spark, Creative Ireland, Arts groups, Arts Centres
	1.4.3 Lead: LCC (Economic Development) Partners: Nighttime Economy Advisor, Dundalk Chamber, Drogheda and District Chamber, Louth Vintners, LLD, Fáilte Ireland, Economic Development, Arts Office, Arts Centres
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	1.4.1. 1 Implementation supported of Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027, the Louth Arts Development Plan 2022-2026, and any subsequent plans. 2 Increased participation in the Arts. Measurement metrics developed. 3 More relationships created with community groups, including disadvantaged and migrant groups.
	1.4.3. 1 County Night-Time Economy strategy created. 2 Purple Flag designation continued for Drogheda, gained for Dundalk, and evaluated for Carlingford and Ardee. 3 Creation of a strong, coordinated and year-round nighttime entertainment and culture programmes for Dundalk, Drogheda, Ardee and Carlingford. 4 No. of innovative projects to reuse structures and spaces within the town centres supported.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	The Arts Council, Creative Ireland Grants Scheme, The Heritage Council, Fáilte Ireland, LCC, LLD

Objective 1.5	
Policy/Planning Framework	Economic
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 8
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 5, NSO 7
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 4.15, RPO 6.4, RPO 6.7, RPO 6.15, RPO 6.17, RPO 9.24, RPO 9.25, RPO 9.26, RPO 9.27, RPO 9.29, RPO 9.30
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 1
	Louth will work with all communities to help them reach their full economic, social, and personal potential.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Economic Development Objective (SEDO)
	Develop a strong tourism sector.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action(s)
	1.5.3. Continue to support the development of existing tourist attractions and the provision of new tourist amenities/attractions.
	1.5.5. Continue to build upon the Visit Louth brand and Sea Louth Scenic Seafood Trail and take full advantage of the Discover Boyne Valley and Ireland's Ancient East propositions.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	1.5.3. Lead: LCC (SEO and Tourist Officer) Partners: Fáilte Ireland, LCC (Economic Development, Planning, Tourist Office), Louth Economic Forum, Louth Age Friendly Alliance, LLD
	1.5.5. Lead: LCC (SEO and Tourist Officer) Partners: Fáilte Ireland, LCC (LEO, Economic Development, Planning, Tourist Office, Heritage Office, Louth Sports Partnership), LLD, Dundalk Chamber, Drogheda, and District Chamber, Ardee Traders and Business Association, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Loughs Agency
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	1.5.3. 1 Interagency group created to manage progress on this objective. 2 Close relationship maintained by LCC Tourist Officer with Fáilte Ireland to ensure that attractions are meeting target market expectations. 3 Study commissioned to establish any gaps in the provision of attractions and events for target markets. 4 Where deemed necessary and appropriate, attractions are to be supported in efforts to improve their visitor proposition. 5 Where deemed necessary and appropriate, new attractions begin to be developed (design/planning/funding stages). 6 Increase in tourist numbers and county dwell time.

Objective 1.5 condit.	
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	<p>1.5.5.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> No. of existing festivals supported. No. of familiarisation trips for commercial buyers to Louth held. Increased involvement from Louth attractions and businesses in Meitheal and other trade events. Greater brand awareness from commercial buyers of Visit Louth brand, Discover Boyne Valley, Sea Louth Scenic Seafood Trail, and Destination Towns. Strong buy-in amongst businesses of the Ireland's Ancient East proposition. Increase in tourist numbers and county dwell time.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	Fáilte Ireland, The Heritage Council, Dept. of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Community Monuments Fund and Built Heritage Investment Scheme, LLD

Goal 2: Louth will continue to develop entrepreneurship and the economic opportunities afforded by the county's strategic location.

Objective 2.1	
Policy/Planning Framework	Economic
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 8, SDG 11
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 1, NSO 2, NSO 3, NSO 5, NSO 7
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 4.11, RPO 4.13, RPO 4.14, RPO 4.16, RPO 4.18, RPO 4.19, RPO 4.20, RPO 4.21, RPO 4.23, RPO 6.4, RPO 6.5, RPO 6.6, RPO 6.7, RPO 6.31, RPO 7.42, RPO 8.7, RPO 8.13
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 2
	Louth will continue to develop entrepreneurship and the economic opportunities afforded by the county's strategic location.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Economic Development Objective (SEDO)
	Help improve the 'carrying capacity' of the economy and develop an ecosystem that is highly attractive and supportive of indigenous businesses and FDI.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action(s)
	<p>2.1.4. Continue to build awareness of Louth's quality of life which will help maintain a strong pipeline of both indigenous businesses and FDI. A focus should be on ensuring vibrant town centres, a high-quality public realm, good accessibility to high quality amenities, and minimal traffic congestion, as well as the availability of quality housing and accessible childcare.</p> <p>2.1.5. Through the Louth Economic Forum continue to maintain strong relationships with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and other economic development stakeholders in the county (such as the SEAI) to ensure the changing needs of businesses continue to be met.</p>
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	<p>2.1.4. Lead: LCC (Economic Development, LEO, Housing, Forward Planning, etc.) Partners: BIDs, Loughs Agency, Nighttime Economy Advisory, Louth Tourism and Arts Office, TI, Dundalk Chamber, Drogheda and District Chamber, Drogheda Implementation Board, Fáilte Ireland, Coillte, Representatives from childcare sector, LLD, M1 Corridor Steering Committee</p> <p>2.1.5. Lead: Louth Economic Forum Partners: LCC (Economic Development, LEO), IDA, EI, DkIT, RDC, Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC, LMETB</p>
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	<p>2.1.4.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Strong pipeline of quality, mixed-tenure housing being created. High quality and creative public realms being created in each town (no. of schemes and programmes delivered/in pipeline). Strong provision of amenities to match needs of population and expectations of investors. Continued improvements in transport infrastructure. Continued delivery of active travel projects (no. of schemes delivered/in pipeline). Continued improvements to waste water and drinking water and expansion of capacity as necessary. Increased no. of childcare places available. Continued development of the M1 Corridor initiative.

Objective 2.1 cond.	
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	<p>2.1.5.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Regular meetings held with Enterprise Ireland and the IDA to inform broader decision making to ensure that Louth's investment proposition is maintained and enhanced. No. of joint initiatives between key agencies delivered to strengthen relationships.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	URDF, RRDF, Croí Cónaithe, Housing Aid for Older People Grant, Dept. of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Age Friendly, Affordable Purchase, Social Housing), NTA-TII Active Travel Grants Programme, NTA, Dept. of Transport, Dept. of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, LLD, Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund, PEACEPLUS

Objective 2.2	
Policy/Planning Framework	Economic
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 7, SDG 12, SDG 13
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 8
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 3.7, RPO 6.5, RPO 6.7, RPO 6.23, RPO 7.7, RPO 7.28
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 2
	Louth will continue to develop entrepreneurship and the economic opportunities afforded by the county's strategic location.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Economic Development Objective (SEDO)
	Develop a strong green economy.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action
	2.2.3. Continue to support companies in their journey to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and generate renewable energy.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	2.2.3. Lead: LCC (Environmental, Climate Action Team) Partners: LEO, SEAI, Louth Economic Forum, County farming bodies, Teagasc, Dept. of Agriculture, EI, Eirgrid, LLD, DKIT
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	<p>2.2.3.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> No. of projects supported. Higher ESG scores for Louth based businesses (where scores are publicly available). Additional renewable energy generated within the County.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	SEAI, LEO, EI, LLD, IDA

Objective 2.3	
Policy/Planning Framework	Economic
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 13
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 3, NSO 5
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 2
	Louth will continue to develop entrepreneurship and the economic opportunities afforded by the county's strategic location.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Economic Development Objective (SEDO)
	Find opportunities to improve entrepreneurship and business conditions in the county for SMEs and retail businesses.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action
	2.3.1. Continue to assist members of the local business community in developing new business ideas and accessing relevant mentoring, training, financial and business supports. Particular attention is to be given to developing opportunities and capacity in technology and the green economy.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action
	2.3.1. Continue to assist members of the local business community in developing new business ideas and accessing relevant mentoring, training, financial and business supports. Particular attention is to be given to developing opportunities and capacity in technology and the green economy.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	2.3.1. Lead: LCC (LEO) Partners: LCC Economic Development, EI, IDA, Louth Economic Forum, LLD, Dundalk Chamber, Drogheda, and District Chamber, Ardee Traders and Business Association, LMETB, DKIT
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	<p>2.3.1.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Regular surveys with businesses as to what business and knowledge supports they need (e.g. green economy, digital/technology innovation/AI). High quality and impactful mentoring and training provided. Monitored using surveys. Increase in rate of Louth based companies scaling up and exporting.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	LEO, SEAI, EI, LCC, LLD

Goal 3: Louth will foster healthy, inclusive, diverse, creative, and resilient neighbourhoods.

