



Core Strategy



1.0 Rationale for Core Strategy

1.1 Introduction

Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) contains requirements for all Planning Authorities to ensure that their Development Plans are consistent with high-level strategic policies and population projections for the country. Planning Authorities are required to prepare and incorporate a Core Strategy that shows that the Development Plan is consistent with national and regional objectives under the National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision 2025 and the relevant Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). The NPF was originally adopted and published by the Government on 16th February 2018, with the First Revision published in April 2025. The RSES replaced the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) for the Northern and Western Region and were introduced under the Local Government Reform Act 2014, which envisaged RSESs co-ordinating not only the physical planning process, as was the case with RPGs and Development Plans, but also the Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs) that have been prepared by local authorities under the 2014 Act. The NPF First Revision and relevant RSES are thus of direct statutory relevance to the preparation of County Development Plans.





Under the Act, a Core Strategy focuses on:

- Defining a settlement hierarchy for the County that is consistent with the NPF First Revision 2025 and RSES.
- Transposing the prescribed NPF First Revision 2025 and RSES housing and population targets set at County level for the rural and urban centres identified within the settlement hierarchy.
- Providing an evidence-based rationale for the land proposed to be zoned for residential and mixed-use development having regard to the capacity of existing zoned land and the phasing of development taking account of the location of public transport and services.
- Demonstrating how the Planning Authority has had regard to the statutory Retail Planning Guidelines in setting out objectives for retail development.

The Core Strategy sets out a vision for County Cavan and strategic aims required to deliver this vision. The development of this Core Strategy has been guided by the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government 'Guidance Note on Core Strategies' (2010) and the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements, Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, July 2025

1.2 Ecosystems Services Approach and Natural Capital

In preparing the Plan and developing policy objectives, the Council have followed these Ecosystem Services¹ Approach principles:

- a) Consideration of natural systems - by using knowledge of interactions in nature and how ecosystems function.
- b) Taking into account the services that ecosystems provide - including those that underpin social and economic well-being, such as flood and climate regulation, resources for food, fibre or fuel, or for recreation, culture and quality of life.
- c) Involving people - those who benefit from the ecosystem services and those managing them need to be involved in decisions that affect them. Public consultation has informed the preparation of the Plan which will be further refined before adoption, taking into account submissions/observations made on the Plan during public display.

¹ Ecosystems are multifunctional communities of living organisms interacting with each other and their environment. Ecosystems provide a series of services for human well-being (ecosystem services) either directly or indirectly contributing towards human wellbeing

The Council shall promote an Ecosystem Services Approach, following the above principles, in its decision-making processes, including those relating to the preparation of statutory land use plans.

In recognition of the need to manage natural capital², provisions have been integrated into the Plan that will contribute towards management of air quality, noise pollution, light pollution, water quality and integrated river basin management.

United Nations Sustainability Goals

Contribute, as practicable, towards achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which came into force in 2016.

2.0 Strategic Development of County Cavan over the Plan Period 2022-2028: Overarching Legislative and Policy Context

2.1 National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision, July 2025

The National Planning Framework First Revision (NPF), July 2025, is a long term, 20-year strategy for strategic planning and sustainable development of our urban and rural areas to 2040, with the core objectives of securing balanced regional development and a sustainable 'compact growth' approach. to the form and pattern of future development.

It sets out ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSO's) which underpin the overarching vision for the country and serve as shared goals, as depicted in figure 1. The Strategy also contains a range of National Policy Objectives providing a wider context for targeting future growth across the country.

² Renewable and non-renewable resources (e.g. plants, animals, air, water, soils, minerals)



Figure 1: NPF First Revision 2025 National Strategic Outcomes. Source: NPF First Revision, p. 5.



