

5

Economic Development

Aim: To provide for the future well being of the residents of the county and the region by facilitating economic development; to promote the growth of employment opportunities in all sectors in accordance with the principles of sustainable development; to achieve a reduction in the unsustainable levels of commuting from the county; to provide a greater focus on community building and improving quality of life.

5.1 National Context

Up until 2006, the Irish economy had grown by an average of 5-6% per annum. However since 2007 the Irish economy has been contracting. The economy contracted by 11 percent on a GNP basis in 2009 and contracted by a further 2 percent on a GNP basis in 2010 (ESRI).

Improving Ireland's economy is a recognised priority at national level and the need to revitalise the economy has been reflected in *Building Ireland's Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal (2008)*. This document sets out government policy on the restructuring of the economy with a primary objective being to return to sustainable growth in the medium-term. The framework focuses on building a smart economy with a thriving enterprise culture, high quality environment, secure energy supplies and first class infrastructure.

5.2 Regional Context

The GDA is seen as the power house of the national economy accommodating over 40% of the population of Ireland and generating just under half of Ireland's Gross Value Added. The success of the Metropolitan core of the GDA is seen as critical to the future performance of the national economy and its return to growth. The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG's) strategy identifies key areas of enterprise development potential in the GDA and focuses on enhancing strategically important aspects of the business environment so as to

create the conditions for attracting investment by both foreign and indigenous companies, stimulating entrepreneurship and enabling companies to grow and target international markets. It focuses on a multi-dimensional economic role for the region in which the whole of the region can both contribute to and benefit from positive economic outcomes. The GDA economic strategy is based on the following principles:

- (i) Continued development of the Dublin Gateway as an international focus for economic activity.
- (ii) Development of economic clusters, centred on strategic economic growth corridors and growth towns.
- (iii) Focusing growth on multi-modal growth corridors in the GDA, which connect the economic growth centres within the region with both the Dublin City-Region Gateway and beyond through adjoining regions to other key towns and NSS gateways, benefiting from national investment on these corridors.

The RPGs identify economic trends for the region which are primarily drawn from the ESRI Medium Term Review (2008-2015) and patterns emerging from enterprise dynamics. These include the following;

- (i) A key driver of growth in the future is the business and financial services sector given the GDA is 'currently the most influential contributor in this sector in terms of employment and regional output, supported by high levels of educational attainment'.
- (ii) The educational sector, third and fourth level education attainment and

innovation are important for developing the knowledge based economy. A decline in the growth and influence of manufacturing, and the changing nature of regional employment to higher value-adding activities is likely to give rise to challenges for industrial policy, R&D policy, land use zoning and human capital.

- (iii) The supply of labour with appropriate skills for services activities will be important for future growth.
- (iv) Despite a reduction in the demand in the global export market, the value of exports at a national and regional level has remained robust and is likely to remain so.
- (v) The Metropolitan area of the GDA and its hinterland suffers from patterns of urban sprawl and dispersal of population which adversely affects competitiveness. Sustainable and balanced spatial planning and targeted infrastructure is therefore essential to support regional enterprise and economic activity.

5.3 Local Context

County Kildare is strategically positioned to benefit from local, national and international markets owing to its location proximate to the national gateway, a number of ports and airports and also due to its excellent road and rail network through the county linking Kildare to other centres of importance throughout the State.

Currently, the county contains a number of significant employers including, Intel, HP and NUI Maynooth in north Kildare, Pfizer in Newbridge, Bord na Mona activities (in both Newbridge and rural County Kildare), the equine industry and the defence forces. Notwithstanding these major

employers there is a need to build on the current economic strengths of the county. In this regard, a strategic, sustainable economic strategy is a priority in the preparation of this Plan.

The current economic strategy for the county *Competing in a Globalised World – An Economic Development Strategy for Kildare (2007)* recognises that Kildare has to compete internationally in order to attract and retain investment and skills. It recognises that the county will need to develop and attract more strategic activities in the manufacturing sectors and re-orientate towards high value added traded services. At a strategic level it advocates the importance of identifying locations that have the highest potential for the attraction of high tech, high value added and research intensive activities and that these sites be prioritised specifically for those developments. It also outlines the need to cater for a wide range of business, residential and infrastructure developments throughout the county. Innovation and the promotion of innovation in order to enhance entrepreneurship and develop the existing and new economic enterprises is supported by the Council in order to translate ideas into high value products and services.

5.3.1 Economic Profile of County Kildare

The CSO recorded 97,719 persons aged 15 years and over, in the labour force in Kildare in 2006 (Table 5.1 refers). Between 1996 and 2002 the highest percentage of workers were employed in clerical, management and government positions while the number of workers employed in farming, fishing and forestry decreased significantly during the same period. At a national level between 2002 and 2006, the majority of workers were employed in the building and construction industries while farming, fishing and the forestry industries continued to experience a decline.

Table 5.1 Persons aged 15 years and over in the Labour Force in County Kildare

	1996	2002	2006
Clerical, Managing and Government Workers	10,315	16,077 (+56%)	19,094 (+19%)
Professional, Technical and Health Workers	8,579	12,765 (+49%)	16,152 (+27%)
Sales and commerce workers	7,205	10,221 (+42%)	12,955 (+27%)
Manufacturing Workers	9,109	9,980 (+10%)	11,624 (+17%)
Service Workers	6,650	8,167 (+23%)	10,452 (+28%)
Farming, fishing and forestry workers	4,096	2,947 (-28%)	2,851 (-3%)
Building and construction workers	4,319	6,196 (+44%)	8,417 (+36%)
Communication and transport workers	3,104	4,481 (+44%)	5,206 (+16%)
Looking for 1 st regular job	897	689 (-23%)	1108 (+61%)
Other	3,482	7,697 (+121%)	9,860 (+28%)
Total in labour force	57,756	79,220 (+37%)	97,719 (+23%)

Source: CSO 2006

5.3.2 Unemployment Rates

Within the county, there has been a significant increase in the numbers of people 'signing on' since the end of February 2007. Between December 2008 and December 2009 the number signing on the register at offices in Co. Kildare increased from 11,571 to 17,229. The highest proportionate increase on the live register at 61% between the period December 2008 to December 2009 took place in the Maynooth Office.