Objective 3.1	
Policy/Planning Framework	Community
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 8, SDG 11, SDG 13
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 1, NSO 7
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 4.11, RPO 4.16, RPO 4.19, RPO 6.4, RPO 6.13, RPO 9.7
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 3
	Louth will foster healthy, inclusive, diverse creative and resilient neighbourhoods.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Community Development Objective (SCDO)
	Support the development of attractive communities within the county.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action
	3.1.2. Continue to work with communities, property owners and other key stakeholders to use all the available tools (incl. funding, taxation) to reduce vacancy and dereliction.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	3.1.2. Lead: LCC (Planning, Housing, Economic Development, etc) Partners: PPN, Communities
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	3.1.2. 1 Accurately quantify and map in detail the level of vacancy and dereliction across the county. 2 Promote available incentives (e.g., Croí Cónaithe) to relevant property owners. No. of seminars/workshops/roadshows held. 3 If needed, issue no. of Compulsory Purchase Orders for high visibility derelict and vacant sites where all other avenues to address the site have been reasonably exhausted. 4 Reduction in vacancy/dereliction.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	Croí Cónaithe, Built Heritage Investment Scheme, Historic Towns Initiative, URDF, RRDF, LCC

Objective 3.2	
Policy/Planning Framework	Community
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 10, SDG 11, SDG 13
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 4, NSO 7
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 4.16, RPO 4.24, RPO 6.4, RPO 6.5, RPO 6.7, RPO 6.12, RPO 6.13, RPO 7.7, RPO 7.32, RPO 8.13, RPO 9.1, RPO 9.10, RPO 9.11, RPO 9.12, RPO 9.13
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 3
	Louth will foster healthy, inclusive, diverse creative and resilient neighbourhoods.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Community Development Objective (SCDO)
	Increase physical accessibility to all within Louth's towns and villages and rural communities.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action
	3.2.1. Public realm redesign is to follow best practice in the creation of new spaces accessible to all. Careful consideration will be needed in providing sufficient parking at appropriate locations for older people and those with mobility issues or additional needs. Accessibility to these sites via sustainable transport modes should also be improved where practical.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	3.2.1. Lead: LCC (Public Realm Team, Active Travel, Age Friendly Louth, Economic Development, etc) Partners: PPN, DisABILITY Louth, Inclusion Louth, HSE (Older Persons – ICPOP)
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	3.2.1. 1 All public realm designs meet high physical accessibility standards (i.e., universal design principles). 2 Appropriate consideration in public realm designs given to the provision of car parking spaces for older people and those with mobility issues or additional needs. No. of age friendly and dementia friendly parking spaces created. 3 Complete Area Based Transport Assessments for Dundalk and Drogheda. 4 Cycleways and associated infrastructure created/in pipeline. 5 Appropriate provision provided for bus accessibility to town centres.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	URDF, RRDF, NTA Active Travel Grants Programme, LCC, LLD, Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund

Objective 3.3	
Policy/Planning Framework	Community
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 3, SDG 10, SDG 11
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 3, NSO 10
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 4.16, RPO 4.24, RPO 9.2, RPO 9.23
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 3
	Louth will foster healthy, inclusive, diverse creative and resilient neighbourhoods.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Community Development Objective (SCDO)
	Work with national and local health agencies to support our people in improving their health and lifestyle.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action(s)
	3.3.3. Continue to support an evidenced-based approach to tackling substance abuse issues by working with local community groups and national health agencies.
	3.3.4. Collate and analyse data to determine gaps in the provision of socially inclusive care for marginalised and vulnerable members of the community.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	3.3.3. Lead: HSE (Community Alcohol and Drug Services Midlands, Louth Meath CHO) Partners: Northeastern Regional Drug Alcohol Task Force, Healthy Ireland, Louth Local Sports Partnership, An Garda Síochána, Family Support Network, Tusla, Department of Social Protection, Housing Office and Approved Housing Bodies, Health Research Board
	3.3.4. Lead: LCDC & HSE (Social Inclusion) Partners: LCC, PPN, LLD, Health Ireland
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	3.3.3. 1 All available research reviewed and devise actions to address issues relating to alcohol and other drug use in the county. 2 Increased number of people accessing supports for drug related intimidation and violence through the DRIVE programme. 3 Increased number of people engaging in supports for their alcohol and other drug use, including where appropriate shared care and case management plans across all relevant state agencies and community service providers, particularly for issues around homelessness, mental health, and family matters. 4 Increased number of people in recovery from alcohol and other drug use in Louth.
	3.3.4. 1 Data collated and analysed to determine gaps in provision of socially inclusive care completed for marginalised and vulnerable members of the community. Solutions identified.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	Dept. of Justice, Dept. of Health, LCC

Objective 3.4	
Policy/Planning Framework	Community
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 3, SDG 10
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 2, NSO 4, NSO 7
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 6.4, RPO 6.5, RPO 6.7, RPO 6.12, RPO 7.7, RPO 7.32, RPO 7.42, RPO 8.7, RPO 9.11, RPO 9.12, RPO 9.13, RPO 9.14, RPO 9.15, RPO 9.16, RPO 9.17
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 3
	Louth will foster healthy, inclusive, diverse, creative, and resilient neighbourhoods.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Community Development Objective (SCDO)
	Increase the rate of participation in physical activity.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action
	3.4.3. Continue to provide greater opportunities for physical activity that has zero cost to communities. Where possible, enhance activity levels through intelligent design – where activity is integrated into daily routines.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	3.4.3. Lead: LCC Partners: Active Travel, Louth Local Sports Partnership, Biodiversity Office, LCC Sport, Louth Local Development, HSE (Health and Well-being), Healthy Ireland, PPN
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	3.4.3. 1 Develop and launch the Play and Recreation Plan, County Sports Plan and Outdoor Recreation Activity Plan. 2 No. of looped walks, outdoor exercise equipment sites created/ improved. Public swimming areas enhanced. 3 Creation of no. of high-quality public realms which encourage people to engage in physical activity and interact. 4 Support provided to encourage active travel (e.g. new/improved footpaths and cycle lanes, no. of safe street crossings, improved street lighting). 5 Support the implementation of the safe routes to school programme at eight schools. 6 Where appropriate, parks and green areas managed to promote biodiversity.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	RRDF, URDF, NTA Active Travel Grants Programme, LCC, Dept. of Rural and Community Development, Sport Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, NPWS, PEACEPLUS

Objective 3.5	
Policy/Planning Framework	Community
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 10, SDG 11
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 5, NSO 7
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 4.14, RPO 4.15, RPO 6.4, RPO 9.24, RPO 9.25, RPO 9.26, RPO 9.27, RPO 9.29, RPO 9.30
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 3
	Louth will foster healthy, inclusive, diverse, creative and resilient neighbourhoods.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Community Development Objective (SCDO)
	Increase and enhance the usage of existing heritage assets (built and natural) and community infrastructure to improve community mental and physical health.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action
	3.5.1. Continue to support the continued development of the county's libraries, museums, archives, and arts centres, and their associated educational and events programmes.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	3.5.1. Lead: LCC (Louth Library Service, Louth County Archives, Louth County Museum, Louth Arts Office, etc.) Partners: PPN, arts centres, museums, archives, Creative Ireland, Louth Heritage Office
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	3.5.1. 1 Deliver redeveloped Dunleer Library. 2 Submit no. of strong capital funding applications to ensure buildings (museums, archives, libraries, and arts centres) meet needs of audiences. 3 Library membership numbers increased. 4 No. of educational and events programmes supported and expanded. Focus should be placed on migrants and providing them with opportunities to meet long term residents of Louth. 5 Increased attendances and participation in the Louth's cultural institutions.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	The Heritage Council, The Arts Council, Creative Ireland Grants Scheme, RRDF, URDF, Fáilte Ireland, DRCD Library Capital, PEACEPLUS