The NPF First Revision 2025 states that the Northern and Western region justifies a particular focus in the Framework. This is due to a historically lower level of urbanisation compared to other regions, proximity to the border and ongoing challenges post Brexit. By 2040, it is envisaged that the region will be home to more than 1 million people. A key challenge for the region, the NPF First Revision 2025 notes, will be identification and implementation of actions that will build up its urban structure, diversify and strengthen its rural areas as they transition towards a more broadly based mix of economic activities sufficient to underpin long term self-sustaining local communities. Moreover, the Framework notes that within the Northern and Western region, most of County Cavan and County Monaghan have a more easterly focus than elsewhere. These counties comprise part of a North-Eastern functional area that also includes County Louth in the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly area. The key driver for this regional area is the Dublin-Belfast cross-border network, the influence of which, as well as that of the Dublin Metropolitan area, extends into Cavan and Monaghan. Having regard to this, cognisance is given to the long term strategic planning and economic framework as contained within the Eastern and Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

The NPF First Revision 2025 further states that there is scope for potential growth in all towns in Ireland and this will largely be determined by the relevant Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for each Regional Assembly area, also taking into consideration the potential of smaller settlements and rural areas. Moreover, the NPF First Revision asserts that *“in setting overall targets for future growth, it is a pattern of development that is being targeted, rather than precise numbers. From a long-term, national perspective, the targeted location, relative scale and proportionality of growth will assist in monitoring and assessing delivery and performance”*.

In terms of specific national objectives relevant to Cavan, the NPF includes a number of targets aimed at growing the Northern and Western Region (NPF First Revision; pg19):

Policy Objective 2:

The projected level of population and employment growth in the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly area will be at least matched by that of the Northern and Western and Southern Regional Assembly areas combined.

Policy Objective 3: *Northern and Western Region: approximately 150,000 additional people between 2022 and 2040 (c. 210,000 additional people over 2016-2040) i.e. a population of just over 1 million.*

Furthermore, the NPF First Revision includes specific targets related to securing compact and sustainable growth in Ireland's towns and cities, recognising that the physical format of urban development in Ireland is one of our greatest national development challenges. A major new Continued policy emphasis on renewing and developing existing settlements will be required, according to the NPF First Revision, rather than continual expansion and sprawl of cities and towns out into the countryside, at the expense of town centres and smaller villages.

The NPF First Revision has noted that since 2018, enhanced methodologies and statutory guideline have been put in place to reconcile future housing requirements effectively, taking into consideration the varying housing needs that are required to be met. National Policy Objective 46 refers (NPF First Revision, page 95);

National Policy Objective 46:

Continue to develop methodologies and data sourced to improve the evidence base, effectiveness and consistency of the planning process for housing provision at regional, metropolitan and local authority levels, this will include standardised requirements for the recording of planning and housing data by the local authority in order to provide a consistent and robust evidence base for housing policy formulation.

2.2 Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework

The Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework (July 2018) highlights the Government's focus on achieving alignment between national, regional and local planning policy and practice. It addresses issues around the legal status of the NPF and provides transitional population projections for the period up to 2031. It also sets out mechanisms to ensure that Development Plans will broadly align with the NPF and RSES's to address the six-year period up to 2026/2027.

Given the above, 2026-2027 will allow the assessment of the first full round of Development Plans prepared in accordance with the NPF and the RSES. This assessment will coincide with several other key dates; 2027 is a Census Year, and 2025 saw the review of the ten-year National Development Plan. It is further noted that Development Plans approved in 2020/21 will commence reviews in 2025/2026 and so require demographic data for the six-year period beyond to 2031.

Therefore, it is stated that *“The critical population projection periods are to 2026 and 2031, with a*

particular emphasis on the initial six-year period to 2026, for city and county development plans that are to be formulated during the 2019-20/21 period” (NPF Implementation Roadmap, p4) The Roadmap provides transitional population projections for these milestones at a regional and county scale, in order to inform Development Plans for the period 2026 and 2031. The transitional population projections for the Northern and Western Region are listed in Table 1 below. With specific regard to Cavan, the projected population for 2026 is in the range of 83,000-84,500. For 2031, it is in the range of 86,000-88,000.

Table 1: Transitional Regional and County Population Projections to 2031 for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly. Source: NPF Implementation Roadmap, p13.

Regions and Counties	2016	2026	2031
North West			
Donegal	159,000	173,500-176,500	179,500-183,500
Sligo	65,500	71,500-72,500	74,000-75,500
Leitrim	32,000	35,000-35,500	36,000-37,000
Subtotal	256,500	280,000-284,500	289,500-296,000
West			
Galway	258,000	300,000-308,500	322,000-334,500
Mayo	130,500	142,000-144,500	147,000-150,500
Roscommon	64,500	70,500-71,500	73,000-74,500
Subtotal	453,000	512,500-524,500	542,000-559,500
Mid border			
Cavan	76,000	83,000-84,500	86,000-88,000
Monaghan	61,500	67,000-68,000	69,000-71,000
Subtotal	137,500	150,000-152,500	155,000-159,000
Total	847,442	942,500-986,500	961,500-1,014,500

NPF Implementation Housing Growth Requirements, Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), July 2025.