5.3.3 Commuting Patterns


Levels of commuting are defined into localised, significant and long commuting times. The 2006 CSO results for commuting patterns are illustrated on Maps 5.1 – 5.3. (CSO 2006) and summarised in the following paragraphs.

- Areas showing highest levels of local commuting¹ are generally concentrated around the central towns (Naas, Newbridge, Kildare, Monasterevin and Kilcullen) and toward the southern end of the county.
- Significant commuting² patterns are concentrated to the northwest of the county, around the central and north-eastern towns of Naas, Celbridge, Leixlip and in Athy and its hinterland in the south of the county. The centre of the county has more sustainable commuting patterns.
- The northeast of the county has the highest proportion of longer time³ commuters, with

¹ Persons travelling less than 15 minutes to work as a percentage of total persons at work in the County in 2006

² Persons travelling 30 - 45 minutes to work as a percentage of total persons at work in the County in 2006

³ Longer commuting time is defined as persons travelling 60 - 89 minutes to work as a percentage of total persons at work in the County in 2006.



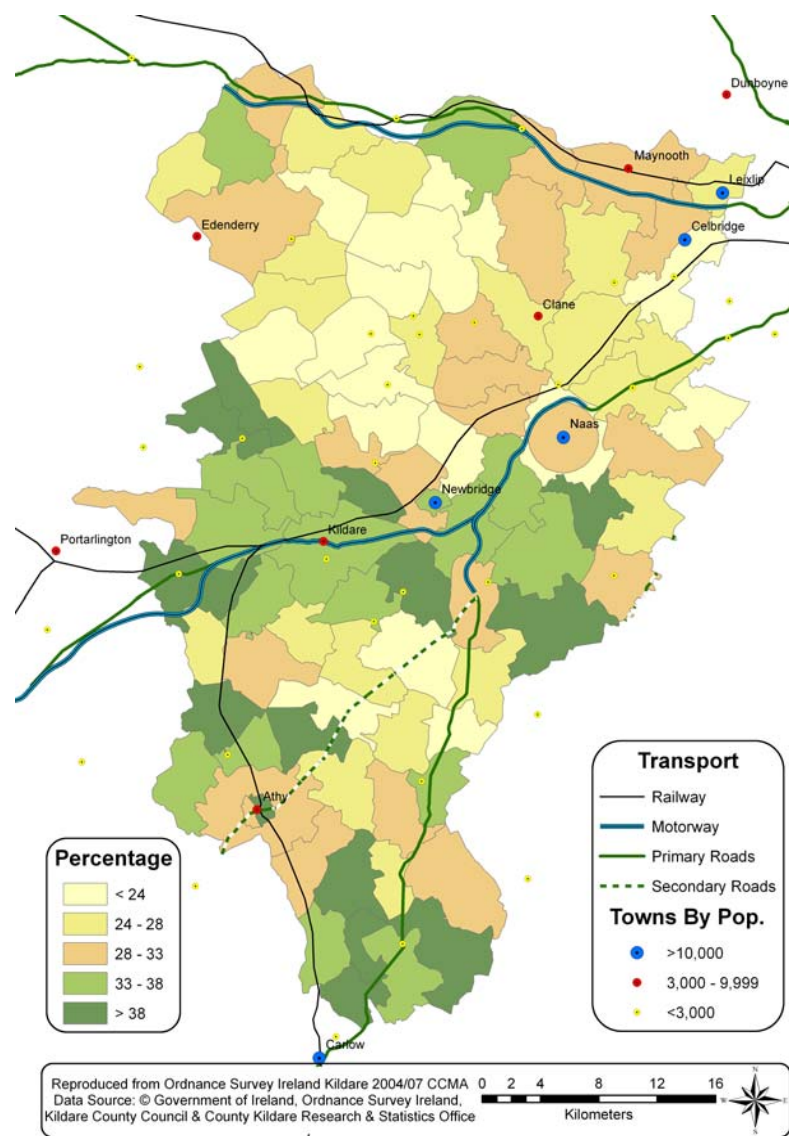
the towns of Maynooth, Leixlip, Celbridge, Kilcock, Clane and Naas and their hinterlands having greater than 10% of their workforce commuting 1 hour or more to work. The areas with the highest proportion of longer time commuters are generally in close proximity to national rail and road infrastructure.

There is also a significant pattern of commuting into and through the county which places significant pressure on infrastructure and resources. The provision of a significant employment base in the county is therefore necessary to address the unsustainable travel patterns within the county and provide for an improved quality of life for residents.

