

## SECTION 14: IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

### 14.1 INTRODUCTION

The Draft Plan sets out the Council's vision and strategy for the sustainable development of the County over the period 2021-2027 and includes a range of policy objectives that provide a framework for the future growth and development of the County.

The Council has a statutory obligation to implement the provisions of the Draft Plan and is committed to securing its objectives.

The Council will progress the policy objectives of the Draft Plan:

- to advance Portlaoise and Graiguecullen as Key Towns,
- to enhance economic activity, promote the transition to a low carbon County, and in particular, Portlaoise' lead role as Ireland's first low carbon town,
- to promote the County's unique cultural, built and natural heritage,
- to develop sustainable communities ensuring sustainable use of natural resources.

The implementation of the Plan is also dependant on a number of factors including collaboration with the community, key stakeholders, adjoining authorities, political support. Council funding and the availability of capital from other sources is also a key factor which, at present due to the uncertain economic climate as a result of COVID 19, may present a challenge in the years ahead.

The Plan will also be regularly reviewed in light of new legislation or guidelines, to assess progress, and to determine where amendments are required, a variation of the Plan will be necessary.

### 14.2 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The *Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)* provides under:

- Section 15 (1) that it shall be the duty of a Planning Authority to take such steps within its powers as may be necessary for securing the objectives of the Development Plan, and;
- Section 15 (2) that the Manager of the Planning Authority shall, not more than 2 years after the making of a Development Plan, give a report to the members of the authority on the progress achieved in securing the objectives referred to in subsection (1).

### 14.3 LOCAL AREA PLANS

The policy objectives of the Draft Plan provide a general framework, but not necessarily the detailed treatment required for significant proposals in certain towns. For a number of towns within the County, a more detailed local level of spatial planning is required through the development of Local Area Plans and Joint Spatial/Local Area Plans.

Joint Local Area Plans will be prepared for the following settlements:

- **Key Town** of Graiguecullen: A Joint Local Area Plan is to be prepared in collaboration with Carlow County Council; and
- **Self Sustaining Growth Town** of Portarlinton: A Joint Local Area Plan is to be prepared in collaboration with Offaly County Council; and

Local Area Plans will be prepared for the following settlements:

- **Key Town** of Portlaoise
- **Self Sustaining Town** of Mountmellick

## 14.4 DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

Development contributions for the provision of services such as roads, footpaths and amenity / open space provision, etc will be applied where appropriate to development applications. The details and basis for the determination of the contributions are set out in a Development Contribution Scheme 2017-2023 or any subsequent schemes adopted thereafter in accordance with the provision of section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

## 14.5 URDF AND RRDF

One of the key objectives of the NPF relates to the need for compact growth, with development being focused within and close to existing built-up areas. A core element of this approach is the regeneration of infill and brownfield sites. This is in line with the NPF targets of achieving at least 50% of all new homes within or contiguous to the built-up area of Dublin city and suburbs and a target of at least 30% for other urban areas.

In this regard, it is a policy objective of Laois County Council to promote measures to reduce vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within urban centres. 30% of lands zoned for residential purposes as part of this Plan have been identified for brownfield development. These lands are primarily located in the larger urban areas such as Portlaoise, Portarlinton, Mountmellick and Graiguecullen where the greatest potential exists.

The importance of the role of regeneration in the delivery of Project Ireland 2040 is acknowledged by the provision of the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) and the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF).

The €2 Billion ten-year Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) was launched in 2018 to support compact sustainable development, through the regeneration of Ireland's cities and large towns, in line with the objectives of Project Ireland 2040 – The National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018 -2027. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) provides the investment framework for Eastern and Midland Region. The types of proposals eligible for funding include strategic development areas, active land management, measures to address building vacancy and refurbishment, public realm improvements, enabling infrastructure, sustainable mobility and transition to low carbon and climate resilience.

### **14.5.1 REGENERATION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT - PORTLAOISE**

The aim of this project is to focus on regenerating the original town centre and main street areas and how they relate to the expanded town, with a view to creating more attractive, desirable places that people want to live and spend time in. The Demonstration Project will be initiated on a community and locally led urban design and renewal initiative. The national Regeneration and Development Agency, with investment from the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and wider community and local businesses, will create and deliver a new vision for the centre of Portlaoise, to show how the best quality planning, urban design and implementation can create a rejuvenated town. There will be a particular focus on self-sustaining and community-driver renewal.

### **14.5.2 RURAL REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT FUND (RRDF).**

The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund is a commitment of €1 billion by government to be invested in rural Ireland over the period 2019 to 2027. The purpose of the fund is to support job creation in rural areas, address de-population of rural communities and support improvements in our towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000, and outlying areas.

It will be a key instrument to support the objectives of the NPF and to aid in the implementation of the RSES and the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.

## **14.6 BONDS**

Depending on the nature of the development, the Council may require, as a condition of planning permission, the lodgment of financial security to ensure that the permitted development is satisfactorily completed.

