



**Comhairle Contae  
an Chabháin**  
Cavan  
County Council

An aerial photograph of a stone tower, likely a round tower, situated on a small island or peninsula in the middle of a wide river. The tower is surrounded by lush green trees. The background shows a dense forest of trees under a dramatic sunset sky with orange and yellow light. The river flows from the top left towards the bottom right.

# **Cavan Socio-Economic Statement February 2023**



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# 1

# Introduction



## Cavan Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2029

Cavan County Council is currently developing a new Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) to cover the 2023-2029 period. The integrated plan for County Cavan will guide the county's sustainable development over the next six years. It will be ambitious in scope and promote collaboration for the purpose of achieving sustainable economic growth in the region, particularly in relation to job creation, further development of the tourism sector and the regeneration of towns and villages. In doing so, the community development principles of wellbeing, inclusion, education and employment will be prioritised. To ensure that it succeeds in its objectives, it is envisaged that the new LECP will be championed, owned and driven by all key stakeholders across the county (including industry, community, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) and the Council).

The plan will be aligned with key policies at local, regional and national level. This includes the National Planning Framework (NPF) (2018), and the National Development Strategy; the Northern and Western Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (NWRA RSES); and relevant policy documents for County Cavan, such as the Connected Cavan Digital Strategy, the current LECP framework, and the County Development Plan. Considering the current climate crisis, the LECP will be informed and underpinned by the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Government's Climate Action Plan (2021) which will help ensure that climate action is central to Cavan's decision-making process.

Comprehensive public and stakeholder consultation will be key to the LECP's development. Over the coming months a number of strands of consultation will be conducted. These include online surveys (both for the community and the private sector), focus groups/workshops and 1-1 key stakeholder interviews. Through these engagement formats, Cavan County Council encourages local communities, organisations, stakeholders, and the general public to have their say on the plan's development and ensure that it is a true reflection of the needs and ambitions of Cavan's wider population.

### **Purpose of this document – a starting point for discussion**

The purpose of this document is to set out the initial strategic direction for the new LECP in the form of draft high-level goals and associated outcomes. As outlined below, the socio-economic statement is based on an initial review of relevant policy and an analysis of the socio-economic profile of the county. It should be noted that this document is a work-in-progress and also does not necessarily reflect the contents of the finalised LECP.

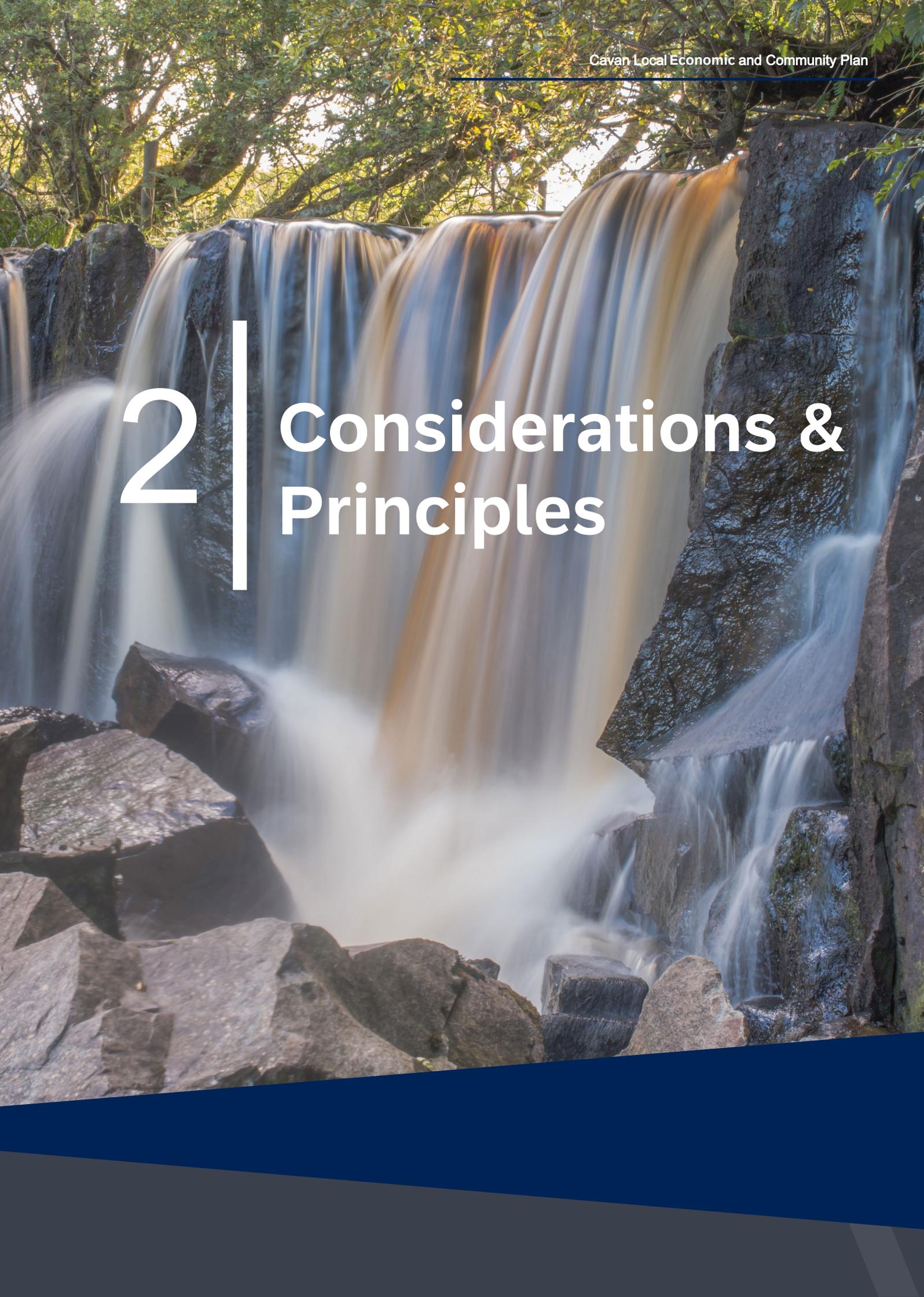
The socio-economic statement contained in this document is intended to serve as a starting point for discussion – i.e. to stimulate ideas and debate around Cavan's goals and ambitions as it looks towards 2029. Upon receipt of feedback on the various topics, the socio-economic statement will be revised to ensure that the high-level goals are reflective of and aligned with the views and needs of the entire community. These consultation findings will then be used to develop specific objectives, actions and outcomes for the final LECP.

In relation to this document, the Council invites feedback and suggestions on the goals outlined below and on the areas to be addressed under the new LECP. In particular, the council wishes to understand if these goals for Cavan are suitable and/or if other issues need to be addressed?

All interested parties and stakeholders are encouraged to provide their feedback on this draft Socio-Economic Statement from **February 8<sup>th</sup> to March 8<sup>th</sup>**. Submissions must be received in writing before 4:30PM on March 8<sup>th</sup>. This may be done by emailing [niall.conway@kpmg.ie](mailto:niall.conway@kpmg.ie) or posting to Niall Conway, KPMG, 1 Stokes Place, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin.

# 2

# Considerations & Principles



## Considerations & Process

### Considerations of cross cutting priorities

The 2021 LECP Guidelines issued by the Department of Rural and Community Development outline a number of cross cutting priorities to be considered in the development of the new LECPs. These are:



Furthermore, in alignment with the above, the LECP is also required to support the Public Sector Duty to prevent discrimination, promote equality and protect human rights. As such, these areas will be taken into consideration and reflected in the development of the goals, objectives, outcomes and actions.

### LECP Process

The six stage LECP development process as per the new LECP Guidelines is outlined below. The publishing of this document represents the start of **Stage two the Public Consultation**.



# 3

# Policy Framework Overview



### 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 Cavan and to which the new LECP will be aligned. Given the importance of the UN Sustainable Development Goals to the new plan, the SDGs are expanded on in slightly more detail below. A more extensive list of policies are provided in the appendix. These policies will help to inform and chart the direction of this LECP and its key elements of goals, objectives, desired outcomes and actions.

From the review of relevant policies and strategies some of the key areas that Cavan can draw upon and align with include:

#### Community

- Providing quality of life through compact and sustainable growth of settlements, associated services and amenities.
- Strengthening local communities to help reverse and address rural decline.
- Capitalising on Cavan’s existing quality of life, natural amenities and cultural heritage to galvanise its strengths as a place to live and work.
- Ensuring the 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.