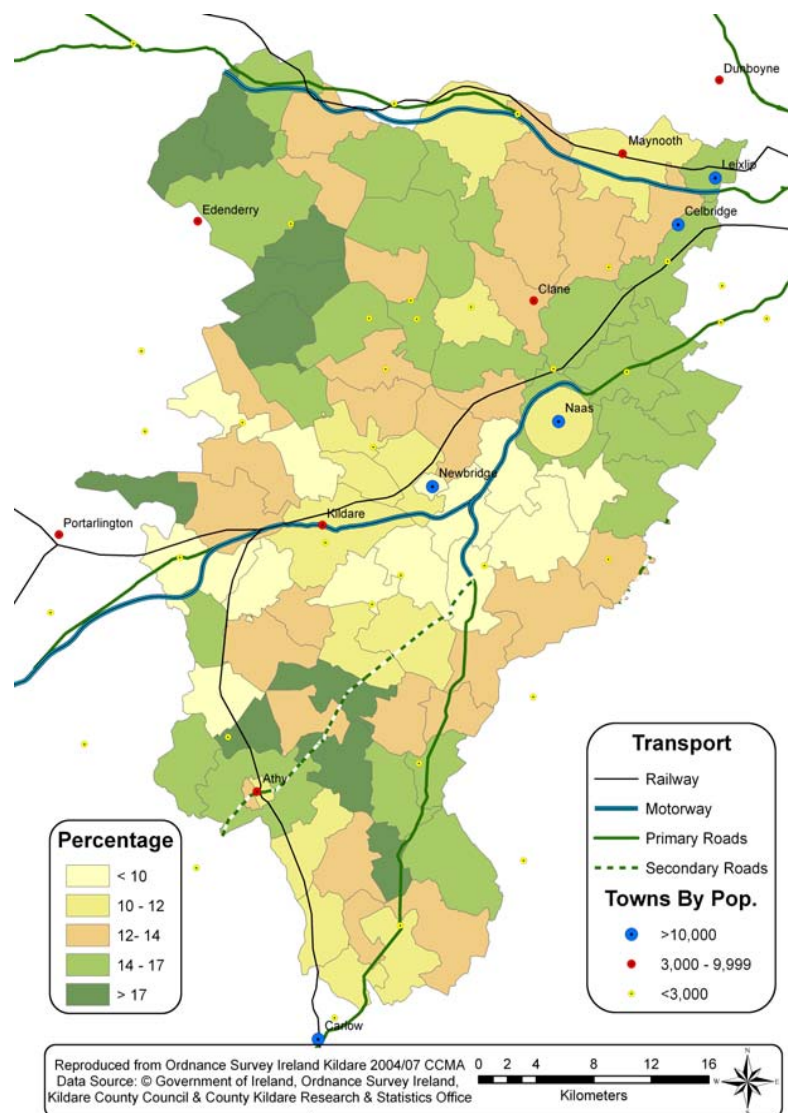
5.3.4 “Itsyourtime.ie”

The Council commenced an initiative – “itsyourtime.ie” in 2008, which provided a statistical profile of skills and employment in Kildare. 53% of Kildare’s workforce is employed at locations outside Kildare, the majority of those in Dublin. 34% of those surveyed worked in IT and Financial Services with 60% of those holding at least a primary degree. The mode of transport for those working in Dublin was mainly by car (68%). 71% of those surveyed are in the family rearing age group. 73% of survey respondents spend 3.5 to 4 hours per day commuting to / from work, irrespective of mode of transport.

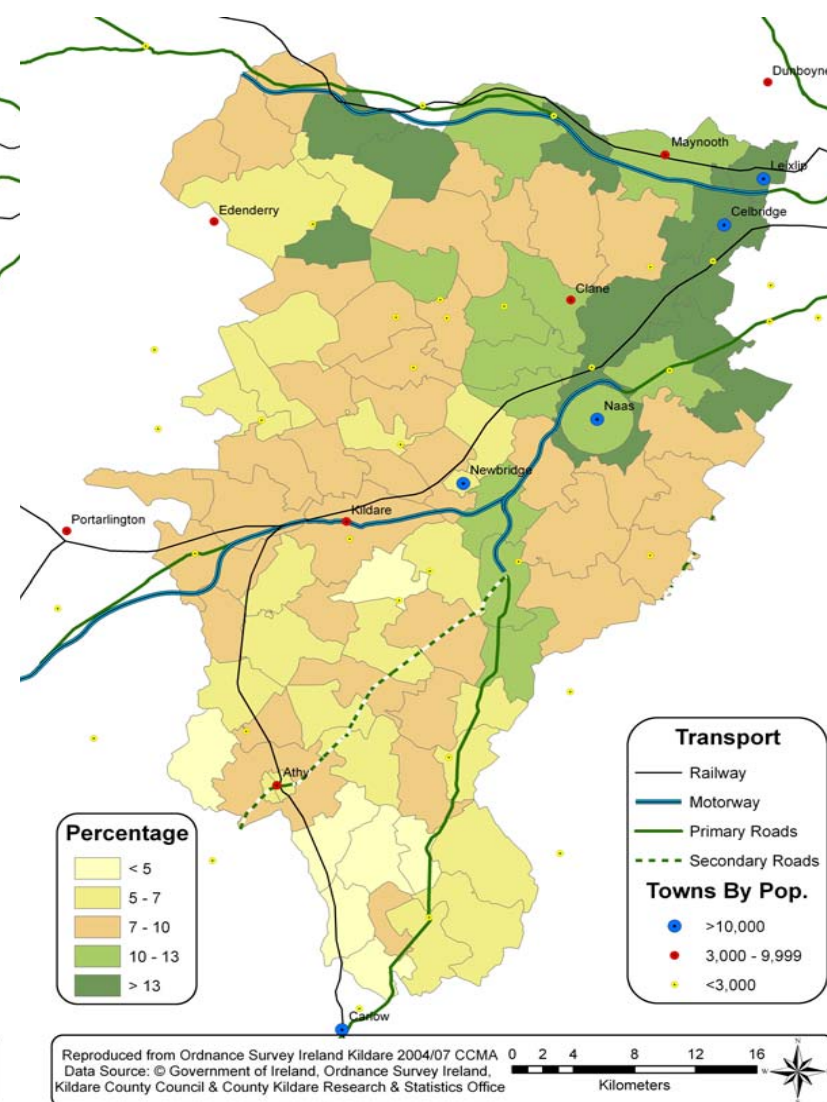
Map 5.1 Localised Commuting
(Persons who travel <15 minutes to work)



Map 5.2 Significant Commuting
(Persons who travel 30-45 minutes to work)



Map 5.3 Longer Commuting Times
(Persons who travel >45 minutes to work)



*The percentage referred to in the above Maps refers to the Percentage of the Total in each Map



5.3.5 Employment Requirements 2006 – 2022.

Table 5.2 below provides a broad assessment of County Kildare’s employment requirements up to 2022. Many residents of the county are dependent on jobs located elsewhere in the region and in particular in Dublin City. In order to make the county more self-sufficient and improve the quality of life of residents by bringing employment closer to where people reside, it will be necessary to promote an increase in the number of jobs available in the county. The RPGs identify that the county should plan for an increased jobs ratio⁴. It is a goal of this plan to achieve a jobs ratio from the current level 0.62 to 0.7 by 2016 and 0.75 by 2022. It is estimated that there were 60,781 jobs in the county in 2006.