Objective 3.6	
Policy/Planning Framework	Community
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 10
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 3, NSO 10
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 4.16, RPO 4.24, RPO 9.1, RPO 9.2, RPO 9.14, RPO 9.18, RPO 9.19
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 3
	Louth will foster healthy, inclusive, diverse creative and resilient neighbourhoods.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Community Development Objective (SCDO)
	Support and promote social inclusion within the county with a particular focus on including the marginalised within the community.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action
	3.6.3. Continue to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to ensure that vulnerable members of society (older people, migrants, people with additional needs, members of the Traveller community members of the Roma community, people with substance misuse) can easily navigate public services.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	3.6.3. Lead: LCC (Integration Unit, Louth Library Service, etc.) Partners: HSE (Older Persons, Disability, Social Inclusion), Citizens Information, LMETB, CYPSC, PPN, LLD, Louth Older People's Forum, Louth Traveller Movement, DisABILITY Louth, Inclusion Louth, Cultúr Migrant Centre, Migrant Interagency Network, Migrant Community Groups, INTREO, Jesuit Refugee Service.
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	3.6.3. 1 Support research to ascertain the level of awareness amongst vulnerable members of society of available public services and the barriers to accessing those (e.g., awareness, language, literacy, technology, physical access). Careful consideration of research programme needed. 2 Based on research, create programme to address the barriers uncovered across the provision of public services in County Louth. 3 Begin to implement programme. 4 Expansion of services at the county's libraries supported. 5 Increase in service provision for Traveller Community in Dundalk facilitated by increased resources.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	LCC, LLD, International Protection Applicant Funding, Dept. of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Goal 4: Louth will actively lead on increasing the county's climate resilience, sustainability, and biodiversity.

Objective 4.1	
Policy/Planning Framework	Community
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 11, SDG 13
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 8, NSO 9
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 3.7, RPO 4.18, RPO 4.25, RPO 6.7, RPO 7.2, RPO 7.7, RPO 7.10, RPO 7.11, RPO 7.12, RPO 7.13, RPO 7.14, RPO 7.15, RPO 7.32, RPO 7.33, RPO 7.34, RPO 12.3, RPO 12.4
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 4
	Louth will actively lead on increasing the county's climate resilience, sustainability, and biodiversity.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Community Development Objective (SCDO)
	Facilitate proactive climate mitigation and adaptation actions within the county.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action(s)
	4.1.1. Implement the National Climate Action Plan and develop and implement the local authority Climate Action Plan for County Louth.
	4.1.2. Work with relevant agencies to mitigate against the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. Where feasible and viable, apply nature-based solutions to managing flooding and coastal erosion.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	4.1.1. Lead: LCC Climate Action Team Partners: LCC, Dept. of Environment, Climate and Communications, PPN, County SECs, SEAI, OPW, Coillte, NPWS
	4.4.2. Lead: LCC and OPW Partners: NPWS, PPN
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	4.1.1. 1 County Council Climate Action Plan developed and adopted. 2 No. of actions from County Council Climate Action Plan being implemented. 3 Lower greenhouse gas emissions for LCC in line with the Climate Action Plan. 4 Strong engagement between LCC and EU Mission: Adaption to Climate Change programme.
	4.1.2. 1 Implementation of Louth Flood Defence Programme. 2 Annual reporting.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	SEAI, OPW, Community Climate Action Fund

Objective 4.2	
Policy/Planning Framework	Economic
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 7, SDG 13
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 8, NSO 9
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 6.7, RPO 7.32, RPO 7.38, RPO 7.39, RPO 7.40, RPO 10.20, RPO 10.22, RPO 10.23
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 4
	Louth will actively lead on increasing the county's climate resilience, sustainability, and biodiversity.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Economic Development Objective (SEDO)
	Work to significantly increase the level of renewable energy generated across the county.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action
	4.2.2. Work with Eirgrid to ensure that the grid has sufficient capacity to handle increased supply, demand, and variance.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	4.2.2. Lead: Louth Economic Forum Partners: LCC (Planning, Economic Development, etc.), Eirgrid, SEAI, Renewable energy investors
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	4.2.2. 1 No. of meetings held with Eirgrid. 2 Necessary upgrades in the pipeline to being undertaken to the grid in Louth to withstand new offshore wind developments, onshore wind, largescale solar and micro-generation.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	Eirgrid

Objective 4.3	
Policy/Planning Framework	Community
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 6, SDG 14, SDG 15
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 1, NSO 9
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 4.2, RPO 9.9, RPO 10.1, RPO 10.3, RPO 10.4, RPO 10.7, RPO 10.10, RPO 10.11, RPO 10.12
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 4
	Louth will actively lead on increasing the county's climate resilience, sustainability, and biodiversity.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Community Development Objective (SCDO)
	Protect and renew the environment of Co Louth.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action(s)
	4.3.2. Continue to support the maintenance and upgrade of water and wastewater treatment facilities as needed across the county.
	4.3.6. Continue to support communities in their efforts to increase local biodiversity levels (e.g, improving habitats in gardens and green areas in housing developments).
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	4.3.2. Lead: Uisce Éireann and LCC Waters Programme Team Partners: LCC (Environment Section, Planning, Forward Planning), EPA, PPN, Dundalk Chamber, Drogheda and District Chamber, Dept. of Environment, Climate and Communications, NPWS
	4.3.6. Lead: LCC (Biodiversity Officer) Partners: LCC (Louth Libraries Service, Heritage Office), NPWS, PPN, Tidy Towns, Resident groups, Estate management companies
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	4.3.2. 1 Review expected housing and business water and wastewater needs across the county. Ascertain if current capacity is sufficient. 2 Support the renewal as necessary of wastewater and water treatment facilities in the county. No. of projects in pipeline (design/planning/construction stages). 3 Opportunities taken to reduce carbon intensive energy usage for water treatment during renovations and new builds. 4 Programme of public awareness on water conservation.
	4.3.6. 1 Exemplar community biodiversity projects supported. 2 Information and training provided on enhancing biodiversity. 3 No. of relevant actions from Louth Biodiversity Plan implemented. 4 Implement/support the relevant Local Authority actions under the National Biodiversity Plan.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	Dept. of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, The Heritage Council, Local Biodiversity Action Fund, Creative Climate Action Fund

Goal 5: Louth will have engaged, empowered, dynamic, resourced and connected communities.