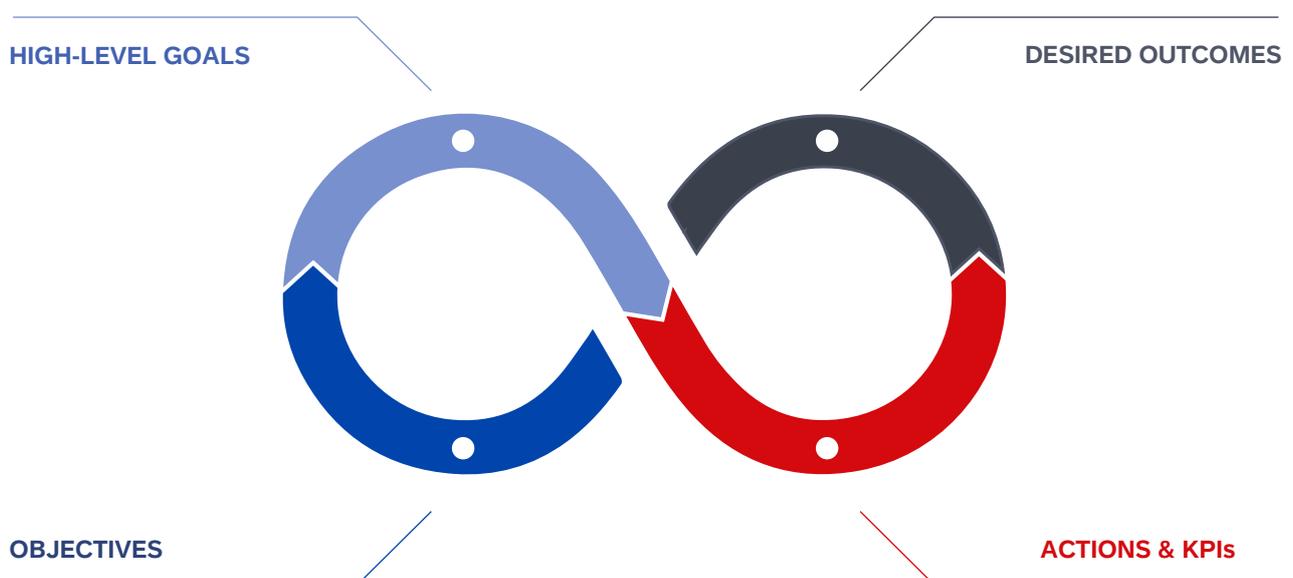


Figure 1: Key Elements of the LECP

### 3.2 International Policy

#### 2030 Agenda – UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals

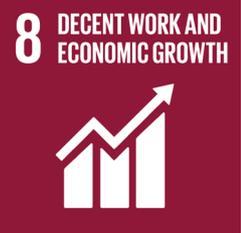
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations 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 Cavan Local Economic and Community Plan...*

#### 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, which will be echoed throughout Cavan’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 the SDG’s. Creating a diverse economy, achieving full and productive employment and decent work is a central foundation of both previous, current and future iterations of planning policy for County Cavan.

#### SDG 13: Climate Action

The urgency and scale of climate action is ever-increasing. The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent public health restrictions has revitalised our sense of value in the natural environment and has provided a prime opportunity for us to take urgent action to combat climate change – through our actions, our governments, our institutions and our policies.



### 3.3 National Policy

#### Project Ireland 2040

##### National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is a high-level strategy that aims to shape growth and development in Ireland out 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 sets in train a 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.



**Rialtas  
na hÉireann  
Government  
of Ireland**

##### 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.

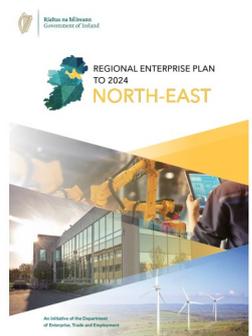
**Tionscaldal Éireann  
Project Ireland  
2040**

### 3.4 Regional Policy



#### Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy for the NWRA

The RSES for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) provides an overarching framework for the creation and enhancement of attractive places with the necessary supporting infrastructures to stimulate enterprise investment and to realise economic potential. 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). 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 nine local authorities in the Region in achieving the objectives of Project Ireland 2040.



#### 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, the digital economy, supporting SMEs, mainstreaming climate action in enterprise and developing existing and emerging growth sectors.

### 3.5 Local Policy

#### Cavan County Development Plan 2022 – 2028

The Cavan County Development Plan 2022 - 2028 sets out the proposed policies and objectives for the development of the county over the 6-year plan period. The Development Plan seeks to develop and improve, in a sustainable manner, the social, economic, environmental and cultural assets of Cavan. Mandatory requirements include the inclusion of objectives for the zoning of land, the provision of infrastructure, the conservation and protection of the environment, and the integration of planning and sustainable development with the social, community and cultural requirements of the County and its population. The Plan aims to support Cavan's aim of being a county where people can have a good quality of life, which is a better place to live, work and makes a contribution to national economic growth by promoting sustainable development and facilitating stable economic growth.

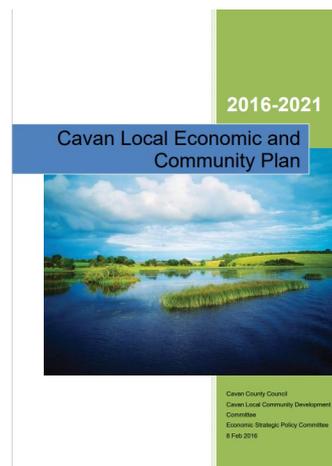


Cavan County Development Plan  
INCORPORATING A LOCAL AREA PLAN  
FOR CAVAN TOWN 2022-2028



#### Cavan LECP 2016 – 2021

This document is the previous iteration of the Local Economic and Community Plan for County Cavan and identifies goals, objectives and actions to promote and support the economic and community development of Cavan. The Plan was focused on achieving the county vision “that Cavan 2021 will be a place that we can be proud of; a place where people can have a good quality of life; a better place to live, to work and to enjoy.” It has been reviewed for learnings for the new LECP as well as the identifications of areas that can be built upon in the new plan to support the goals and ambitions of this edition of the LECP.



#### Cavan Digital Strategy 2021 to 2024

The Digital Strategy for Cavan 2021 to 2024 (*Connected Cavan*) aims to encourage and support citizens, businesses, and visitors to harness the potential of a digitally enabled society through digital adoption and innovation. This Strategy will also inform the current and future County Development Plan and new LECP for Cavan, building on existing resources, knowledge, networks and plans to “pave the way for future prosperity, cohesion and sustainability across the economy and communities of the county. ... We commit to develop and activate communities through exposure to digital content and technology and support people to discover the value of using digital in their daily lives”.



An aerial photograph of a stone ruin, likely a church or monastery, featuring a prominent circular stone tower. The ruins are surrounded by a cemetery with numerous headstones. In the background, a large lake is visible, surrounded by green hills under a cloudy sky. The text '4 | Snapshot Profile' is overlaid on the image.

# 4 | Snapshot Profile

## Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis

### Introduction

This section provides an initial snapshot overview of a selection of key areas including demographics (population), housing, the economy, social and community, and the environment. The findings from this analysis and the policy review have been used as a starting point to identify strengths, constraints, opportunities and threats for the county. This has informed the development of the initial draft High-Level Goals and will be utilised further to stimulate discussion during the consultation process.

The analysis outlined below is based largely on the analysis of 2016 Census data with 2022 Census data used where available. Census 2022 data will become available in finer detail over 2023. Further up-to-date information has also been incorporated from other departmental and agency releases, as well other sources such as the SEAI, Pobal, and Geodirectory.

County Cavan is part of the regional development area administered by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly. This region comprises eight counties (i.e. Galway, Roscommon, Monaghan, Mayo, Leitrim, Donegal, Sligo, Cavan). Within this report whenever the word 'region' is used, it denotes the region covered by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly.