Table 5.2 Employment Requirements

County Kildare	2006	2016	2022
Population	186,335	234,422	252,640
Total Labour force in County ⁵	97,719	122,930	132,484
Jobs Ratio	0.622	0.7	0.75
No. of Jobs existing / required in County	60,781 ⁶	86,051 (+25,270)	99,363 (+38,582)

⁴ The Jobs Target Ratio is the ratio of the number of jobs in the county to the labour force resident in the county.

⁵ Estimates based on same proportion evident in 2006.

⁶ Source: Derived from CSO POWCAR data, by DTO (2009).

Assuming greenfield sites are developed at a modest plot ratio of 0.4 and all lands are developed at low-medium density type employment (40m² per employee), the provision of the required new jobs on new sites would require the zoning of 252 hectares of employment land up to 2016 and 386 hectares by 2022. Currently, it is estimated that 760ha of land has been zoned for employment purposes throughout the county.

5.4 Economic Development Strategy

This Plan seeks to support and facilitate the economic development of the county across a range of sectors while acknowledging in particular the growing importance of the knowledge economy and the regionally important primary and secondary economic growth towns.

The hierarchy of employment centres are generally compatible with the settlement and services hierarchy. Future development must have regard to a settlement’s position within the overall settlement hierarchy and its capacity to facilitate the scale of development proposed. The following paragraphs together with Table 5.3 outlines the hierarchy of employment centres and sectoral strengths for each settlement:

- **Naas, Maynooth and Leixlip** are identified as primary economic growth towns to be prioritised for local and regional enterprise. Critical mass is a core objective, supported by density levels which support competitiveness, sustainability and create opportunities for economies of scale to justify strategic infrastructure provision. It is estimated that 149 hectares of land is zoned for employment purposes in these centres. A particular shortfall of employment zoned land is apparent in Maynooth with only c. 5 ha of land zoned for employment purposes. To ensure Maynooth is in a position to deliver on its primary economic growth status additional

lands will need to be zoned for employment uses in the forthcoming local area plan.

- Economic clusters are also promoted as part of the overall economic strategy. In this regard, Naas and **Newbridge** are clustered with **Kilcullen** while Maynooth and Leixlip are clustered with **Celbridge and Kilcock**. Clusters are to develop in a mutually dependent way, so that the amenities and economies of the whole cluster are greater than the sum of the individual parts. It is estimated that 274 hectares of land are zoned for employment purposes in these centres.
- **Athy** and **Kildare** are identified as secondary economic growth towns providing an important and complementary role in developing economic growth and sectoral interests in tandem with primary economic growth towns. Athy has close linkages and interactions with the town of Carlow in the South East Region. It is estimated that 138 hectares of land is zoned for employment purposes in Athy and Kildare.
- **Monasterevin** has been identified as a district employment centre providing employment needs for its urban area as well as a large rural hinterland. It is estimated that 56 hectares of land is zoned for employment purposes in Monasterevin.
- In the small towns of **Clane, Prosperous, Rathangan, Sallins, Athgarvan, Castledermot, Derrinturn** and **Kill** together with the villages of **Johnstown, Straffan, Ballymore Eustace, Allenwood, Johnstownbridge, Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh, Kilmeague, Caragh, Kildangan, Suncroft, Ballitore/ Timolin/ Moone / Crookstown** the Council will seek to encourage new local employment opportunities and assist in reducing long

distance commuting patterns and thus creating more sustainable communities.

- Within the rural areas of the county there are many rural settlements and rural nodes which provide clear locational requirements for employment generating uses including green energy projects such as renewable energies, resource recovery, food production, forestry and agri-business, bloodstock, horticulture, rural based tourism and resource based enterprises.

Hierarchy of Employment Centres		Sectoral Strengths																									
Primary Economic Growth Towns/Clusters	Metropolitan Area Maynooth Leixlip ¹ Both supported by Celbridge and Kilcock.	Identified for regional population growth and serve a pivotal role in employment and provision of goods and services.	Knowledge based economy focusing on hi tech / biotechnology, research and development ICT and manufacturing.																								
	Hinterland Area Naas/ Newbridge Supported by Kilcullen		High tech manufacturing and research, ICT, food production, public administration, wholesale and retail trade, banking, tourism and bloodstock.																								
Secondary Economic Growth Towns	Athy Kildare	Important supporting and complementary role in developing regional economic growth in tandem with the primary economic growth towns and large hinterland areas.	Development of high value added manufacturing sectors, logistics and internationally traded sectors in tandem with IDA support, around transport corridors and routes such as rail stations, are advocated, together with continued investment in education and skills development. Kildare town also has the opportunity to develop and promote its economic base through capitalising as an important tourism destination.																								
District Employment Centres	Monasterevin	Main town providing employment needs of the urban area as well as a large rural hinterland.	Innovation in indigenous enterprise (both high tech and traditional) and business start-up's.																								
Local Employment Centres	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Small Towns</td> <td>Villages</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Clane</td> <td>Johnstown</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prosperous</td> <td>Straffan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rathangan</td> <td>Ballymore- Eustace</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sallins</td> <td>Allenwood</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Athgarvan</td> <td>Johnstownbridge</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Castledermot</td> <td>Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Derrinturn</td> <td>Kilmeague</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kill</td> <td>Caragh</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Kildangan</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Suncroft</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Ballitore/ Timolin/ Moone / Crookstown</td> </tr> </table>	Small Towns	Villages	Clane	Johnstown	Prosperous	Straffan	Rathangan	Ballymore- Eustace	Sallins	Allenwood	Athgarvan	Johnstownbridge	Castledermot	Coill Dubh/ Coolearagh	Derrinturn	Kilmeague	Kill	Caragh		Kildangan		Suncroft		Ballitore/ Timolin/ Moone / Crookstown	Small towns and key villages providing employment needs for local hinterlands.	Local investment generally small scale industry.
Small Towns	Villages																										
Clane	Johnstown																										
Prosperous	Straffan																										
Rathangan	Ballymore- Eustace																										
Sallins	Allenwood																										
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Kill	Caragh																										
	Kildangan																										
	Suncroft																										
	Ballitore/ Timolin/ Moone / Crookstown																										
Rural Employment Areas	Rural Settlements / Rural Nodes and Rural Countryside.	Rural employment in the countryside.	Agriculture, horticulture, forestry, tourism, energy production, rural resource based enterprises.																								