Objective 5.1	
Policy/Planning Framework	Community
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 3, SDG 5, SDG 10, SDG 11
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 1, NSO 2, NSO 3, NSO 4,
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 4.16, RPO 4.24, RPO 7.32, RPO 7.42, RPO 8.7, RPO 9.2
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 5
	Louth will have engaged, empowered, dynamic, resourced and connected communities.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Community Development Objective (SEDO)
	Continue to develop safe and connected communities (socially, economically, digitally, and physically)
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action(s)
	5.1.4. Continue to support the delivery of Louth County Council Active Travel (Program of Works) and Pathfinder Program.
	5.1.5. Continue to support initiatives to prevent and mitigate against Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based violence in accordance with the 3rd National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Implementation Plan and any successor plans.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	5.1.4. Lead: LCC (Active Travel, Economic Development, Planning, Forward Planning) Partners: Local Link Louth Meath Fingal, LLD, NTA-TII
	5.1.5. Lead: Tusla (Domestic Violence Support Services programme), later CUAN Partners: HSE (Social Inclusion), LCC (Housing, Homeless Office), Approved Housing Bodies, An Garda Síochána, PPN, Rape Crisis North East, Women's Aid Dundalk, Drogheda Women's and Children's Refuge, LMETB, Addiction Services, Social Inclusion and Services
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	5.1.4. 1 Louth County Council Active Travel (Program of Works) and Pathfinder Program no. of actions being successfully implemented. 2 High-quality footpaths and cycle lanes in pipeline (design, planning, construction). Public lighting renewed as needed. No. of additional pedestrian crossings. 3 No. of new local link routes and more frequent bus services.
	5.1.5. 1 No. of initiatives supported to prevent and mitigate against domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. 2 Baseline created recording the numbers of people reporting Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based violence. Care is to be taken to ensure the experiences of those experiencing homelessness are recorded.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	NTA Active Travel Grants Programme, LLD, Dept. of Justice, Dept. of Health, Dept. of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Tusla, POBAL, Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund, NTA

Objective 5.2	
Policy/Planning Framework	Community
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 11, SDG 17
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 3
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 9.2, RPO 9.19
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 5
	Louth will have engaged, empowered, dynamic, resourced and connected communities.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Community Development Objective (SEDO)
	Strengthen the leadership capacity of local communities.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action
	5.2.4. Continue to support the development and delivery of a mentoring programme for Tidy Towns, Residents Association and Community Groups.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	5.2.4. Lead: PPN & Louth Volunteer Centre Partners: LCC (Community Office, etc.), LLD, Louth Local Sports Partnership, Tidy Towns, Residents Associations, Community Groups
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	5.2.4. 1 Research conducted as to what mentoring and training services are needed in the community sector. 2 No. of mentoring and training programmes delivered. No. of people that have taken part in training programme. 3 Review quality and impact of mentoring and training to continuously improve programme.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	LCC, LLD, AIB Community Fund

Objective 5.3	
Policy/Planning Framework	Community
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 10
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 1, NSO 3, NSO 5
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 9.2, RPO 9.18, RPO 9.19
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 5
	Louth will have engaged, empowered, dynamic, resourced and connected communities.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Community Development Objective (SEDO)
	Support the community and voluntary sector and build their capacity to deliver support to the people of county Louth.
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action(s)
	5.3.1. Through implementing the Co. Louth Volunteering Framework, develop and carry out initiatives that encourage more people to volunteer and stay engaged in community activities over the long term.
	5.3.2. Work with community and volunteer groups to enhance their governance and funding.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	5.3.1. Lead: Louth Volunteer Centre and PPN Partners: LCC, LLD, Louth Local Sporting Partnership
	5.3.2. Lead: Louth Volunteer Centre and PPN Partners: LCC, LLD, Louth Local Sporting Partnership
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	5.3.1. 1 No. of actions from the Co. Louth Volunteering Framework implemented. 2 Research conducted as to causes of volunteer fatigue and possible solutions.
	5.3.2. 1 Assistance provided to organisations that wish to merge for administration purposes. 2 Training programme provided on governance and fundraising. No. of people that have attended training events. Quality and relevance assessed using surveys. 3 Increased numbers of volunteers. 4 Increased retention of volunteers.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	LCC, LLD, AIB Community Fund

Objective 5.4	
Policy/Planning Framework	Community
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	SDG 10, SDG 11
National Development Plan (NDP) National Strategic Outcome	NSO 1, NSO 3
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	RPO 4.16, RPO 4.24, RPO 9.1, RPO 9.2, RPO 9.23
LECP Framework	High Level Goal 5
	Louth will have engaged, empowered, dynamic, resourced and connected communities.
LECP Framework	Sustainable Community Development Objective (SEDO)
	Continue to support and develop an Age Friendly society for all people in County Louth
LECP Implementation Plan	Prioritised Action
	5.4.1. Develop and implement a new Age Friendly Strategy for Co. Louth.
LECP Implementation Plan	Lead Agencies and Partners
	5.4.1. Lead: LCC (Age Friendly Louth, Integration Team) Partners: Active Travel, Louth Library Service, PPN, LLD, HSE (Older Persons), Citizens Information, Louth Older People's Council, Louth Local Sports Partnership, Other relevant charities/NGOs and community groups, Creative Ireland, DkIT, LMETB, Service providers for older people
LECP Implementation Plan	Key Performance Indicators
	5.4.1. 1 New Age Friendly Strategy Developed. 2 No. of actions implemented.
Potential Funding Sources (example)	Healthy Ireland Fund, LCC, LLD, Dept. of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, NTA/TFI, Creative Ireland

8.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

This chapter outlines the Council's high-level approach to the monitoring of the 2024-2029 Local Economic and Community Plan. The monitoring and evaluation of the LECP will be vital to ensure the successful implementation of the plan. As previously highlighted, the evaluation of progress will also be key to realising the benefits of the flexible Implementation Plan which will be reviewed and revised every 2 years.

Louth County Council, as the overarching implementing agency, is committed to the regular and accurate monitoring of the performance and progress of the new plan. However, as the LECP is a shared plan, accurate monitoring and evaluation can only be achieved

through a coordinated effort with key stakeholders who are involved in the delivery and implementation of the plan's actions. The monitoring of progress on the goals, objectives and actions will assist the Council and its partners in adopting a data led and evidence-based approach to decision making whilst increasing collaboration across the county (figure 8.1). This in turn will contribute to the appropriate allocation of resources to address the specific needs of the county and assist in ensuring value for money is achieved over the timeframe of the LECP.

Louth LECP Monitoring and Evaluation Approach

The approach to monitoring is

designed to be uncomplicated, concise, and accurate. It is acknowledged that reporting requirements need to be as time efficient as possible given the various agencies and stakeholders involved in the delivery of the LECP's actions. The foundation of the approach is based around a needs-based approach to monitoring and evaluation (i.e., the opportunity to revise the actions), open and clear communication, collaboration, and a culture of ownership within the Council to ensure the LECP's success.

As outlined in the previous chapters, the goals, objectives, outcomes, and actions have been developed and enabling agencies and KPIs identified. Data sources, outlined below, have also been identified to assist in the

monitoring of the plan. Louth County Council will be responsible for the overall monitoring and evaluation of the plan and will liaise regularly with the various stakeholders and agencies involved in its implementation (the enabling agencies). Where relevant for specific actions and in coordination with the Council, nominated points of contact will be identified in the enabling agencies to provide updates on progress by agreed dates.

Management Structure

Although Louth County Council will be responsible for the overall monitoring and evaluation of the plan, its implementation is to be led by a combined steering group. This will ensure that the burden is shared and more can be accomplished. The Steering Group is to be comprised of the Chairs of the LCDC and SPC, and four other members appointed by the SPC and LCDC.

A report on progress being made should be compiled and published annually through the Steering Group. The progress report should be made available online and publicised on the Council's social media channels.

At an early state, the Steering Group and Louth County Council should contact every agency identified as being a key stakeholder and agree a route to accomplishing each of the 31 prioritised actions. The various actions should become the Steering Group's work programme. Towards the end of this two-year Implementation Plan, its success is to be evaluated and lessons learnt for the successor document.

What is being Monitored

The overall actions and KPIs of the implementation plan will be monitored and evaluated for progress with updates sought from the relevant enabling agencies on a quarterly basis. The KPIs vary by nature with some relating to enrolment and participation numbers for courses and training, while others are implementation dependent e.g., in relation to progressing pilot initiatives, feasibility studies. Regardless of the nature of the KPIs, the actions of the initial Implementation Plan should result in clear updates and reports on progress; be it the number of participants enrolled on a course

Figure 8.1: Monitoring and Evaluation Wheel



or on what initiative has or has not progressed.