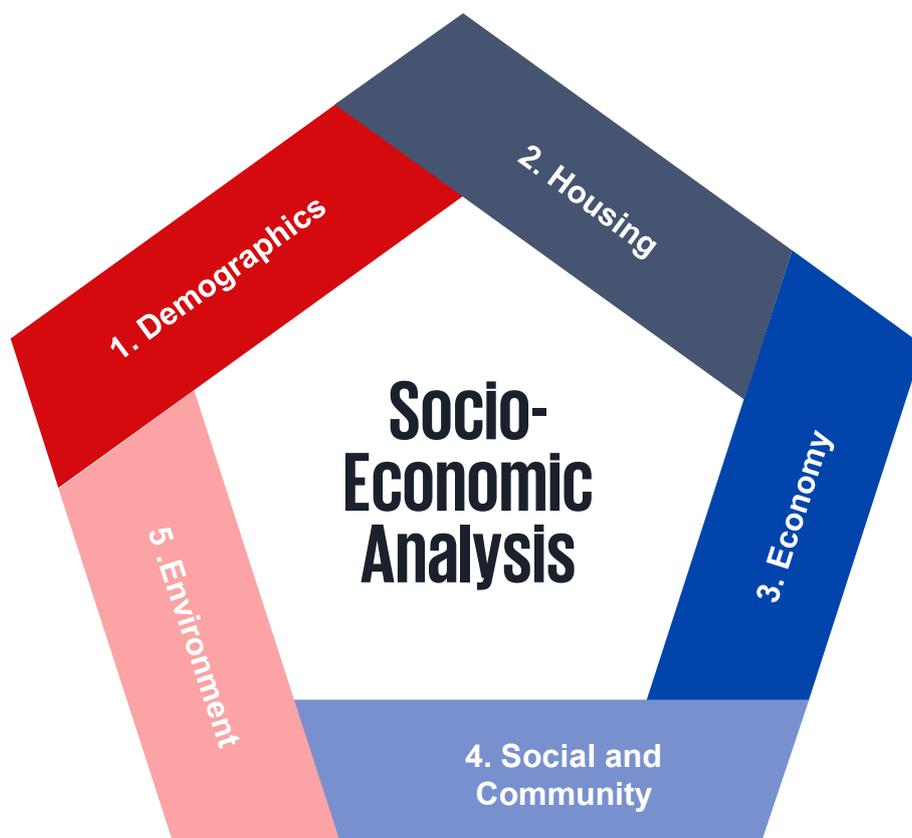


Figure 2: Socio-Economic Analysis

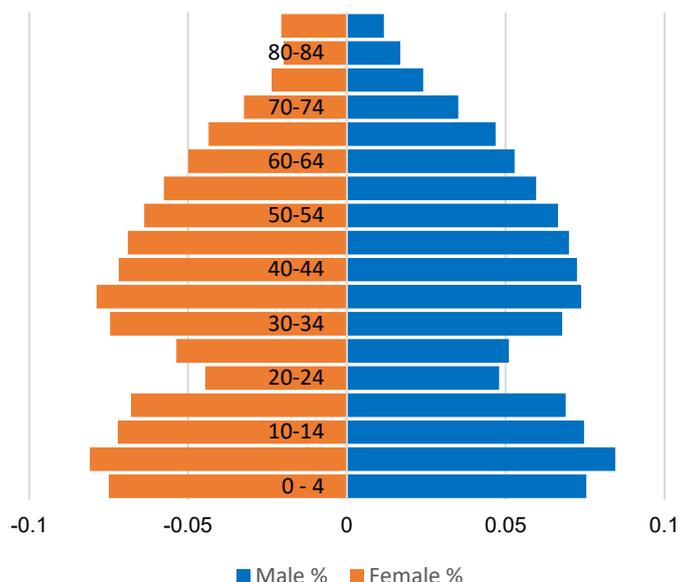
## Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis

### Demographics

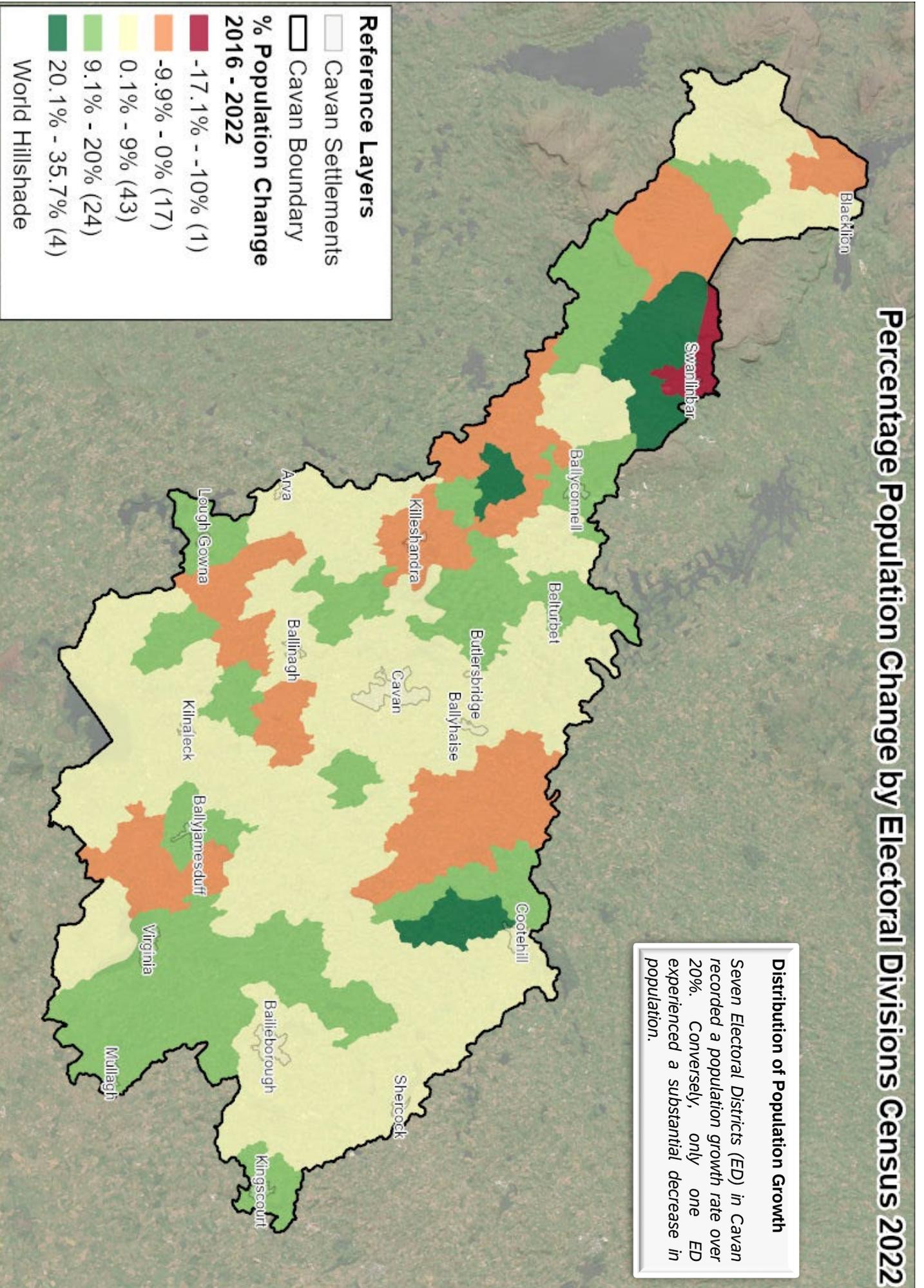
The Census 2022 results continued the upward growth trend in population for Ireland as a whole. The total population for the state is the largest since the famine and represents a 7.6% increase on the figure recorded in 2016. This upward growth trend is also reflected in the population totals for the region and Cavan. In 2022, the Census day population of Cavan stood at 81,201, making it the 20<sup>th</sup> most populated county in the country. Between 2016 and 2022, the county recorded a growth rate of 6.6%. It was the county with the 17<sup>th</sup> highest growth rate in Ireland. The population figure recorded by County Cavan in 2022 represents a fifth consecutive census day increase in the population since 1996. There is a growing cohort of older and younger persons which will require services to support their participation in everyday life and combat isolation.

- Due primarily to its more rugged terrain and lack of infrastructure, the western section of the county has a lower population density than the more populous central and eastern sections. The only settlement in the county with a population greater than 10,000 is Cavan Town (CSO 2016, 10,914 population). The largest town west of Cavan Town is Belturbet (CSO 2016, 1,369 population).
- The 2022 population of Cavan is 1.6% of the total state population.
- The 6.6% population growth rate across 2016 to 2022 is a substantial increase from the 4% rate of county population growth in the 2011 – 2016 period.
- Cavan’s population grew both by new births and inward migration to the county, the region and the state. The net inward-migration rate for Cavan in 2022 was 5 per 1000 which was slightly less than the rate of natural increase of 6 per 1000.
- The largest age cohorts in Cavan are the 0-9 and 30-39 age cohorts, accounting for 14.4% and 14.2% of the population in 2016, respectively. These two age cohorts collectively account for 28.6% of the population in Cavan.
- The smallest age cohort in Cavan as of 2016 was the 80 and over age cohort with only 3.7% of the county’s population falling within this age group.
- Between 2011 and 2016 the largest growth recorded by an age cohort was the 60 – 69 group, with a growth rate of 18.3%. Conversely, the 20 – 29 group conversely experienced a 18.2% decrease.
- In 2016, Cavan’s population largely consisted of Irish nationals at 87% of the population. The largest grouping of foreign nationals was those from the UK and Poland which accounted for 3% each of the county’s population. The number of Ukrainian nationals in the County increased significantly in 2022.
- In 2016, White Irish and White Irish Travellers made up 84.6% of Cavan’s population, with 10% of the population being members of other White ethnic groups. By themselves Travellers make up 6.3% of the total population of the county. The remaining ethnic groups make up less than 1% of the county’s population.

Cavan - Population by Gender and Age Group (2016)



# Percentage Population Change by Electoral Divisions Census 2022



**Distribution of Population Growth**

Seven Electoral Districts (ED) in Cavan recorded a population growth rate over 20%. Conversely, only one ED experienced a substantial decrease in population.