Table 5.3 Economic Development Hierarchy County Kildare

¹ Including the expansion area of Collinstown



5.5 Factors Influencing Future Economic Development

A number of key land use factors influence the future economic potential of the county and are considered in the preparation of this Plan. They comprise availability of zoned land, availability of infrastructure and quality of life considerations.

5.5.1 Availability of Zoned Land

Availability of appropriately zoned land for employment purposes is necessary so that competitively priced properties and attractive business and industrial parks can accommodate employment in a planned and strategic way. There is a need to ensure that this Plan caters for a range of employment types including those to service the smart economy. It is particularly important that new development should be located within existing settlements to encourage economic diversification and networking between related businesses, enhancing the degree of employment choice and providing economies of scale and at least some opportunities for travel to work by public transport.

While at a county level sufficient lands have been zoned for employment purposes, the spatial distribution of the relevant employment zonings will need to reflect the economic strategy as outlined in this chapter.

5.5.2 Availability of Infrastructure

Adequate infrastructure is paramount to facilitate future economic development activity in the county. This includes water services, effective public transport networks, energy, telecommunications, waste management, education facilities, etc. There are significant infrastructural deficits in waste water infrastructure in the central county area serviced by the Osberstown wastewater treatment plant and in Kildare Town which have been identified as key infrastructural priorities in this Plan. In addition, increasing broadband capacity and availability in business premises and in the home

are further required to promote the full economic potential of the county.

5.5.3 Quality of Life

The importance of quality of life is a key component to facilitate future economic development and depends on factors such as commuting times, availability of childcare, recreation opportunities and on the quality of the built and natural environment. Specific actions to improve quality of life through this Plan and future Local Area Plans include:

- Channelling residential developments to urban centres with supporting social and community facilities;
- Ensuring that the character of the built and natural environment is maintained and enhanced within towns and villages throughout the county.
- Identifying suitable zoned land for employment opportunities / retail developments, etc;
- Ensuring the appearance of development complements existing environments and is of the highest quality;
- Facilitating links between schools and NUI Maynooth and firms;
- Seeking the upgrading of all commuter train stations to adequately service commuter needs and where feasible to investigate the re-location of same to provide for the delivery of a modern commuter friendly facility.
- Seeking the upgrade of main transport arteries and public transport infrastructure together with the improvement of inter-urban non national roads;

- Expanding infrastructural capacity for energy, waste, water and wastewater;
- Increasing and improving the range and quality of recreational, amenity and cultural facilities; and
- Ensuring that conservation of heritage is acknowledged and recognised as a key component of quality of life.

5.6 Land-Use and Economic Development

The main towns of the county are the engines for economic growth and are the main employment centres for future development. In the key growth centres outlined in Table 5.3 economic development will be focused on the different land uses that represent the different functions namely, enterprise development, industry, retail and commercial development. Other sectoral employment opportunities for consideration include rural development and tourism development throughout the county.

5.6.1 Enterprise Development

Enterprise development is the term used to describe a broad range of economic and employment generating developments that rely on process-orientated activities to produce goods and services. It includes 'office-based industry' producing an end product or providing telephone or web-based services. A number of specific elements are considered essential for enterprise development and to attract future investment.

These include;

Skills and Education	Access to a skilled work force together with access to regional or national centres of learning.
Innovation	Access to sources of research

Economic Infrastructure	Ease of access to markets and customers, ease of travel to work, adequate zoned and serviced land banks, effective waste management structures and facilities, reliable, secure and cost-competitive energy supplies and; Appropriate communication links.
Enterprise Dynamic	Inter-linkages between firms, higher education institutes and government agencies.
Quality of Life	Access to regional cultural facilities, health care, a high quality built environment including parks and other amenities.
Leadership and Strategic Capacity	Efficient and high quality delivery of support services, integrated strategies for physical, economic and social development and environmental protection.

Enterprise development uses should generally be provided in enterprise locations such as business or technology parks or at town centre locations. It is important to ensure that there is adequate protection of the most suitable land for expansion in this sector with particular reference to the employment hierarchy. Appropriately zoned land will be identified in the relevant local area plans / development plans so that opportunities can be exploited as they arise and a range of choice provided to the investor.

It is necessary to ensure that sufficient land is zoned for enterprise development particularly in the primary economic growth towns/ clusters in north Kildare [Maynooth and Leixlip (including

Collinstown] with Kilcock and Celbridge in a supporting role) and central Kildare (Naas, Newbridge and Kilcullen) and the secondary economic growth towns of Athy and Kildare. It is noted that strategic land banks have been zoned in the primary economic growth centre of Naas at the Northwest Quadrant/ Millennium Park and in Leixlip at Collinstown. There is however a need to zone lands within the primary economic growth centre of Maynooth to provide for local and regional economic growth. Athy and Kildare as secondary economic growth centres have sufficient lands zoned to accommodate further employment opportunities.

5.6.2 Industry

Industrial areas are concerned with process-orientated employment and production that includes manufacturing, repairs, warehousing, distribution, open storage and transport centres. They are generally not appropriate to town centre locations and often require separation from other land uses. The scale of industrial development will be dependent upon its location within the employment hierarchy. Large scale industrial development should be encouraged in the supporting towns of the primary economic clusters and secondary economic growth towns. Small to medium scale enterprises including the provision of incubator units should be located in district and local employment centres. These areas should cater for manufacturing, repairs, distribution, open storage and transport centre type activities.