These updates will contribute to the overall evaluation of progress towards the higher-level goals, objectives, and outcomes for the entire LECP period. The outcomes also vary in nature with regards to reporting and can be monitored in many instances through statistical data (updated at varying intervals outlined further below) provided by the CSO and other agencies such as GeoDirectory. In other instances, specific data will be held by the Council as well as other key stakeholders involved in the delivery of the LECP such as the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, service providers (e.g. TFI, HSE) and community groups (e.g. Louth Volunteer Centre). Due to the higher-level and longer-term nature of the goals, objectives and outcomes, Louth County Council will hold the overall responsibility in relation to monitoring their progress.

What will be Reported

Through their nominated points of contact, relevant enabling agencies will provide short progress related updates on relevant actions and KPIs. Where information or data related to KPIs is not yet available (e.g. annual

enrolment figures for courses or similar), this should be noted along with the envisaged date for when such data will be released. Any issues relating to the implementation of the action or reporting on the KPIs should be highlighted in the updates provided. Louth County Council will review any such issues and where appropriate, solutions will be identified and implemented.

The goals, objectives and actions have been coded for ease of reference. For reporting purposes when referring to actions, the action number and where applicable KPI number should be referenced. For each action a record should be kept on whether it has commenced, is in progress or has been completed. In instances where actions have not commenced, detail should be provided in the update as to why this is the case and the action's envisaged start date if applicable. Where actions have not been progressed, this should also be recorded, and a reason provided. Similarly, where feasibility studies have resulted in ideas or pilots not being progressed, this should be clearly noted and recorded for future planning purposes.

8.4 Data Sources

The below highlights a few data sources that have been utilised in the development of the LECP and can also be used to support the monitoring of its progress:



Business Demography

The business demography, updated annually, provides information on numbers of enterprises, enterprise births and deaths and survival rates as well as related employment figures. It can be used to update information on employment growth by enterprise category.

Census Information

Statistics and datasets from Census 2022 and future censuses will contribute greatly to monitoring progress in relation to a few elements, particularly in relation to the goals, objectives and outcomes. This includes population information, level of employment, principal economic status, means of travel (e.g., walking, cycling or by vehicle), general health assessment, educational attainment and more.

CSO New Dwelling Completion

The CSO's New Dwelling Completions data is based on the number of domestic dwellings connected by the ESB Network to the electricity supply. Updated quarterly, it can assist in monitoring the housing supply in the county and whether it remains adequate to support the county's growth and development.

GeoDirectory

The GeoDirectory provides information on a quarterly basis on commercial and residential vacancy at county and selected town level. It can be used to track changes in the commercial and residential vacancy rates in Louth. This can be supplemented with findings from town centre health checks should they be undertaken in the county over the course of LECP timeframe.

HEA Enrolments by HEI Region/ Home County

The Higher Education Authority provides information, updated annually, on enrolments by county. This includes data on institution, course level and mode of study amongst other areas.

Labour Force Survey (LFS)

The Labour Force Survey replaced the Quarterly Household Survey and provided labour force estimates in relation to measure of employment and unemployment in the country including by region. It is updated quarterly.

Live Register

The Live Register provides information monthly in relation to those seeking jobseekers benefit and jobseekers allowance and includes county level information. Notably, it is not designed to measure unemployment as it includes part-time, seasonal, and casual workers that maybe entitled to jobseekers benefit and allowance.

Pobal HP Deprivation Index

The Pobal HP Deprivation Index shows the level of overall affluence and deprivation at by Electoral District and Small Area along with associated deprivation scores. The latest version of the index is based on the 2022 Census.

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme Reports (SICAP)

Pobal release annual reports related to the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme by county which includes indicators and identified trends around specific target groups including those from minority groups, the unemployed and older people.

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9.5 2023 LECP Members	125
9.6 2023 SPC (Economic Development and Enterprise Support) Members	125

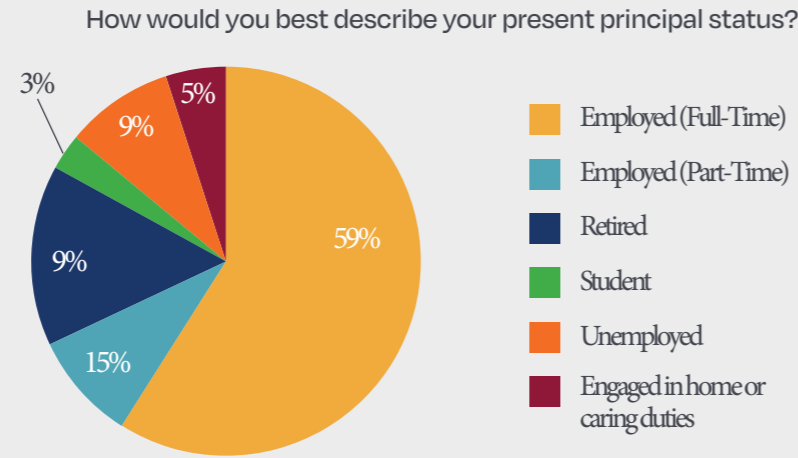
Public Consultation



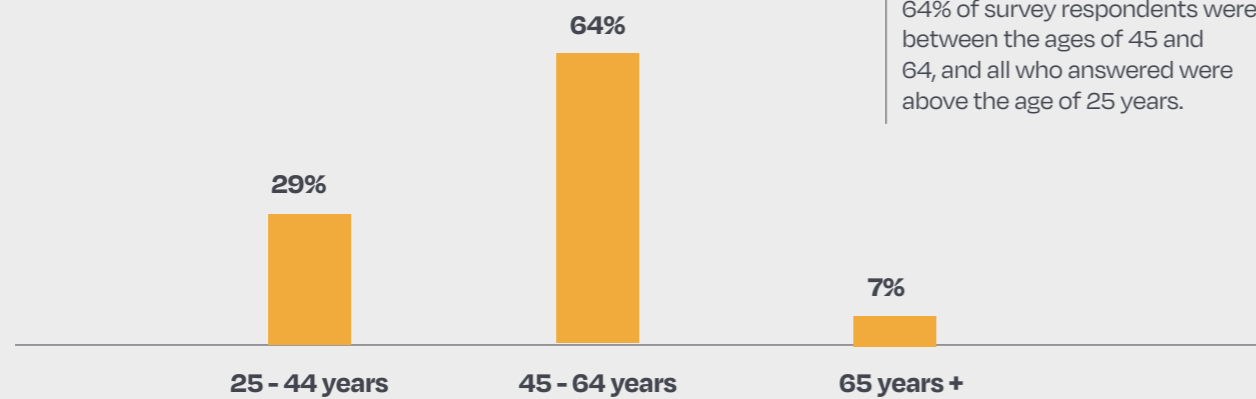
9.1 Community Survey Results

Following are additional charts derived from the community surveys that have not been previously incorporated into the consultation findings section of the document.

A majority of the community members who engaged with the consulting process and filled out the survey were in full-time employment. The remainder included other principal statuses such as retirees and students.

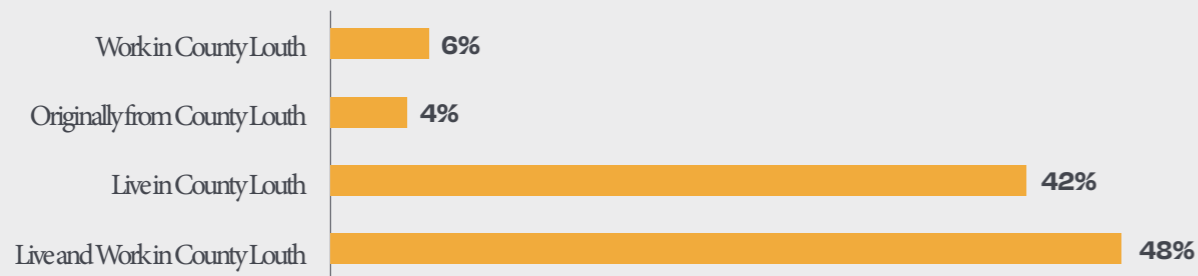


What age bracket do you fall into?



64% of survey respondents were between the ages of 45 and 64, and all who answered were above the age of 25 years.