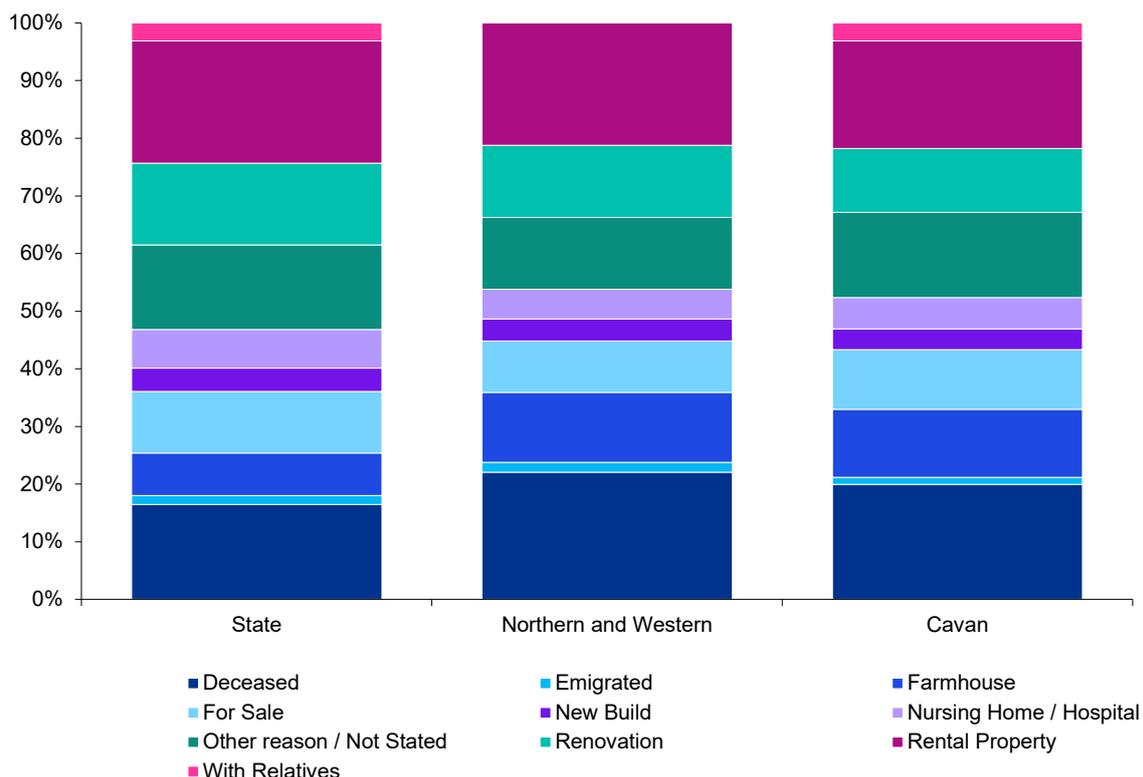
## Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis

### Housing

The high rate of growth recorded between 2016 and 2022 for the population figures was not mirrored in the housing stock for the period. This was the case for Ireland as a whole and the wider region. The national housing stock rate increased by 6% between 2016 and 2022. However, the housing stock increase in Cavan for that same period was 3%. This lack of growth in housing stock particularly in light of an ever increasing population, underlines the urgent need to increase housing provision.

- Cavan’s housing stock stood at 34,601 in 2022. There were 890 units added to housing stock between 2016 and 2022.
- In 2022, Cavan was at the lower end of national league table for housing construction, ranking 31<sup>st</sup> in the country amongst local authority areas.
- 35% of Cavan’s 2016 housing stock was built between 2001 and 2010. However, only 1.7% of the 2016 housing stock was built after 2011.
- Owner occupied with no mortgage made up 39.8% of total tenures. Owner occupied with mortgage was at 31.7%. By contrast, Rented from a Private Landlord was at 15.6%. This is broadly in line with regional/national numbers for Owner occupied with no mortgage (42.0%/36.0%), Owner occupied with mortgage (29.3%/31.6%), and Rented from Private Landlord (16.1%/18.2%).
- There was a 2.9% decline in the ownership rates for the county between 2011 and 2016. This was primarily from the group categorised as Owner occupied with mortgage who declined by -4.0% though this was partially offset by an 1.1% increase in those categorised as Owner occupied with no mortgage.
- In 2022, Cavan’s housing stock vacancy rate stood at 13.0% and was the sixth highest vacancy rate in Ireland. The 2022 vacancy rate recorded for Cavan was 4074 units. While the rate was the 16<sup>th</sup> highest number in the country and made up 2.44% of national vacancies it was only the fifth highest in the region reflecting the wider challenges of the region as a whole.
- The top 5 reasons for vacancy given during the 2022 Census in Cavan were “Deceased” (20%), “Rental Property” (18.7%), “Farmhouse” (11.8%), “Renovation” (11.1%), “Other Reason” (14.8%). The top three reasons account for 51.5% of vacancy.

Reasons for House Vacancy - Cavan, Region, and National 2022



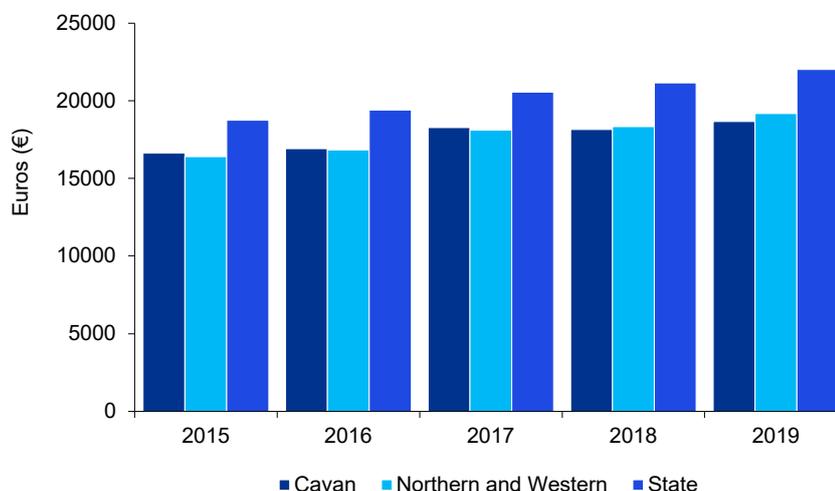
## Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis

### Economy

The economy of Cavan is mixed in character with a range of operations across primary (i.e. agriculture), secondary (i.e. manufacturing), and tertiary (i.e. service) industries. In 2016, 18.3% of persons at work were in primary sector employment, 16.7% were employed in secondary industries, and another 50.2% made their living in tertiary employment. Notable employers include Abbott Ireland Nutrition Division, as well as Kingspan, Mannok, and Saint-Gobain Construction materials. Key economic initiatives in Cavan include the county's Food Cluster and Food Strategy, the Cavan Digital Hub, Diaspora Engagement, and Tourism Development Plans (Cavan is part of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands). Businesses in Cavan are benefiting from €65m National Broadband investment, which will connect to 16k premises when completed. In 2021, Cavan was granted €14.49M for the Cavan Town Regeneration Project as part of the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund.

- Breaking down the industries in to their sub-categories, Cavan's top three economic industries in 2016 were "Professional Services" (21.0%), "Commerce and Trade" (19.6%), and "Manufacturing Industries" (16.7%). In comparison, the share for "Professional Services" and "Manufacturing Industries" at the regional level was 24.7% and 13.8%, and at the national level it was 23.5% and 11.4% respectively.
- The results from the 2020 Business Demography highlight that there is a range of enterprise sizes across County Cavan. 27.8% of employment in Cavan is provided by enterprises with between 50-249 employees, with another 27.6% of employment in firms with under 10 employees. In total, 87.3% of employment is provided by SMEs and micro-firms (i.e. firms with less than 250 employees). This underlines the importance of SMEs and micro enterprises to the economic livelihood of County Cavan.
- According to the county's socio-economic Catchment Profiles, 22.3% of Cavan people commute out of county. This underlines the importance of sufficient public transportation linkages and infrastructure to service this movement. Virginia is a choke point for commuters to Dublin.
- There are some clear divergences across gender in economic status. 58% of men were employed, compared to 46% of women. Between 2011 and 2016 the number of women employed had grown by 1.6%, while the number of men in employment increased by 4.9%. There was a stark gender difference in those looking after the home/family. Only 1% of men were looking after the home/family compared to 18% of women. This potentially indicates a lack of childcare services across the county.
- Between 2015 and 2019 disposable income per person rose from €16,629 to €18,668. This is lower than the figure for the region at €19,093 and the national average of €20,055, as per the 2019 national accounts.
- Cavan had the eighteenth highest business vacancy rate in the country at 12.9% as reported in the GeoDirectory Commercial Buildings Report Q2 of 2022.