5.6.2.1 Prevention of Major Accidents

Two industries in Kildare are affected by the SEVESO II Directive (96/082/EEC). The Directive seeks to prevent major industrial accidents that involve dangerous substances and to limit the consequences of accidents on people, property and the environment. In accordance with Section 10(2)(k) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, this Plan seeks to ensure that:

- *Proposals for new industries at risk of causing major accidents;*
- *Proposals for the expansion of existing industries designated under the directive; and,*
- *Other developments proposed near to existing SEVESO II industries,*

take account of the need to prevent major accidents involving hazardous substances and safeguard the public, property and the environment.

The industries that are currently covered are outlined in Table 5.4. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) has been designated as the central competent authority for the enforcement of the SEVESO II Directive and has established generic consultation distances for these facilities.

Establishment	Address
Irish Industrial Explosives	Clonagh, Enfield
Intel Ireland Ltd	Collinstown Industrial Park, Leixlip

Table 5.4 Industries affected by the Seveso II Directive

5.6.3 Retail and Commercial Development

The retail strategy for the county is set out in Chapter 9 and it seeks to direct retail growth in accordance with a designated retail hierarchy and outlines key considerations for the distribution of floorspace at each appropriate level.

Like retailing, the commercial sector contributes significantly to employment and provides access to goods and services. It is important to ensure that this sector is allowed to expand with a choice of location either in town centres or on appropriate sites elsewhere as outlined in Chapter 9. In general, where a proposal involves the provision of

goods or services to a significant number of visiting members of the public it will clearly be appropriate for it to be located within a town centre. Appropriate locations will be designated as part of the review of development plans / local area plans.

5.7 Rural Development

One of the most fundamental challenges facing rural economies is the impact of restructuring in agriculture and traditional industry and the associated need for diversification and growth in the non-farm rural economy. Key potential employment areas are outlined hereunder with more detail provided in Chapter 10.

5.7.1 Equine

It is estimated that 5,000 people are directly employed in the equine industry within the county, with a further c. 10,000 people in associated industries and services. 145 stud farms are recorded in the county in the Irish Field Directory 2008. Race courses at Punchestown, Naas and The Curragh, the State owned National Stud Farm, a National Equestrian Centre and Goff's Equine Auction Centre are important economic contributors to the county. There are considerable opportunities to optimise these existing resources in order to increase employment by utilising existing infrastructure to further develop equine tourism and Kildare as a location for national and international equine events. There is also scope to further diversify the sports related horse industry which, given the proximity to Dublin, could be integrated with show jumping, eventing and general equine related leisure activities.

5.7.2 Agriculture

The changing nature of Ireland's economy will impinge directly upon the economic viability of the agricultural sector. In terms of employment the 2002 and 2006 Census of Population recorded 3.7% and 2.9% of the labour force of County Kildare respectively in the "*farming, fishing and*

forestry" occupational group. Another feature of the changing employment patterns in the sector is the growing number of part-time farmers. Despite the decline in fulltime agricultural employment, it is recognised that the agricultural industry is important to the economy and has a major role in preserving and improving the natural environment. Important sectors for the future are the agri-food sector and horticulture both of which offer higher value than traditional agricultural enterprises. There is a need to recognise the economic value of agriculture and protect productive agricultural land from inappropriate industrial, commercial or residential development.

5.7.3 Energy Production

There is a major transformation underway in energy markets and energy supply that will give rise to opportunities over the coming years. This arises from resource depletion of hydrocarbons and the need to address climate change. As outlined in Chapter 8 (Energy and Communications) Ireland has a 40% target for renewable energy over the next 12 years. There are Government incentives and supports available to meet this target, with an objective to achieve a fully functioning all-island electricity system and plans for further interconnection to the UK and beyond. Given the manner in which significant power energy transmission networks traverse the county, opportunities exist to create energy from renewable sources that can connect with relative ease into the existing national grid.

5.7.4 Rural Enterprise

This Plan supports innovation in indigenous industry (both high tech and traditional) and will encourage business start-ups in rural employment centres (i.e villages / settlements) to enable them to contribute to the economy. It is acknowledged that certain kinds of rural enterprises, especially those that involve natural resources and serve rural communities, at an appropriate scale, have a role to play in rural development. Where appropriate

locations are available and subject to proper planning considerations including adequate infrastructure, these can be located in the rural area.

5.8 Sustainable Tourism

Tourism is an important sector of Kildare's economy and it has grown substantially over the last number of years. Because of its proximity to the Dublin tourism hub, the tourism sector requires a particular strategic approach for success. This includes an emphasis on boutique and character hotels offering an accommodation plus product (e.g. leisure, recreation, outdoor pursuits, heritage and selected sports). Kildare currently has a varied portfolio with a position of excellence in heritage, golf, equine and horse racing. Whether operating individually, within clusters or along touring routes these must be organised so as to constitute attractive day visits or touring options that appeal to both domestic and international visitors.

In the context of tourism, the natural environment, landscape, built heritage and attractive towns and villages play a key role. Significant natural attractions include the Curragh plains, the bogs to the west, the rolling hills of the eastern uplands, the waterways of the River Liffey, the River Barrow and the Royal and Grand Canals. The rich architectural and archaeological heritage of the county is also acknowledged with many renowned structures and houses including: Castletown House, Carton House, the Wonderful Barn, Moone High Cross and Castledermot Round Tower.

Sport tourism, particularly equine and golfing play have an important role in the local economy. In recent years tourism has embraced golf, angling and horse racing and has excellent potential for expansion and diversification. Both the Curragh and Punchestown racecourses hold festivals that attract global publicity and international tourists. Key golf clubs include the K Club which hosted the 2006 Ryder Cup, Carton and Palmerstown. It is important to protect and enhance the qualities of

such areas so that they can continue to contribute to the growth in tourism visitors into the county as a whole.