These Guidelines set out the instruction to update housing targets in line with the revised National Planning Framework which is a key step in the acceleration in housing delivery. They require planning authorities to align development plans with the revised NPF for the period up to 2040. Development plans must now incorporate the revised housing targets to support local and regional growth. These targets include for unmet demand and targets resolution of same by 2034. In order to align with these Guidelines planning authorities are required to prepare a core strategy consistent with national and regional objectives. The Guidelines allow for additional housing provision of up to 50% in light of the urgent need to increase housing delivery and optimise the ability to deliver on the housing requirements of the Revised NPF.



2.3 RSES for the Northern and Western Region

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western region came into force in January 2020 superseding the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border 2010-2022. The RSES is a high-level plan that seeks to support the implementation of the NPF by providing a strategic planning and economic framework for the region's sustainable growth and development. It echoes the NPF in emphasising sustainable development patterns and seeks to focus growth within the footprint of existing urban areas and in key regional growth settlements.

The RSES seeks to determine at a regional scale how best to achieve the shared goals set out in the National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) of the NPF. To this end, the Strategy sets out a number of Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) which are aligned with international, EU and national policy and which in turn set the framework for city and county development plans. In relation to County Cavan, the Strategy for the region designates Cavan Town as a Key Town. Key Towns are those regionally strategic employment centres of significant scale that can act as regional drivers that complement and support the higher-order urban areas within the settlement hierarchy (ie. Regional Growth Centres and Galway Metropolitan Area). The RSES notes that Cavan Town performs a regional function, being the largest town within the Cavan/ Monaghan/Leitrim sub-region and the town which experienced the largest growth within the past 10 years.

The Key Towns are to have a targeted growth rate of at least 30% to 2040, relative to a Census 2016 population baseline. The Strategy further states that these targets need to be matched by the delivery of critical enabling infrastructure and services, thus ensuring that these places grow as successful significant employment centres and service locations not only for the urban areas themselves but, importantly, for their extensive hinterlands that include smaller towns, villages and rural areas.

The population projections contained within the Implementation Roadmap for National Planning Framework, the RSES notes, shall allow balanced growth elsewhere within each county to be determined locally and based upon the varied growth potential of different places,

subject to safeguarding that the growth of the Regional Growth Centres and Key Towns is not compromised.

Moreover, RPO 3.1 outlines the following core objectives centred on developing urban places of regional-scale:

- *Delivering on the population targets for the Metropolitan and Regional Growth Centres through compact growth*
- *Delivering significant compact growth in Key Towns; and*
- *Developing derelict and underutilised sites, with an initial focus within town cores.*

In line with this, RPO3.2 outlines the following objective:

Deliver at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements with a population of at least 1,500 (other than the Galway MASP and the Regional Growth Centres), within the existing builtup footprints

In addition, RPO3.3 states:

Deliver at least 20% of all new housing in rural areas on brownfield sites.

2.4 Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA)

Under Section 94 (1) (a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), each planning authority "shall include in any development plan a strategy for the purpose of ensuring that proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the development plan provides for the housing of the existing and future population of the area in the manner set out in the strategy".

In order to ensure that the plan-making system is supported by a robust methodology to inform policies and funding initiatives around housing and associated land requirements, the NPF First Revision states that a Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) will be developed by each Local Authority to support the preparation of housing strategies



and all related housing policy outputs, e.g. city and county development plans, local area plans, traveller accommodation plans etc.

The purpose of the HNDA tool is to:

- Assist local authorities to develop long-term strategic views of housing need across all tenures.
- Provide a robust evidence base to support decisions about new housing supply, wider investment and housing related services that inform an overall national housing profile
- Inform policies about the proportion of social and affordable housing required, including the need for different types and sizes of provision
- Provide evidence to inform policies related to the provision of specialist housing and housing related services.