County, Regional, and National Disposable Income 2015 - 2019



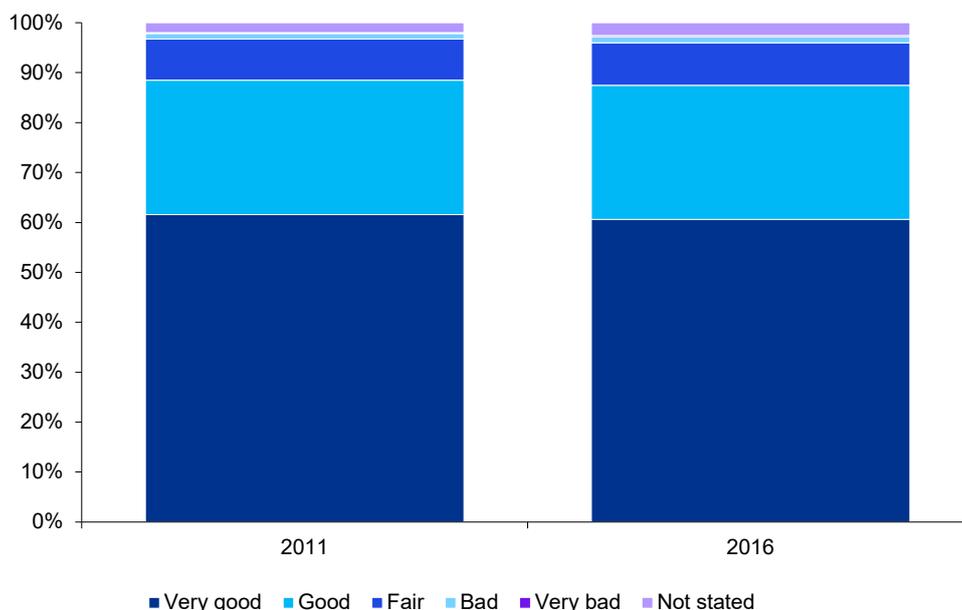
## Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis

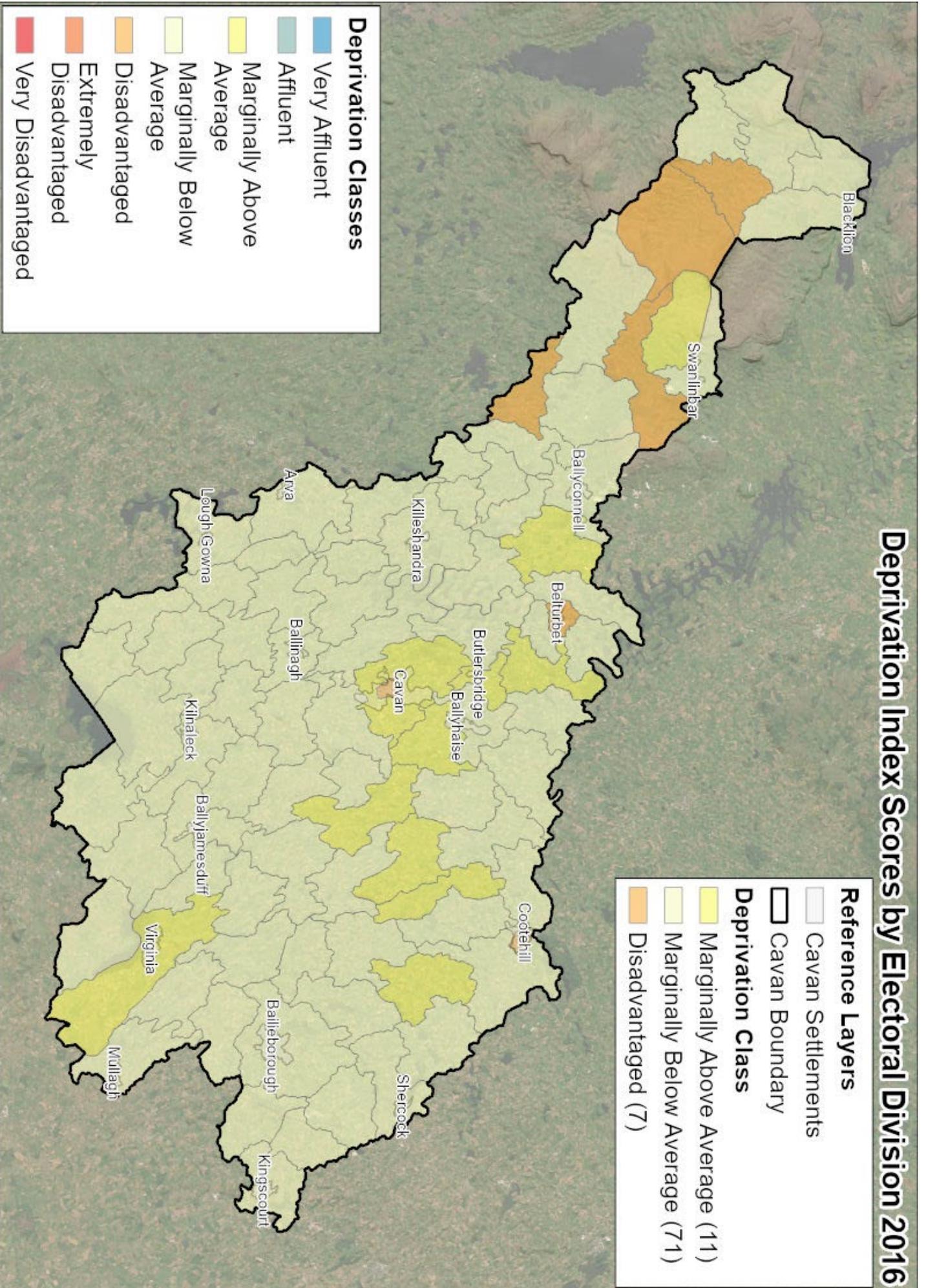
### Social and Community

*Building a strong community means addressing areas such as health, education, social deprivation, heritage. The Cavan Sports Partnership which was established in 2008 includes 57 clubs, amenities, and parks promoting a healthy lifestyle for all of Cavan. A recreational forum is currently being established for the county that will have a strategic approach to all types of outdoor recreation. Cavan has good levels of educational attainment and a strong base for its education system, including Cavan Institute, a third level college located in Cavan Town. According to IDA (2022), Cavan is accessible to 170,000 students and to over 50,000 graduates from seven universities and two Institutes of Technology within a 90-minute drive. The border is of crucial importance to the economic and social reality of the Cavan. According to the CSO, 14% of Cavan's population live within 10km of a vehicular point of entry into Northern Ireland.*

- In 2016, 42.9% of Cavan's population aged 15 and over have completed some form of tertiary education. This is slightly below the region (44.8%) and below that of the state (48.1%).
- As of 2021, the most prevalent category for tertiary qualifications obtained in Cavan is social sciences, business and law (10%) with engineering, manufacturing, and construction (9.5%) slightly behind.
- In Census 2016, 60.6% of people in Cavan reported themselves as being in Very Good Health which is slightly above both the region (57.9%) and the state (59.4%). Furthermore 26.8% of people classified themselves as being in Good Health which is less than the wider region (28.7%) and the state (27.6%). It should also be noted that these figures do not reflect the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic which could possibly adversely affect physical and mental health of the county.
- Cavan utilised the Government's COVID-19 supports at a higher rate than the region as a whole, with a higher rate in 2020, 2021, and 2022 with the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> highest rate regionally.
- Due to the war in Ukraine, as of November 2022, just over 62,000 Ukrainian Nationals arrived in Ireland, of which 1,162 arrived in Cavan. This represents 2.0% of all Ukrainian Nationals who have arrived in Ireland. This may increase pressure on the provision of key services in the county. As reported in the *Irish Examiner* 24<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2023 ('More than half of Ukrainians will stay in Ireland post-war'), Government officials believe that 60% of recently arrived Ukrainian Nationals are expected to stay in Ireland even after the conflict ends.
- The POBAL Deprivation Index Score for the County in 2016 was -3.91, which is lower than the state (-1.74) and region (-2.83) and classes the county as "marginally below average".
- Cavan's score under the Pobal Deprivation index worsened marginally between 2011 and 2016 by -0.08 points but the county's classification as "marginally below average" affluence has remained the same. This deterioration in the deprivation score may have improved since 2016 given the then continued recovery of the economy (results are yet to be released).
- The POBAL Deprivation Index Score for Elector Divisions (EDs) indicate that 77.4% of people in Cavan live in an area categorised as "marginally below average" and "disadvantaged" compared to the 22.6% EDs classified as "marginally above average".
- Of households within Cavan, almost 1 in 4 are single persons (24.8%). Couples/families with children make up another 40.6% of households with 9.6% of households being lone parents. There is clear movement along the life cycle, with 45.4% of families in the adult/empty nest/retired stage.