Within the county there are a number of areas of strategic tourism potential. These are outlined on Map 5.4. Concentrations of tourist attractions are located within the cluster around Kildare Town including; St Brigid's Cathedral and Round Tower, the Irish National Stud, Japanese Gardens, St Fiachra's Garden, Kildare Town Heritage Centre and Kildare Outlet Village. There is also a wide range of tourist attractions in the North Kildare Area including, Castletown House and Demesne, Conolly's Folly, Leixlip Castle and St Patrick's College Maynooth.

These areas have a sustainable and competitive tourism product and have the potential for future tourism growth based on a supply of resources and features around which the tourism product can be built. It is important that tourist development in these areas does not have a negative impact on the overall character of the area.

5.8.1 Tourism Infrastructure and Facilities

Facilitating the development of infrastructure to meet the needs of visitors is fundamental to the effective delivery of a sustainable tourism strategy. The provision of new tourist facilities will further strengthen the county's main clusters. These would include facilities for conferencing, wellness, recreation, sport and outdoor activities and should be provided having regard to the existing settlement pattern of the county and touring routes used by visitors. This will enable new and enhanced facilities to be provided where they can be best accessed and used by international and domestic visitors using independent or public transport.





5.9 Economic Development Policies

5.9.1 General Economic Development Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

ECD 1: To support and facilitate the economic development of the county in accordance with the economic development strategy across a range of sectors while acknowledging in particular the growing importance of the knowledge economy in delivering sustainable employment opportunities.

ECD 2: To facilitate the creation of suitably located centres of excellence for knowledge, innovation and creativity based enterprises and ensure the knowledge-based economy has opportunity to grow in the county.

ECD 3: To work in conjunction with the county's third level institution NUI Maynooth, in the creation and fostering of enterprise and research and development.

ECD 4: To co-operate with local and national development agencies to maximise job creation opportunities and to engage with existing and future large scale employers in order to maximise job opportunities in the county.

ECD 5: To promote initiatives with relevant agencies to expand training and education that meets the wide range of business skills located in the county.

ECD 6: To identify and promote a wide range of locations within the county for different types of enterprise from international business and technology parks to small and medium enterprises (SME) and micro enterprise centres.

ECD 7: To promote the location of high profile developments at suitable locations, particularly headquarter buildings, the offices of representative bodies and research and development facilities in the county.

ECD 8: To facilitate and encourage the development of the alternative energy sector and work with the relevant agencies to support the development of alternative forms of energy where such developments are in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

ECD 9: To facilitate the development of agriculture, bloodstock, horticultural and rural related enterprises in the county.

ECD 10: To facilitate home-working and innovative forms of working which reduce the need to travel but are subordinate to the main residential use of the dwelling and do not result in disamenity to the area.

ECD 11: To encourage the provision of livework units as part of mixed-used developments in appropriate locations (particularly at ground floor level) to provide accommodation for the creative sectors and small businesses and to facilitate home-working, of suitable design which protects the amenities of adjacent residents.

ECD 12: To encourage the further development of Clongowes College and farm as a centre of excellence for a range of education and research related uses.

ECD 13: To ensure that any development at Clongowes College and farm, has regard to existing educational uses and that such development will respect the existing architectural character and planned layout of Clongowes.

ECD 14: To continue to work with all the key state agencies and other stakeholders to seek opportunities for employment creation in the county.

ECD 15: To promote the sustainable development of the tourism sector in appropriate locations throughout the county, acknowledging that Ireland's largest tourist market (i.e. Dublin) is highly accessible through the existing transport system.

5.9.2 Major Accidents Directive

It is the policy of the Council:

ECD 16: To comply with the SEVESO II Directive and to reduce the risk and limit the consequences of major industrial accidents by, where appropriate, taking into account the advice of the Health and Safety Authority and the Fire Authority where proposals for new developments are considered.

ECD 17: To have regard to:

- The Major Accidents Directive (SEVESO II, 96/82/EC);
- Potential adverse impacts on public health and safety;
- HSA generic land-use planning advice;
- The need to maintain appropriate safe distances between residential areas, areas of public use and areas of natural sensitivity; and
- The specialist advice of the Fire Authority;

in assessing planning applications for new development or the expansion of existing development involving hazardous substances.

5.9.3 General Tourism Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

ECD 18: To promote, protect, improve, encourage and facilitate the development of tourism throughout the county as an important contributor to job creation in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

ECD 19: To support the implementation of the Regional Tourism Plan for the East Coast and Midlands, 2008-2010 and to work with key stake holders and agencies with the aim of increasing overseas and domestic visitor numbers.

ECD 20: To direct tourism based development where appropriate, into existing settlements where there is adequate infrastructure to service the development and where it can contribute to the maintenance of essential services.

ECD 21: To seek to maintain a clean environment, protect the tourism amenities of the county from insensitive or inappropriate development particularly any development that threatens the tourism resources and tourism employment of the county.

5.9.4 Tourist Infrastructure Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

ECD 22: To promote County Kildare's cultural, literary, historical, genealogical, equine, archaeological and architectural heritage as tourism generating opportunities.

ECD 23: To encourage the clustering of and the promotion of additional tourism facilities and services at appropriate locations throughout the county having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, in order to

increase linkages within and reduce leakage from the local economy.

ECD 24: To support the development of new tourist facilities or upgrading / extension of existing tourist facilities at tourist sites in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development principles.

ECD 25: To ensure that the development of new tourist facilities are designed to the highest quality with particular emphasis given to quality materials in sensitive locations, energy efficiency, waste management and recycling.

ECD 26: To facilitate the erection of standardised signage for tourism facilities and tourist attractions as part of national and regional initiatives.

ECD 27: To improve the surrounding road network and to provide adequate car parking and bus parking facilities at all tourist attractions, including scenic areas, subject to the availability of resources and the protection of the environment.

ECD 28: To consider suitable sites for caravanning, camping and hostelling, in consultation with Bord Failte, East Coast and Midlands.

5.9.5 Inland Waterways Tourism Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

ECD 29: To maximise opportunities for the use of canals and other waterways including the River Liffey and River Barrow as tourism and recreational amenities. In this regard the Council will co-operate with Waterways Ireland, National Parks and Wildlife Service of the DoEHLG and community groups to develop the infrastructure, quality and amenity of these waterways.