In 2010, the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government published a Guidance Note on Core Strategies requiring the Housing Strategy to be informed by the Core Strategy as regards overall population and housing land requirements. The Guidelines (2010) further state that the purpose of the Core Strategy is to articulate a medium to longer term quantitatively based strategy for the spatial development of the area of the planning authority and in so doing to demonstrate that the development plan and its objectives are consistent with national and regional development objectives. The Core Strategy must therefore give effect to the NPF First Revision and RSES hierarchy (as extended at County level) by setting population targets and associated requirements for housing. This must now be undertaken through the HNDA process.

This Core Strategy Chapter sets out the population targets and broad housing requirements for County Cavan for the period 2022-2028. The HNDA process is elaborated and presented in greater detail in the Housing Strategy (see Appendix 1).

2.5 Strategic Aims

The strategic aims which guide the advancement of this Development Plan are set out hereunder.

- I. To guide the future development of County Cavan in line with national and regional objectives set out in the NPF First Revision and RSES and other national guidelines and policies.
- II. To promote and facilitate the development of the County in accordance with the provisions of the Core Strategy, including directing development in line with the settlement hierarchy and promoting development at an appropriate scale that is reflective of the terms of the Core Strategy Table and zoning maps.
- III. To apply the Settlement Hierarchy to determine the scale, rate and location of proposed developments and apply appropriate development management measures to ensure compliance with the Settlement Hierarchy including the population targets for the County.
- IV. To promote the delivery of at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements within their existing built-up footprints.
- V. To promote the delivery at least 20% of all new housing in rural areas on brownfield sites.







2.6 Population Trends and Targets

Census 2016 results show that Ireland's population stood at 4,761,865 in April 2016, an increase of 173,613 (3.8%) since April 2011. The population within the NWRA area amounts to approximately 18% of Ireland's total. This can be considered a relatively low proportion of the overall population considering the geographical size of the region. However, as the RSES notes, this should not be seen as a negative, rather it provides the region with its distinctly rural, and at times remote character which can be advantageous. Indeed, each county in the region has a majority living in rural areas, with Leitrim the highest on 89%. Within County Cavan, this figure stood at 69.5% (the state average was 37%). While this rural nature is common to each of the eight counties within the region, there are also a multitude of differences. For example, the counties of Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan and Cavan all share the border Ireland possesses, something that has its own specific challenges.

Within County Cavan, the county saw a population increase of 4% (+2993 persons) between 2011-2016, as the population increased to 76,176 from 73,183. However, there are significant variances in population trends across the county. In 2011, six towns (including Cavan Town) had an 'urban' population of more than 1,500 people⁴ (with Ballyjamesduff, Bailieborough, Kingscourt, Virginia and Cootehill forming the remaining five). However, between 2011-2016, each of these settlements experienced quite different growth trajectories.

During this period, Cavan Town continued its steady growth to reach a population of 10,914 (a growth rate of 6.9%). Virginia experienced one of the highest rates of population increase in the county between 2011-2016 at 16%. However, Cootehill recorded a population decline of 12%, with a total of 1853 people in 2016 (in comparison to the 2011 figure of 2123). However, it should be noted that the CSO settlement boundary for Cootehill has changed between 2011-2016, which impacts the reporting of this data. The remaining three urban settlements (Ballyjamesduff, Bailieborough, Kingscourt) all recorded growth rates of between 3-7% (see table 3).

In 2016, of the three towns which had populations of between 1000-1,500 people, Belturbet marginally declined by 2.7%; Mullagh grew by a significant 18%; while Ballyconnell grew by 4.1%. The rest of the County experienced varying growth rates. However, towns with populations of between 500-1000 have experienced the largest overall growth between 2011-2016. Ballinagh grew by 22.1% during the same period.

Table 3: Population Growth 2011-2016

Settlement	2011	2016	2011-2016 Growth Rate %
Cavan Town	10,205	10,914	6.9%
Ballyjamesduff	2,568	2661	3.6%
Bailieborough	2,530	2683	6.0%
Kingscourt	2,326	2499	7.4%
Virginia	2,282	2648	16.0%
Cootehill	2,123	1853	-12%
Belturbet	1407	1369	-2.7%
Mullagh	1,137	1348	18.0%
Ballyconnell	1061	1105	4.1%
Ballinagh	766	936	22.1%
Killeshandra	364	388	6.5%
Arva	380	411	8.1%
Kilnaleck	384	393	2.3%
Shercock	384	588	53.1%
Ballyhaise	620	711	14.6%
Lough Gowna	161	149	-7.4%
Blacklion	229	194	-15%
Butlersbridge	282	276	-2%
Swanlinbar	211	207	-1.8%
Rest of the County	43,763	44,843	2.5%
Total for County Cavan	73,183	76,176	4.0%

⁴ The CSO defines a settlement as urban when it has a population of 1,500 or more.