The amount of the security will be determined by the Council and will be reviewed during the plan period. The security will be held by the Council until all works are satisfactorily completed to the exacting standards of the Council, or until the development is taken in charge by the Council

## **14.7 PHASING**

The timely provision of supporting infrastructure and community facilities in tandem with the development of areas is important in ensuring high quality, sustainable development takes place. All large-scale development proposals shall be phased having regard to the delivery of both physical and social infrastructure and orderly development.

## **14.8 MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The Planning Department of the Council is the lead section responsible for monitoring and implementing the Plan, mainly through its development management function.

However, it is important to note that this Plan co-ordinates the work and objectives of not only of the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development directorates but also the Corporate and

Emergency Services, Operations, Housing, as well as the Finance and Water Service directorates.

In some instances, the implementation of certain policy objectives may be the responsibility of external bodies such as OPW, Irish Water, National Parks & Wildlife Service, Fisheries Ireland, National Roads Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, and the Environmental Protection Agency etc. The Planning Authority will work in collaboration with the relevant external body to assist in ensuring the implementation of the relevant policy objective.

The Draft Plan policy objectives are specific, measurable, achievable and realistic. However, a number are set within a longer timeframe, thus they may not be fully implemented over the lifetime of this Draft Plan.

#### **14.8.1 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONTORING OF THE CORE STRATEGY**

The NPF states that new statutory guidelines, supported by wider methodologies and data sources, will be put in place under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act to improve the evidence base, effectiveness and consistency of the planning process for housing provision at regional, metropolitan and local authority levels.

This will be supported by the provision of standardised requirements by regulation for the recording of planning and housing data by the local authorities in order to provide a consistent and robust evidence base for housing policy formulation.

As such, Laois County Council, as set out in section 2.18, will monitor ongoing developments in this respect and review the operation and implementation of this Plan. This includes adjustments as needed to ensure the effectiveness of its alignment with National and Regional policy and objectives.

<b>Implementation and Monitoring Policy Objective</b>	
<b>IM 1</b>	Monitor development for compliance with the objectives of the Core Strategy and adjust, where necessary, the approach taken to the consideration of development proposals in order to ensure effective alignment with National and Regional policy and objectives.

### **14.9 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. Monitoring can both demonstrate the positive effects facilitated by the Plan and can enable, at an early stage, the identification of unforeseen adverse effects and the undertaking of appropriate remedial action.

The occurrence of significant adverse environmental effects not predicted and mitigated by this assessment, which are directly attributable to the implementation of the Plan, would necessitate consideration of these effects in the context of the Plan and potential remediation action(s) and/or review of part(s) of the Plan.

### **14.9.1 INDICATORS AND TARGETS**

Monitoring is based around indicators which allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives identified in Section 5 of the SEA Environmental Report and used in the evaluation. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the target(s) which were identified with regard to the relevant strategic actions. Given the position of the Development Plan in the land use planning hierarchy beneath the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), the measures identified in that RSES SEA have been used – as they are or having been slightly modified – in most instances. This consistency across the hierarchy of land use plans will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of future monitoring programmes.

Table 10.1 of the SEA Environmental Report shows the indicators and targets which have been selected for monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated. Monitoring is an ongoing process and the programme allows for flexibility and the further refinement of indicators and targets. The Monitoring Programme may be updated to deal with specific environmental issues – including unforeseen effects – as they arise. Many of the indicators relate to more than one of the freshwater and terrestrial environments.

### **14.9.2 SOURCES**

The Draft Plan will form part of the wider land use planning framework comprising a hierarchy of policies, plans, programmes, etc. This wider framework, including the National Planning Framework and the Eastern and Midland RSES, is subject to its own SEA (and associated monitoring) requirements. At lower tiers of the hierarchy, Local Area Plans and individual projects will be subject to their own monitoring requirements as relevant.

In implementing the Monitoring Programme, the Council will take into account this hierarchy of planning and environmental monitoring. Sources for indicators may include existing monitoring databases (including those maintained by planning authorities and national/regional government departments and agencies) and the output of lower-tier environmental assessment and decision making (including a review of project approvals granted and associated documents and the output of any EIA monitoring programmes).

Internal monitoring of the environmental effects of grants of permission in the Council would provide monitoring of certain indicators on a grant of permission basis. Where significant adverse as the result of a development to be permitted are identified, such effects could be identified, recorded and used to inform monitoring evaluation.

### **14.9.3 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONTORING OF THE CORE STRATEGY**

A stand-alone Monitoring Report on the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan will be prepared in advance of the beginning of the review of the Plan. This report will seek to address the indicators set out on Table 10.1 of the SEA Environmental Report. The Council is responsible for the ongoing review of indicators and targets, collating existing relevant monitored data, the preparation of monitoring evaluation report(s), the publication of these reports and, if necessary, the carrying out of remedial action.