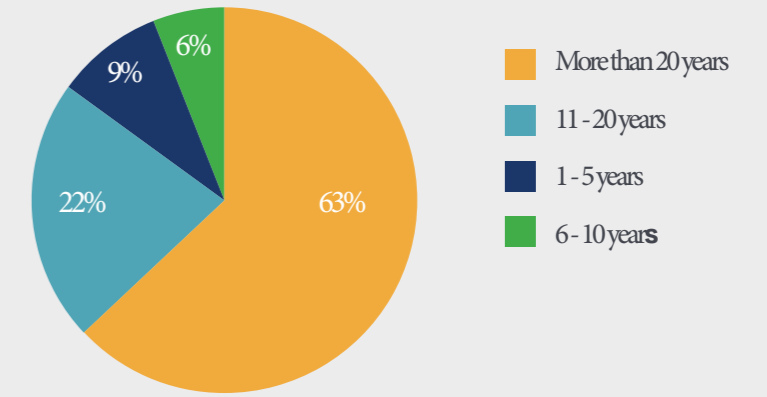
How would you describe your connection with County Louth?



Almost all survey respondents currently reside in County Louth with a near even split of those working in the county and those working outside of it.

9.1 Community Survey Results (cont.)

How long have you lived and/or worked in County Louth?

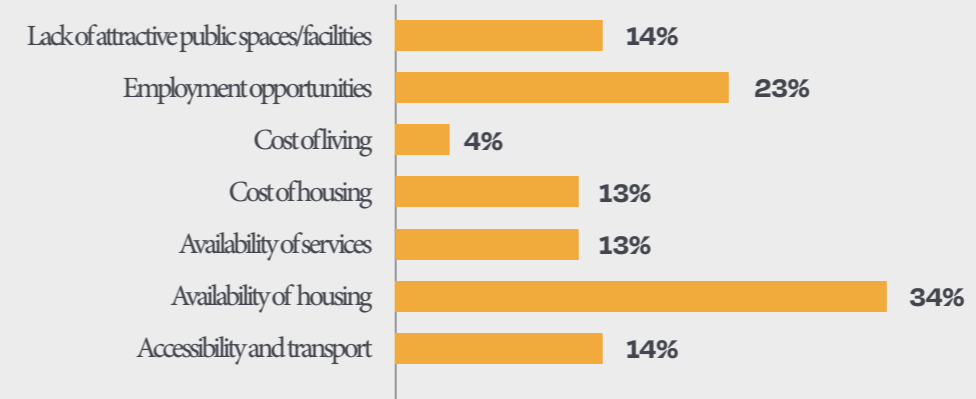


If employed, where is your usual place of work?



53% of the employment was within County Louth, while 19% of it was located in the Greater Dublin Area.

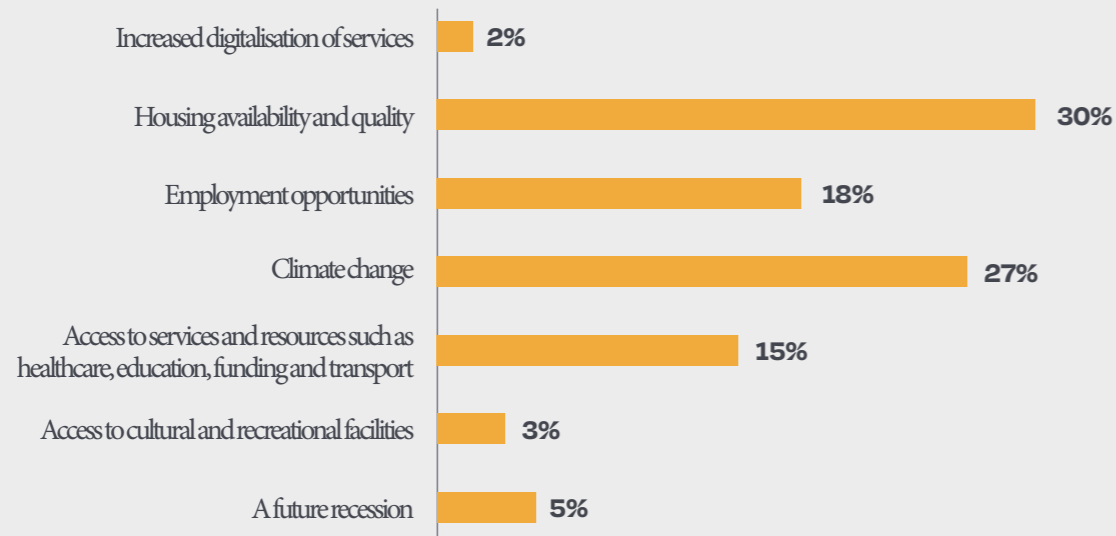
What is the main barrier to people coming to live and work in Louth?



According to the survey results, the main barriers to people coming to live and work in Louth are availability of housing and employment opportunities at 34% and 23% respectively. There are a few issues all had 14% percent of survey respondents each; lack of attractive public spaces, cost of housing, availability of services, and accessibility and transport.

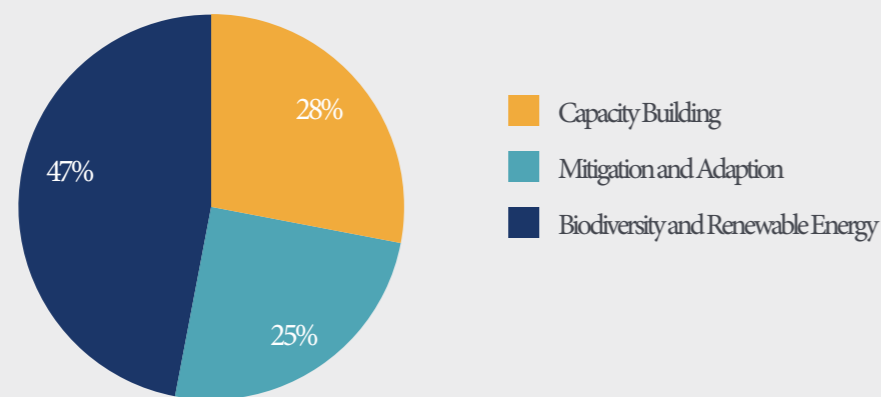
9.1 Community Survey Results (cont.)

What are the biggest threats, issues or concerns for the future development of Louth?



30% of survey respondents believe housing availability is the biggest threat for the future development of County Louth. Another 27% believe climate change is the biggest concern. Employment opportunities and access to services also ranked highly as a concern. Some survey respondents also added written submissions, the most notable examples being lack of accessible rural transport and lack of cross-territorial development.

In terms of sustainable development of the rural environment and climate change, which is the most significant for the future of Louth?

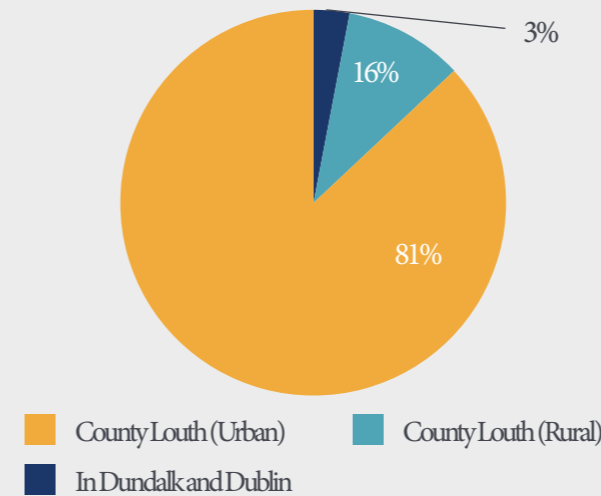


Almost half of survey respondents believe biodiversity and renewable energy development are the most significant factors with regard to sustainable development of the rural environment.