2.6.1 Population Distribution

According to the CSO's parameters, a total of 23,258 people (30.5%) were living in urban settlements in Cavan in 2016. 52,918 (69.5%) were living in smaller towns and villages, as well as in the rural remainder of the county. In 2011, census results showed a distribution between the urban and rural population as 30% and 70% respectively. Thus, the urban/ rural split has remained relatively stable over this period, with a marginal increase in the urban population.

2.6.2 Population Structure

The Census 2016 results show that Ireland's population has been getting steadily older since the 1980s. In 2016, 37.2% of the Irish population were aged 45 and over, compared with 34.4% in 2011 and 27.6% in 1986. As is the case in the rest of Ireland, the NWRA has an ageing population, with the average age of the population standing at 37.9 in 2016.

The average age of Cavan's inhabitants is 36.7 years old, lower than the national average age of 37.4. 13.7% of the county population were over 65 years old in 2016, in contrast to state figure of 13.4%.

23.1% of Cavan's population is aged under 14. In total, the number of children of pre-school age (0-4) is 5,725 (7.5%). 9,678 (12.7%) are of primary school going age (5-12) and a further 6,596 (8.6%) are of secondary school going age (13-18). An extended age of the county is presented in figure 2 below.

2.7 Settlement Hierarchy

In developing a settlement hierarchy for County Cavan, an asset-based approach has been adopted. Such an approach acknowledges that population and employment size are not the sole determinant of a settlement's functional role or of its strategic regional significance. Indeed, this approach identifies and builds on a combination of social, economic and natural assets and potential that is available within towns and smaller settlements in the County. This has been broadly informed by the criteria listed in the Hierarchy of Settlements and related Infrastructure considered by NPF First Revision (see figure 3). These criteria are grouped under eight overarching themes, with criteria graded according to the size of the settlement in question (ie. Smaller settlements and rural areas; Smaller towns and villages; Large towns; and Cities).

Figure 2: Cavan Extended Age Profile (CSO, 2016)