**Self-reported health status - Cavan**





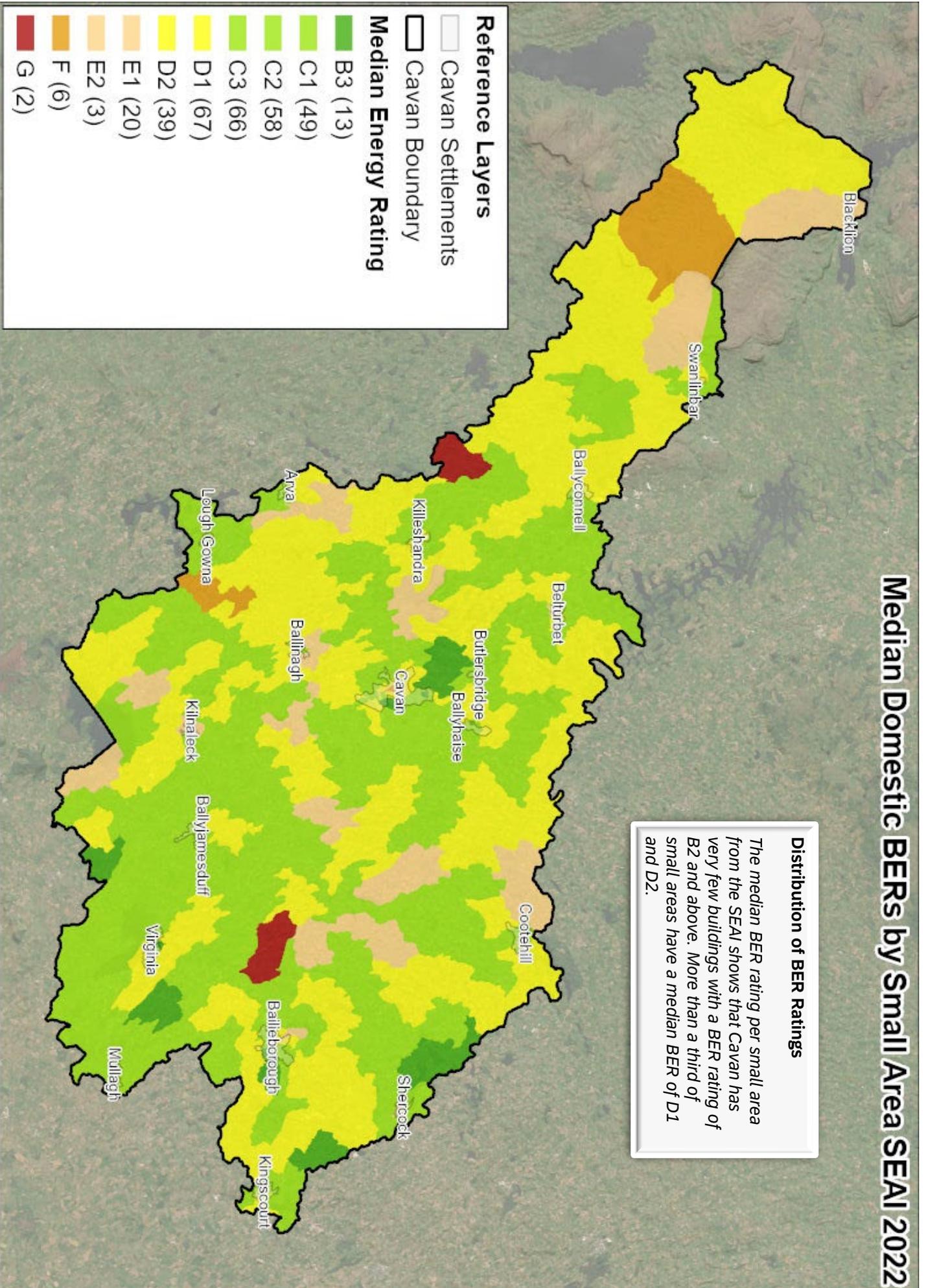
## Snapshot Socio-Economic Analysis

### Environment

*Cavan, along with the rest of Ireland, is facing a climate and biodiversity crisis. In accordance with EU and national policy, it will be necessary to integrate sustainability and climate action into all areas of life. In an effort to identify these action areas, the following provides a selection of environmental and sustainability information. To prepare for the effects of future climate impacts, it is recommended that improvements now be prioritised in the areas of building energy efficiency, sustainable transport, as well as other climate adaptation and mitigation measures. Of course, those who are vulnerable and less financially well off in society should be adequately supported during the transition from a high carbon to net zero carbon economy.*

- Cavan had a total of 13 wind and hydro electricity generation stations with a total capacity of 136 MW. Cavan contributes approximately 3.2% of the total installed capacity of wind and hydro generator capacity in Ireland.
- Just over 23% of households in Cavan use electricity for heating with the most prevalent source for domestic heating being oil, representing more than 58% of the county's total. Taken together, fossil fuel sources account for 77% of all home heating in Cavan (58% Oil, 8% Mains Gas, 8% LPG, 3% Solid Fuel).
- Data from the SEAI (2022), shows that Cavan's energy efficient buildings are clustered in and around towns and villages with areas with lower BER ratings generally situated in rural areas.
- Approximately 73% of those commuting to work, school, or college in Cavan use a personal motor vehicle while only 22% of commuters walk, cycle or use public transport.
- In 2016, the percentage of commuters "working at or mainly from home" was just 4%. This is likely to have increased given the well documented shift to hybrid working post-COVID 19.
- In 2022, an EPA study of the ecological status of Irish rivers between 2016 and 2021 found that 20.5% of Cavan's rivers were of poor quality (caused primarily by farm waste, sewage, pesticides and chemicals) with 59% being considered either good or high quality. The same EPA research showed that this was similar for lakes with 20.8% of lakes being rated as Bad or Poor but with a much lower level of lakes showing Good or High quality (1% and 2% respectively). The lack of adequate waste and grey water treatment facilities is also holding back economic development and housing.
- Flooding is a major issue for the county. In recent years heavy rain caused significant subsidence in Bailieborough and a landslide at Benbrack Mountain in west Cavan. In Cavan Town alone, some 54 homes and 56 non-residential properties are currently considered at risk of flooding.
- There are six Special Areas of Conservation (Boleybrack Mountain, Corratirrim, Cuilcagh – Anierin Uplands, Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally), Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs, and the River Boyne and Blackwater SACs) and three Special Protection Areas in the county (Lough Oughter, Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough, Lough Sheelin). There are two Natural Heritage Areas (Slieve Rushen Bog and Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough NHAs).
- The SEAI supports 12 Sustainable Energy Communities in the county which are focussed on a range of community development and sustainability initiatives.
- Indicative of the wider decarbonisation shift, in 2020 and 2021 the number of new electric vehicles sold in Cavan increased by 192% from 38 to 111. As of November 2022, there are 8 public EV charging stations in the county, with another 182 granted permission.

## Median Domestic BERs by Small Area SEAI 2022



# 5

# Initial SCOT Analysis



## 5.1 Initial SCOT Analysis

A high level study into Cavan's Strengths, Constraints, Opportunities, and Threats (SCOT) was conducted and several major points across each category were identified.

**Strengths** – can be understood as the **advantages** of Cavan in the **present day**. They can be seen as a 'snapshot' of the present day.

**Constraints** – can be understood as the **challenges** facing the County at present, where they represent a 'snapshot' of Cavan.

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

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

### Strengths

- Within Cavan's growing population, families with young children account for 28.6% of the population.
- There is a quite developed economy within Cavan with over half of business in the county in the Professional Services, Commerce and Trade, and Manufacturing Industries.
- 87.3% of employment in the county is provided by SMEs and micro firms which reduces reliance on a small number of large employers.
- Some notable large employers have their roots in the region (e.g. Mannok and Kingspan). This makes them less likely to leave.
- Cavan has a high level of people in Good or Very Good health.
- Cavan is dominated by a landscape full of beautiful lakes and waterways (e.g. Shannon-Erne Navigation).
- Cavan has a range of ongoing socio-economic initiatives including the Food Network, Created in Cavan, the Cavan Digital Hub, Diaspora Engagement, and Tourism Development Plans.
- The presence of the Cavan Institute within the county and its planned €40 million expansion.

### Opportunities

- Through its existing initiatives in Agri-Food, Tourism, and Rural Regeneration; the county could encourage increased inward investment and migration to support development.
- Cavan has untapped potential as a tourism destination given the large number of natural and built heritage sites.
- There are significant funding opportunities for the county, including RRDF, the PEACEPLUS funding programme, as well as European Union programmes.
- There are significant opportunities to increase the utilization of sustainable forms of transport, including the development of public transport routes, greenways and transport electrification.
- Effective action to reduce unemployment in the county that encourages entrepreneurship and fosters employable skills could help stimulate the wider economy of the county.
- There are opportunities to improve tertiary education attainment given Cavan's lower levels of at present.
- For manufacturing firms focused on the construction sector to pivot even more towards facilitating green/sustainable building practices.

### Constraints

- Cavan has a sizable older population who require additional supports and services into the future.
- Successfully integrating new arrivals (Ukrainians and others) into the county.
- Cavan is constrained by a relatively low rate of housing construction and a large number of existing vacant housing.
- A lack of childcare undermines economic opportunity for women in the county. It also reduces overall economic vitality by reducing accessibility to employment.
- A high level of vacancy in commercial property constrains the ability of local business to form thriving local economic clusters in towns and villages.
- A majority of small areas in Cavan are considered marginally below average or disadvantaged.
- Building Energy Rating data from the SEAI indicates that Cavan faces a significant challenge in meeting its decarbonisation and climate action objectives.
- The county requires further investment including in roads (i.e. connecting to Dublin-Belfast corridor and Dundalk, Virginia bypass). Limited broadband reduces remote work opportunities.
- Weak provision of public transport. No rail. Limited bus services.