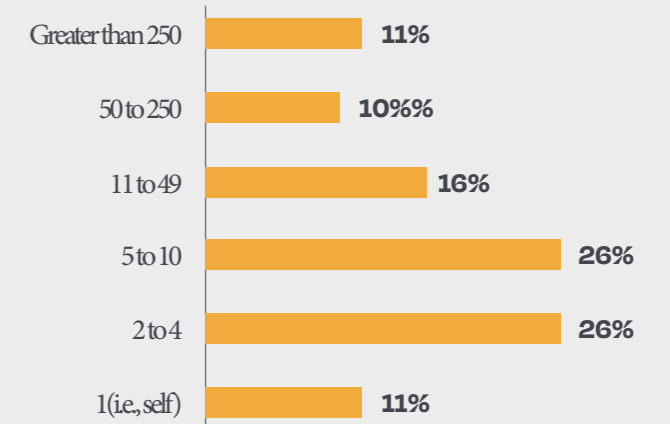
9.2 Business Survey Results

As well as the community surveys, a few businesses in Louth were surveyed. Below are charts and insights gleaned from the survey that were not already covered in section 6.

Where is your business located?

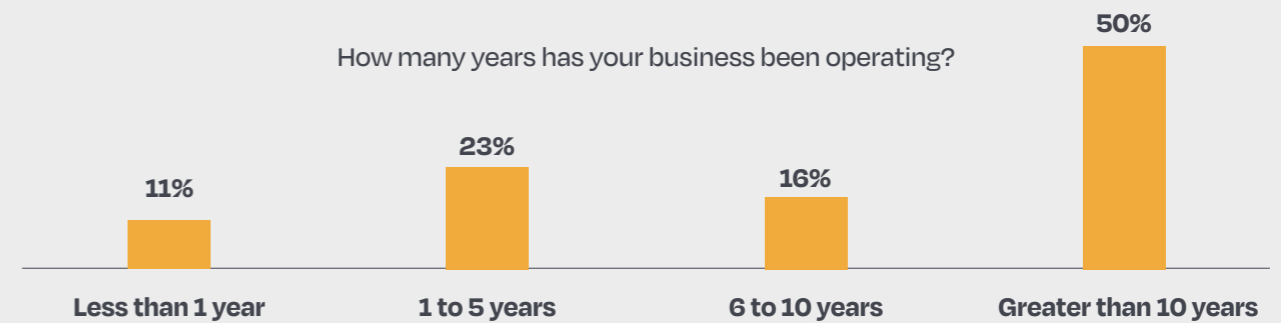


How many people does your business employ?

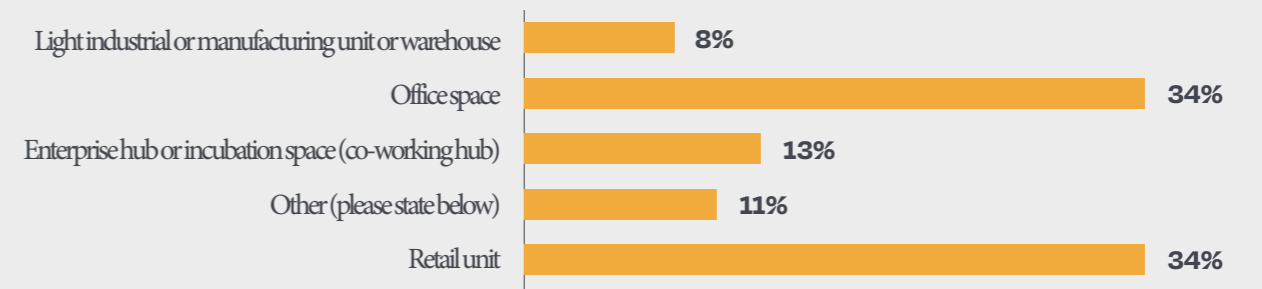


A majority of the businesses surveyed were located in the urban Louth, and consisted of less than 50 employees. Over half of the business have been operating for more than 10 years.

How many years has your business been operating?



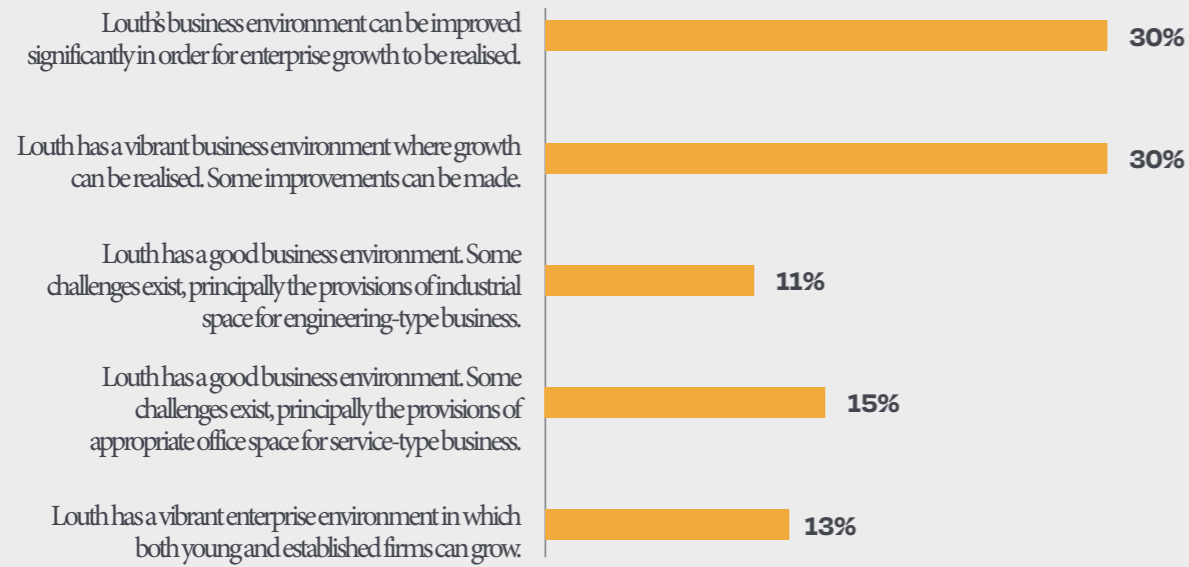
What type of facility does your business/organisation primarily use?



The most common facilities used by businesses were retail units or office spaces, with a few mentioning co-working hubs such as enterprise hubs and incubation spaces.

9.2 Business Survey Results (cont.)

What best describes Louth as a place to do business?



Most businesses see Louth as a good business environment where some improvements can be made. Namely, facilitating enterprise growth and provision of appropriate space for businesses.

What are Louth's main strengths as a place to do business?



A majority of businesses believed that Louth's strategic location is its greatest strength as a place to do business. Workforce availability is also considered a strength of Louth.

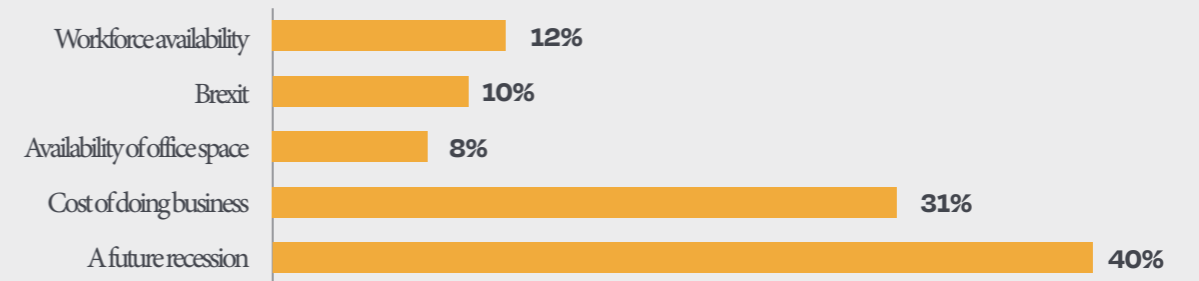
9.2 Business Survey Results (cont.)

What are Louth's main constraints as a place to do business?