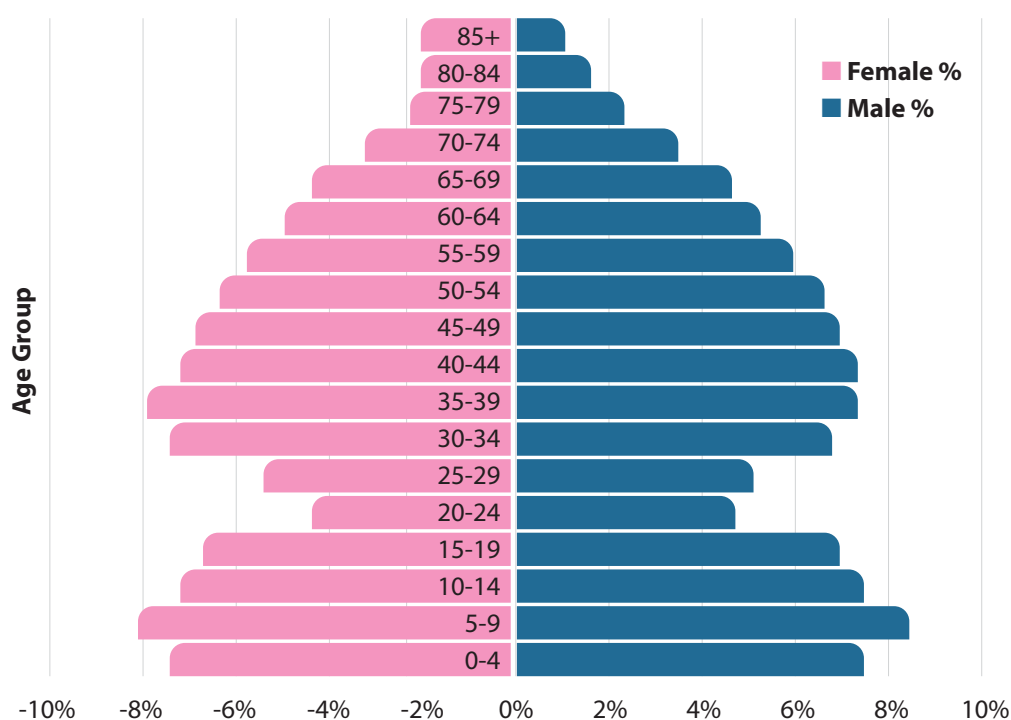
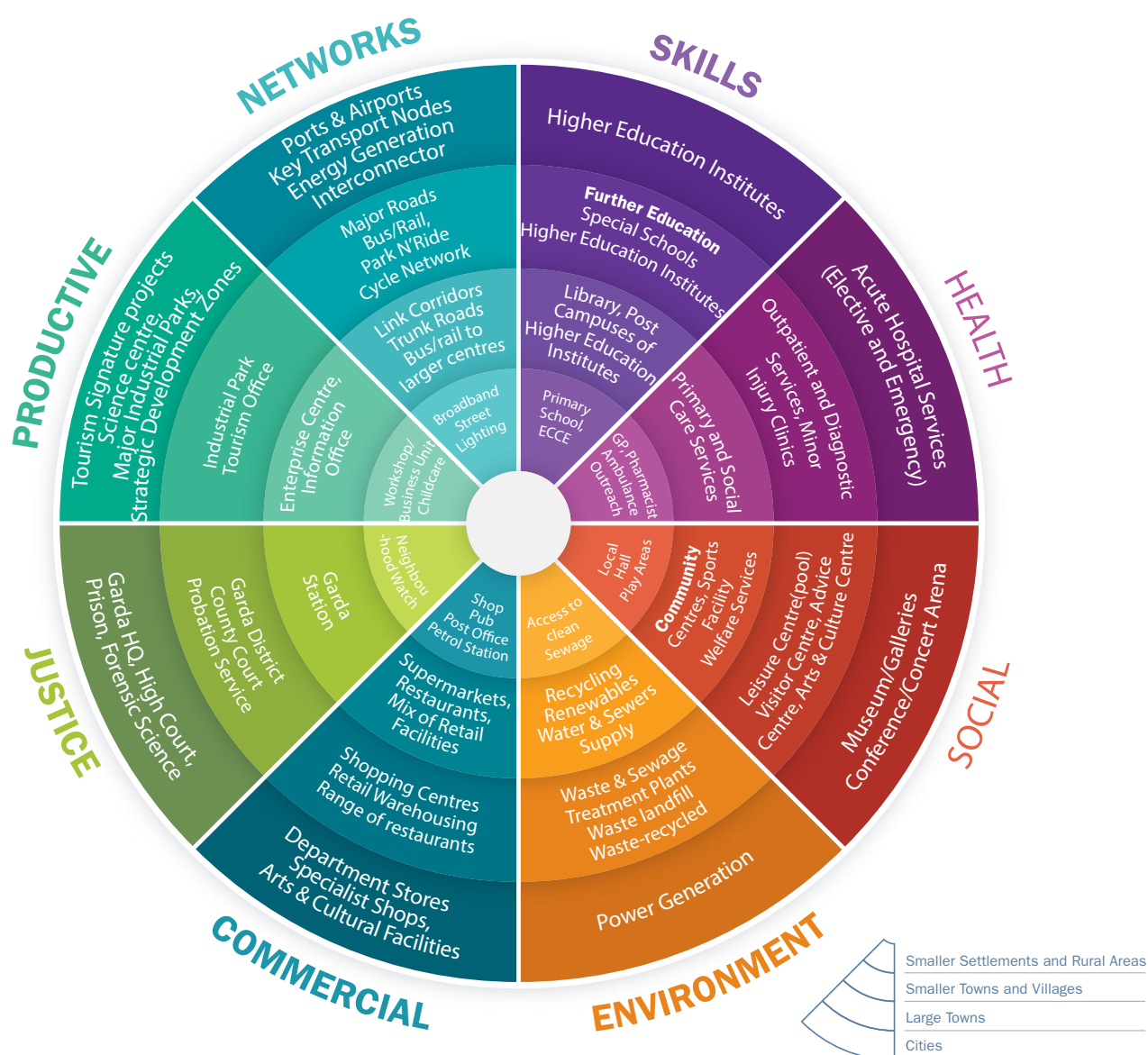