### Threats

- Economic opportunities in other counties and countries including across the border may encourage younger people to migrate from Cavan and remain away for their own economic prosperity.
- Homeownership declined in the county between 2011 and 2016 and home affordability has further deteriorated in that time.
- Extreme weather events including flooding, cold snaps and heatwaves will place additional strain on the core infrastructure including energy use, roads and bridges, and civic buildings.
- Ensuring there is a Just Transition as the economy moves from high carbon emissions to net zero. This is particularly important for the those who are vulnerable and not financially well off.
- Demographic changes will need to be planned for with adequate provision for social services made to meet the different needs of the young, the old, and new arrivals.
- Global economic uncertainty including increased cost of living as well as the fallout from Brexit risk undermining efforts to improve the lives of the people of Cavan.

# 6

# High-Level Goals & Outcomes



## Emerging High Level Goals

The initial findings from the policy review, socio-economic analysis, and SCOT analysis outlined above has allowed for the identification of some key areas and themes that could potentially be addressed in the new LECP. This includes opportunities and associated strengths that can be built upon as well as constraints and gaps that are affecting the County. Taken together this has allowed for the formulation of six draft High Level Goals that propose an initial strategic direction for the new LECP. These goals are outlined in the figure below and elaborated on in the pages that follow.

The draft High Level Goals have been formulated with reference to the new *'Local Economic and Community Plans Guidelines 2021'*. These Guidelines provide a recommended framework for the development and format of the LECP. Under this framework, the High Level Goals are to inform the development of Objectives and Outcomes under the following three headings:

- Economic Elements
- Economic and Community Elements
- Community Elements

The indicative High Level Goals adhere to this format. Goals 1 and 2 predominantly relate to the economic elements of the LECP. Goals 3 and 4 relate to economic and community elements, while Goals 5 and 6 relate to community elements. It is noted that these Goals are integrated and mutual and that each element will play an important role in supporting economic and community development in County Cavan.

Furthermore the goals look to reflect Cavan's commitment to become a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable county that is growing, inclusive, and welcoming. At the same time the Goals are realistic and achievable. As mentioned earlier, these goals are a starting point for discussion and will be revised and refined where appropriate as the new LECP is developed following further analysis and feedback from the consultation.

The Council would like to hear your views on these goals:

**Are they the right goals for Cavan's next LECP as the County moves towards 2029?**

**Do they reflect the correct priorities for the economic and community development of the County?**



Figure 10: DRAFT High Level Goals

## Goal 1. Cavan will have a dynamic, innovative, and equitable economy that supports enterprise and employment.

This goal looks to support Cavan's economy through proactive actions to attract new investment, reward innovation and building on existing strengths. The County has a strong base of economic activity and a number of existing clusters, and more can be done to support entrepreneurship within the county. These clusters include construction materials providers (e.g. Mannock & Kingspan) who provide an important source of economic activity in the county. In the agriculture and food economies, there is a need to support both big and small producers. Therefore, expanding the employment base and creating new job opportunities will be a key element to Cavan's success moving forward. This economic development will help to underpin further investment into the wellbeing of the community, reduce unemployment and poverty, and improve the quality of life of all within the county. This could include:

- Building deeper relationships with key actors including Enterprise Ireland, the LEO, and the IDA to help foster and attract high-value jobs and sustainable employment. The indigenous businesses and FDI related companies will create wider spill-over growth to the county.
- Using digitalisation and new technologies including the implementation of Cavan's Digital Strategy to ensure that Cavan remains competitive and benefits from changing work patterns which the county is well placed to benefit from (i.e. remote working).
- Creating an optimal business environment that supports existing businesses, incentivises new business creation and acts as a key attractor for potential investors by providing business supports, talent, enterprise space, broadband availability, and transport infrastructure.
- Support Cavan's economy as it adapts to the challenge of Brexit. This is vital given Cavan's border location.
- Developing the retail, accommodation and hospitality sectors and increasing their importance to Cavan's economy and community through initiatives like Created in Cavan.
- Improved transport linkages and infrastructure to improve economic activity and better take advantage of wider regional and national growth engines such as the ongoing Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.
- Supporting other key sectors such as professional services that contribute to the economic diversification and growth of Cavan.
- Promoting and supporting Social Enterprises. Social Enterprises are likely to be particularly important in areas with a low population.

### Key Questions...

- What can be done to further support existing businesses?
- How can Cavan attract new businesses and investment to help diversify its economy?
- Are there any opportunities that Cavan should look to capitalise on for growth?

### SDG Alignment



## Goal 2. Cavan will support the development of the county as a tourism destination in a sustainable and balanced manner that respects and appreciates its natural and built heritage.

Cavan is a place of great natural beauty. The county contains a variety of different natural features and landscapes (e.g. Geopark, Slieve Rushen Bog, Lough Sheelin, Lough Ramor). It also has a rich culture and built heritage (e.g. Cootehill Passage Tomb, Shannon Erne Waterway, Cavan County Museum) with a welcoming community. Taken together these assets contribute to an enhanced sense of place and a charming appeal to visitors. Similarly, they also highlight Cavan's strong tourism potential which can contribute to the overall development of the County, its liveability, and the health of the economy. In light of Brexit, attracting both domestic and international tourists from further afield has gained a renewed importance. As such, this goal looks to harness the county's tourist potential, while championing, protecting and strengthening Cavan's culture and heritage. This could include:

- Supporting and encouraging participation in cultural, heritage and creative initiatives and the agencies that support them (e.g. Creative Ireland, The Heritage Council, The Arts Council, Fáilte Ireland).
- Building on the opportunities that exist to further develop Cavan as a tourism destination as part of its inclusion in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands.
- Supporting the sustainable development – both economic and environmental – of outdoor and active tourism (e.g. walking, cycling, horse riding, angling, boating, and lakeside activities). A likely key focus will be on developing Blueway and Greenway projects.
- Ensuring a coordinated approach to the promotion and development of Cavan's tourism offering across strategically important channels and stakeholders.
- Strengthening of the county's culture and heritage infrastructure, including capability building and skills development.
- Ensuring that Cavan's sensitive landscapes, places and objects are well cared for and appropriately presented.
- Developing Cavan's night-time economy.

### Key Questions...

- What markets should Cavan focus on and what tourism products are needed to meet the demands of these target markets?
- How does Cavan best balance the development of the tourist sector with the need to care for the natural, built and intangible heritage that people come to experience.

### SDG Alignment



## Goal 3. Cavan will facilitate life-long learning and education opportunities to support the personal development education and attainment of its people.

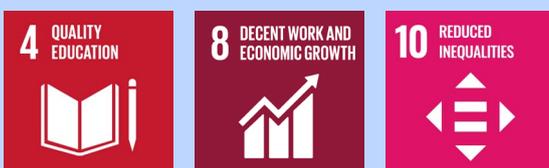
Life-long learning and upskilling is vital in the personal development and career advancement of many people across the county. It contributes to the wellbeing of the wider community through increasing employability and economic independence. This in turn reduces unemployment and poverty. Ensuring that Cavan has a skilled workforce that aligns with employer needs will help develop a dynamic economy that can attract investment and nurture entrepreneurship. In terms of upskilling and life long learning, Cavan Institute and Ballyhaise Agricultural College are both essential as providers of training and education. Actions under this goal could include:

- Working to facilitate life-long learning in Cavan to contribute towards EU targets relating to 15% of adults participating in life-long learning.
- Working in collaboration with training and education providers to ensure appropriate education and skills provision across the county that is accessible and inclusive for all the community.
- Promoting linkages and collaboration between the private sector actors, public sector bodies, as well as education and training providers to identify and address skill needs and shortages across the county.
- Preparing the community for the jobs of the future and to exploit opportunities where the county is well situated in areas such as the green economy – especially in the construction sector – and sustainable tourism.
- Working to address the digital skills gap where it exists and promoting the development of such skills in all age groups to improve digital literacy and economic opportunities.

### Key Questions...

- What can be done to encourage more to participate in life-long learning?
- What specific training should be provided that will lead to the best opportunities for Cavan's economic growth?

### SDG Alignment



## Goal 4. Cavan will support the regeneration and revitalisation of towns and villages as attractive places to live, work and visit.

Irish towns and villages are facing significant challenges in relation to high-levels of commercial vacancy, dereliction and more generally, rural decline. Cavan's location on the border – especially during the period of the Troubles – has not been conducive to the economic development of its towns and villages. The uncertainty caused by Brexit has again brought a dynamic to Cavan that other counties located away from the border do not have to deal with to the same extent. Regardless, the decline of rural towns and villages in Cavan is part of a wider national and international trend. A number of national policies such as the Town Centre First Policy and Our Rural Future look to specifically address this challenge. Under this goal, Cavan will work to support the regeneration and revitalisation of towns and villages across the county, thereby ensuring the development of vibrant and resilient communities. Actions under this goal could include:

- Supporting Cavan's towns and villages by seeking the necessary funding from national and EU sources to implement regeneration and revitalisation initiatives.
- Collecting relevant data and applying strategic approaches to urban/rural planning for the future of Cavan's towns and villages.
- Making every town and village and associated rural area SMART (i.e. the use of data, technology and innovation to enhance places).
- Implementing targeted public realm interventions to enhance town and village centres to create vibrant, attractive and inclusive spaces for all persons, regardless of circumstances.
- Identifying ownership and repurposing of vacant and derelict buildings for potential community, residential, creative and commercial purposes.
- Exploring options to reduce traffic congestion and improve uptake of more sustainable transportation options.
- Embracing sustainability and quality of life elements associated with nature and walkable settlements as a competitive advantage.