ECD 30: To facilitate infrastructure for water based activities such as boating, canoeing, angling, cruising, bathing and other sustainable water based interests.

ECD 31: To develop, in conjunction with the relevant authorities, berthing and other ancillary infrastructure at key locations along the canal systems, particularly in areas where tourism is underdeveloped at present.

ECD 32: To facilitate Waterways Ireland in the restoration of the Royal Canal.

ECD 33: To promote and develop the towpaths along the Grand Canal, the Royal Canal, the Barrow Line and the Corbally Line as cycleways, in co-operation with Waterways Ireland and neighbouring Local Authorities.

ECD 34: To encourage walking and recreational facilities, where feasible and where development opportunities arise along riverbanks and lakes. In this regard land adjacent to river banks and lakes will be reserved, where possible, for linear parks for public access and where linear parks are designed and developed provision shall be made for walking and cycling routes.

ECD 35: To preserve the undeveloped sections of the Liffey Valley as a resource for tourism and to develop paths and walkways where appropriate subject to environmental and other constraints and considerations.

ECD 36: To reserve where feasible, land adjacent to river banks and lakes for public access and to facilitate the creation of linear parks to accommodate walking/cycling routes.

5.9.6 Sport and Recreation Tourism Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

ECD 37: To support the sustainable tourist related development of the Bloodstock and Equine Industries.

ECD 38: To recognise the importance of angling and the golf industry to tourism in the County.

ECD 39: To support the development of appropriate Integrated Tourism / Leisure facilities in Palmerstown Demesne.

ECD 40: To recognise the importance of the Kildare Hotel and Country Club as a Tourism facility of national and international significance. The Council will support and encourage further appropriate development of tourism and recreational facilities in the Kildare Hotel and Country Club.

ECD 41: To recognise the sensitive and unique quality of Carton House as a tourism facility of national and international significance and to ensure that its integrity be protected. The Council will support and encourage further appropriate development of the tourism and recreational facilities at Carton House, having regard to its status as a house and demesne of international heritage importance.

ECD 42: To recognise the sensitive and unique quality and importance of Castletown House, its demesne and history as a unique element of heritage, tourism and educational potential, to ensure that the integrity of the house and its demesne as well as its collection of buildings, artefacts, landscapes, views and prospects is fully protected, and to ensure that any future development within or without the demesne and its environs which impacts on it is appropriate to its status as a house and demesne of national and international significance.

5.9.7 Events and Festivals Tourism policy

It is the policy of the Council:

ECD 43: To promote festivals and sporting events to increase the cultural and lifestyle profile of the county, and where appropriate to promote the development of new venues to host these events.

5.9.8 Agriculture Based Tourism Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

ECD 44: To support agri-tourism initiatives including visitor accommodation and supplementary activities such as organic / farmers' markets, health farms, heritage and nature trails, pony trekking, boating, walking, eco-tourism, open farms and pet farms, ensuring that all built elements are appropriately designed and satisfactorily assimilated into the landscape.

ECD 45: To facilitate and encourage the re-use of redundant farm buildings of vernacular importance for appropriate owner run agri-tourism enterprises subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

5.10 Economic Development Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

EO 1: To ensure that sufficient and suitable land is zoned for employment generating uses through the development plan and local area plans as appropriate. Such land will, normally, be protected from inappropriate development that would prejudice its long term development for employment uses.

EO 2: (i) To promote and facilitate the development of regional large scale

employment generating developments as a priority in the Primary Economic Growth Centres of Maynooth and Leixlip/ Collinstown supported by Celbridge and Kilcock in the Metropolitan area, Naas/Newbridge in the Hinterland area supported by Kilcullen and the Secondary Economic Growth Towns of Athy and Kildare.

(ii) To recognise the supporting role of economic clusters (Celbridge and Kilcock to Maynooth and Leixlip, and Kilcullen to Naas and Newbridge) in the delivery of critical mass to deliver regional scale employment opportunities.

(iii) To promote the development of the Moderate Sustainable Growth town of Monasterevin as a district employment centre.

(iv) To promote small towns and villages as local employment centres where investment can be focused on creating additional employment opportunities that will sustain a local rural hinterland.

(v) To promote rural economic development by adopting a policy framework that recognises the need to promote the long-term sustainable social and environmental development of rural areas, encourages economic diversification and facilitates the growth of rural enterprises.

EO 3: To encourage mixed use settlement forms and sustainable centres, in which employment and residency are located in close proximity to each other and strategic multi-modal transport corridors and to arrest long distance commuter trends and congestion.

EO 4: To ensure the provision of water, wastewater treatment and waste management facilities to accommodate future economic growth of the county and to reserve capacity in water services infrastructure for employment generating uses.

EO 5: To support and promote proposals for SME business development in development centres where existing infrastructural facilities are available or where they can be provided with services and good communications.


EO 6: To support start up businesses and small scale industrial enterprises, particularly those that have a creative and innovative dimension.

EO 7: To encourage and facilitate at appropriate locations, small indigenous industries in recognition of their increasing importance in providing local employment and helping to stimulate economic activity within small communities.

EO 8: To acquire suitable land, including, where appropriate, disused sites in State ownership, subject to the availability of funding, for creative and innovative entrepreneurial initiatives and the provision of clustered incubator units.

EO 9: To support further development of NUI Maynooth as a leading third level research and educational facility and work with NUI Maynooth and other third level institutes (e.g. Tallaght and Carlow IT) to develop and improve linkages between the College and high tech / FDI firms in the surrounding sub-region and county in general.

EO 10: To ensure high quality living environments in Kildare to retain its indigenous skilled



population and to attract high skilled labour.

- EO 11: To facilitate the development of tourism infrastructure such as accommodation, restaurants, car and coach parking and toilet facilities in the designated hubs throughout the county.
- EO 12: To work with adjoining local authorities and tourism bodies to develop the tourism potential of the region.
- EO 13: To continue to facilitate the upgrade of broadband services throughout the County.