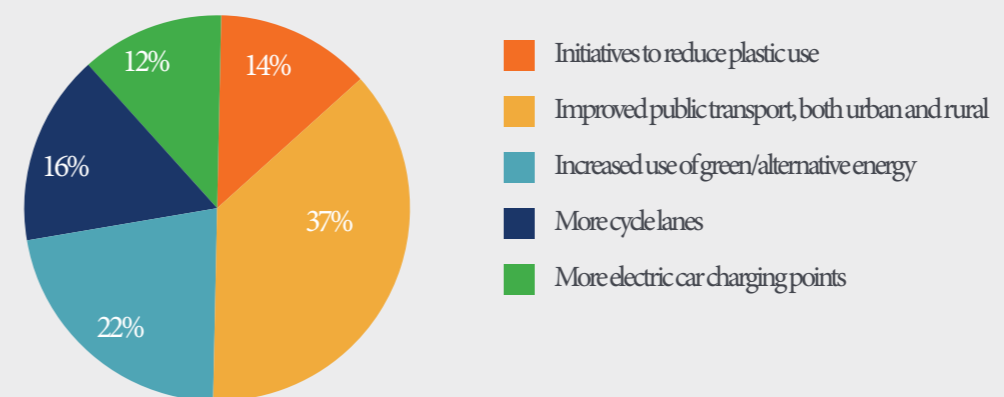
Regarding constraints Louth has as a place for doing business, costs of both housing and of doing business were frequently mentioned. Also the lack of business supports and space were considered constraints by many businesses.

What are the biggest threats for future economic development?



When asked about the threats for future economic development, a future recession was mentioned repeatedly.

Which of these green initiatives would benefit Louth the most?



Businesses survey believed most green initiatives in the survey would benefit Louth as shown above

9.3 Table Schedule of LECP Public Consultations

The following table summarises the engagement achieved as part of the LECP consultation process.

LECP Community & Business Surveys Online (open from 18.04.2023 – 08.09.2023)			
18.04.2023	10.00am -11.30am	Crowne Plaza Dundalk	Open Public Consultation
18/04/2022	12.00pm – 1.30pm	Crowne Plaza Dundalk	Elected Members Workshop
18.04.2023	2.30pm - 4.30pm	Crowne Plaza Dundalk	Council Staff - Economic Element LECP
18.04.2023	6.30pm – 8.00pm	Crowne Plaza Dundalk	Open Public Consultation
19.04.2023	9.30am -11.00am	The Mill Enterprise Centre Drogheda	Business & Traders / Under Represented Groups
19.04.2023	11.30am – 1.00pm	The Mill Enterprise Centre Drogheda	Older People
19.04.2023	2.00pm -4.00pm	The Mill Enterprise Centre Drogheda	Council Staff – Community Element LECP
19.04.2023	4.30pm -5.30pm	The Mill Enterprise Centre Drogheda	LGBTQI+ / New Communities
19.04.2023	6.30pm -8.00pm	The Mill Enterprise Centre Drogheda	Open Public Consultation
24.04.2023	10.00am -11.00am	On Line Workshop	LCDC Members & Economic SPC Members
25.04.2023	9.30am -11.00am	The Mill Enterprise Centre Drogheda Carrickdale Hotel	Disability Groups & Under Represented Groups
25.04.2023	11.30AM -1.00pm	The Mill Enterprise Centre Drogheda Carrickdale Hotel	Sports Groups /Sports Partnership
25.04.2023	2.00pm -3.30pm	The Parish Centre Ardee	Farming Groups/Rural Groups /Business &Traders
25.04.2023	4.00pm -5.30pm	The Parish Centre Ardee	New Communities / Older People
25.04.2023	6.30pm -8.00pm	The Parish Centre Ardee	Open Public Consultation
26.04.2023	9.30am -11.00am	County Hall, Dundalk	Louth Local Development & LCC Staff
26.04.2023	11.30am -1.00pm	County Hall, Dundalk	Groups representing the homeless and people with a disability
26.04.2023	2.00pm -3.30pm	The 4 Seasons Carlingford	Older People/Farming/Rural/
26.04.2023	4.00pm -5.30pm	The 4 Seasons Carlingford	Sports & Community Groups/Business & Traders
26.04.2023	6.30pm -8.00pm	The 4 Seasons Carlingford	Open Public Consultation
04.05.2023	10.00am -4.00pm	Scotch Hall, Drogheda	LECP Pop Up Stand – Online & Hardcopy public survey
04.05.2023	10.00am -4.00pm	Scotch Hall, Drogheda	LECP Pop Up Stand Survey distributed to all shops/businesses in Scotch Hall
05.05.2023	10.00am -4.00pm	The Marshes Dundalk	LECP Pop Up Stand – Online & Hardcopy public survey
05.05.2023	10.00am -4.00pm	The Marshes Dundalk	LECP Pop Up Stand Survey distributed to all shops/businesses in The Marshes
08.05.2023	2.30pm -4.00pm	St Anthony's Park Drogheda	Traveller Specific Accommodation Door to door survey
08.05.2023	7.00pm -8.30pm	Online Workshop	LGBTQI+ Community Outcomers Dundalk
09.05.2023	10.00am -12.30pm	Naughton Close Dundalk	Traveller Specific Accommodation Door to door survey
09.05.2023	12.30pm -1.00pm	Woodland Park, Halting Site	Community Survey Leaflet Drop
11.05.2023	6.30pm -8.00pm	Online Workshop	New Communities Culture Connect
12.05.2023	10.00am -11.30am	Online Workshop	Seniors LCC
16.05.2023	10.00am -11.00am	Online Workshop	Drogheda Chamber & Dundalk Chamber
19.05.2023	11.30am -12.30pm	Online Workshop	LMETB/HSE /DKIT
08.09.2023	12pm-1.15pm	Online Workshop	Key stakeholders from public, private and community sectors
08.09.2023	2.00pm-3.15pm	Online Workshop	Key stakeholders from public, private and community sectors

9.4 List of Submissions Received

The following table summarises the written submissions received during the LECP consultation process.

Drogheda Women's & Children Refuge
HSE
DkIT
Active Travel
CYPSC
Dundalk Outcomers
Naughton Close Residents Association
Local Link
Drogheda United Football Club
Drogheda Implementation Board
Louth Beekeepers Association
Paddy Malone
Louth Older People's Council & Age Friendly Alliance
Megan Woods (Carlingford)
Owen Woods (Carlingford)
Healthcare Centre - Louth County Hospital
Energy Team
Drogheda and District Chamber
LMETB
Harry McCarthy
Maeve Yore - Independent Councillor

Members of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for Economic Development and Enterprise Support

9.5 2023 LECP Members

Public Sector	
Louth County Council	Cllr. Liam Reilly
Louth County Council	Cllr. Kevin Meenan
Louth County Council	Cllr. Eileen Tully
Louth County Council	Cllr. Dolores Minogue
Louth County Council Official	Joan Martin
Louth County Council Official	Niamh Dennehy
Louth Meath ETB	Sadie Ward McDermott
DSP	Sharon Curran
HSE	Bridie Pepper
Private Sector	
Louth Local Development	Ciaran Reid
Community & Voluntary Interests	Alison Quail (Chairperson LCDC)
Community & Voluntary Interests	Jasmine Mathew
Social Inclusion	Bernardine Quinn
Social Inclusion	Carol Murphy
Environment	Lisa Doyle
Farming	John Carroll
Chamber of Commerce Dundalk	Una McGoey
Chamber of Commerce Drogheda	Steven Rice
Louth Volunteer Centre	Olivia Conlon

9.6 2023 SPC (Economic Development and Enterprise Support) Members

Louth County Council	Cllr. Dolores Minogue
Louth County Council	Cllr. Andrea McKeivitt
Louth County Council	Cllr. Declan Power
Louth County Council	Cllr. Pio Smith
Louth County Council	Cllr. Tomas Sharkey
Louth County Council	Cllr. Emma Coffey
	Paddy Malone
	Sarah Daly
	Tomas Meegan
	Alan McArdle



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

Louth Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2029

February 2024