### Key Questions...

- How can people be encouraged back in to the centre of Cavan's towns and villages?
- How can the quality of life of those living in the county's towns and villages be improved?

### SDG Alignment



## Goal 5. Cavan will be an inclusive, healthy and equitable county that supports wellbeing across its communities.

Cavan County Council, in collaboration with key stakeholders, will work to ensure an equitable county that promotes social inclusion and diversity. In line with the Healthy Ireland Framework 2019-2025, we will continue to work to improve health and wellbeing by creating and continually improving the county's physical and social environments and develop community resources that help people to support each other and achieve their potential. The goal will also look to support those that are most vulnerable and address deprivation where it exists. This could include:

- Ensuring access to services for all as relevant to healthcare, childcare, housing and education.
- Ensuring the provision of adequate supports for the older population of Cavan and working across all groups to reduce the threat of rural isolation.
- Building on and supporting innovation projects that promote inclusion and the fight against inequality.
- Deepen and expand the work of the Cavan Sports Partnership to continue to promote a healthy and active lifestyle within the county.
- Continuing work to reduce deprivation and poverty where it exists, including through increasing employment in well paying roles and enhancing skills and educational attainment in vulnerable groups.
- Implementing initiatives that promote positive mental health and healthy life choices for the benefit of all the community, especially those at acute risk of isolation.
- Developing initiatives that celebrate diversity and inclusion and encourage people to actively participate in the development of their communities and the County.

### Key Questions...

- What are the best actions/initiatives to improve the community's mental and physical health?
- How can social cohesion be strengthened and inequality lessened?

### SDG Alignment



## Goal 6. Cavan will proactively support climate action to create resilient and sustainable communities.

Cavan has an abundance of natural assets that adds to the appeal the County has for residents, workers and visitors alike. The natural environment contributes not only to Cavan's tourism potential but more importantly to the quality of life and wellbeing of communities across the county. Therefore, it is vital that the natural environment, its ecosystems and habitats are protected for future generations. As such, we will strive to realise national, regional and local goals towards developing and supporting climate action to create sustainable communities and support national objectives to reach Net Zero emissions by 2050. In order to realise these climate action ambitions, sustainable practices must be integrated across all areas of life and services, with the UN SDGs underpinning the new LECP. This could include:

- Building upon Cavan's generation and use of renewable energy sources, including through exploring the development of micro-generation, community wind, and larger-scale renewable energy projects where appropriate.
- Piloting innovative projects and increasing participation in sustainability initiatives across the community and private sector, including in relation to projects that will address the current biodiversity crisis.
- Encouraging and increasing the use of more sustainable modes of transport such as public transport (including in rural areas) and active modes of travel including through increased cycleways and walking routes.
- Increasing the uptake of electric vehicles and ensuring the necessary infrastructure (i.e. EV charging points) is in place to support their use.
- Increasing the accessibility and integration of innovative farming approaches and technologies to farms across Cavan to help them become more economically and environmentally sustainable.
- Supporting the development of the green economy to further realise the economic benefits of going green particularly with existing economic clusters such as construction material providers.

### Key Questions...

- How can climate change adaptation be a force for improving residents' quality of life?
- What can be done to reduce the county's carbon emissions and increase biodiversity?
- Are there any innovative environmental projects or initiatives that you would like to see introduced in Cavan?

### SDG Alignment



# 7

# Conclusion & Next Steps



## 7.1 Conclusion and Next Steps

In developing a Local Economic and Community Plan for Cavan, a comprehensive Socio-Economic Statement is imperative to informing the various stages of Public Consultation. This draft Socio-Economic Statement provides the material needed to effectively engage all stakeholders in Cavan in order to chart the best direction for the new LECP for the county. All interested parties and stakeholders are encouraged to provide their feedback on this draft Socio-Economic Statement from **February 8<sup>th</sup> to March 8<sup>th</sup>**. Submissions must be received in writing, by email or by post before 4:30PM on March 8<sup>th</sup>. This may be done by emailing [niall.conway@kpmg.ie](mailto:niall.conway@kpmg.ie) or posting to Niall Conway, KPMG, 1 Stokes Place, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin.

A number of key consultation events and opportunities will be planned and promoted by the project team. These opportunities will include online community and business surveys, focus groups and 1:1 key stakeholder interviews. These events are all aimed at helping to develop an LECP which is reflective of the needs of Cavan's communities and businesses alike.

Information about upcoming consultation sessions will be available on the Council website at [www.cavancoco.ie](http://www.cavancoco.ie).

**It is vitally important that the public and businesses provide feedback on this document and the high-level goals to ensure the Cavan LECP accurately reflects their ideas, concerns, and needs.**

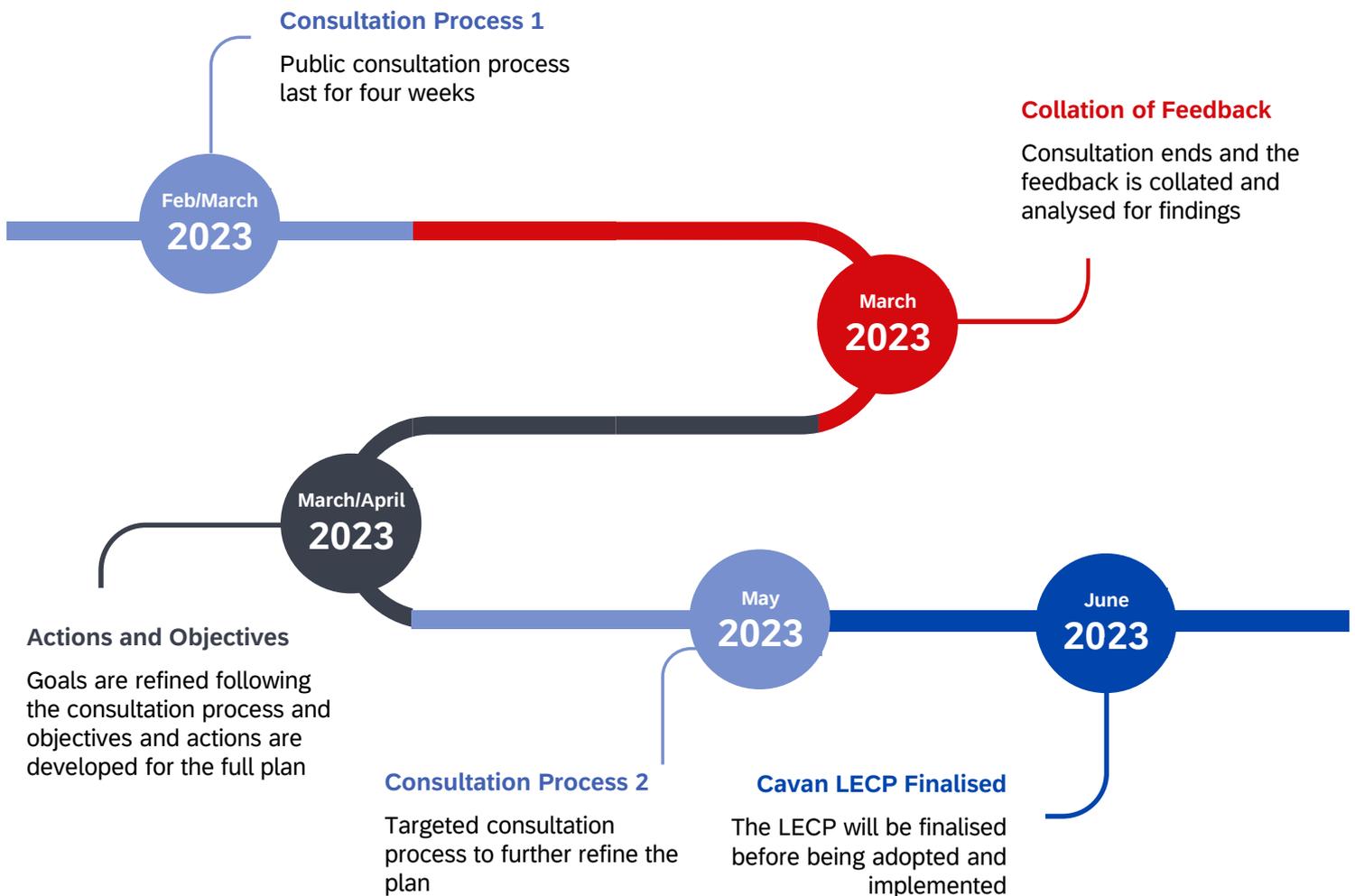


Figure 11: Cavan LECP Indicative Timeline