Figure 3: Hierarchy of Settlements and related Infrastructure considered by NPF (Source: NPF; page 83)



Building on the above, the following broad considerations have informed the development of Cavan's settlement hierarchy;

- **Scale:** The scale of population, growth rates and local ambition for sustainable compact growth
- **Function:** The scale of employment provision and commuting flows; Particular sub-regional interdependencies and influence
- **Human Capital:** The extent of local services provision i.e. administration, education-particularly third level, health, retail and amenities; Levels of relative affluence or deprivation
- **Enterprise:** The availability of economic development assets and clusters
- **Placemaking:** This is linked to 'Functionality' in terms of provision of suitable sites and property solutions to meet enterprise and labour force expectations
- **Connectivity:** Transport accessibility and trip profiles, including internal trips
- **Environmental / Natural Capital:** Environmental sensitivities, resources and assets
- **Infrastructure:** Current and planned infrastructure capacity

The specific criteria stemming from these thematic considerations are further elaborated in in table 4.

Table 4: Summary of criteria utilised to develop the settlement hierarchy for Cavan 2022-2028

Criteria	Description	Rationale
SCALE		
Population	Population resident within CSO defined settlement boundary	Settlements with critical mass of population to drive regional development
Growth Rate	% Growth rate between 2011-2016	Growth rate will determine capacity for future growth. Towns that have experienced high growth rates may require additional investment in services, infrastructure and employment
NPF / RSES designation	Settlements designated for growth in the NPF and RSES include Regional Growth Centres and Key Towns	The NPF and RSES identified a number of centres of scale, which have the potential to meet the critical mass to drive regional growth – this includes the Key Town of Cavan.
FUNCTION		
Commuter Trips	Journey times from the settlement to work, school or college	The scale of commuting flows will inform the characterisation of a settlement as commuter focused or as more self-sustainable.
Ratio between workers and jobs (where relevant data is available)	The average ratio of jobs to resident workers in the Northern and Western Regional Assembly area is 1:13.	An analysis of the ratio between workers and jobs at the settlement level reveals the economic importance of a number of Cavan towns for surrounding areas.
Retail Hierarchy	Retail hierarchy based on the Retail Strategy reflected in the Plan.	Consideration must be given to the retail hierarchy included in Cavan Retail Strategy
SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE / PLACE MAKING		
Community Facilities	Sustainable neighbourhoods require a range of community facilities as stated in the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)	The extent of local services provision (such as shops, schools, preschool facilities, community halls or centres; medical centres etc) will determine the attractiveness of a settlement to attract and retain a critical mass of population.
ENTERPRISE		
Economic Assets	Higher Education Centres, Business Incubation and Innovation Centres, Technology Gateways and Research Centres, IDA Business parks or industrial estates, local enterprise office, and Strategic sites	Firms and enterprise development are drawn to urban locations by market forces such as agglomeration, migration and specialisation that depend on factors such as scale, accessibility, innovation supported by higher education institutions and quality of life. Moreover, as the NPF (p. 71) notes, Ireland's natural resources are some of our greatest assets and through the development of the agriculture, food, forestry, tourism and renewable energy sectors, this will not only sustain rural employment, but also contribute to driving the national economy.



Criteria	Description	Rationale
CONNECTIVITY		
Public Transport	Proximity to high quality public transport, both existing and planned.	Access to transport infrastructure influences the location of housing and employment growth, with compact settlements more efficient in terms of maximising returns on transport investment
Mode Share	% Mode share of work and education trips (Origin) by Active Travel (walk, cycle), Public Transport, Car (driver, passenger).	Mode share data indicates the extent of car dependency in a settlement
NATURAL CAPITAL		
Flood Risk (RPS -RFRA)	Flood Risk Summary of key Towns from SEA Environmental Report. Includes Flood Zones, constraints and measures identified in the FRMP along with assessment of climate change and adaption measures	Future development and flood risk assessment will need to consider and address flood risk at settlement level.



2.7.1 Cavan Settlement Hierarchy

Table 5: Cavan Settlement Hierarchy

Category	Description	Settlement	Population (2016)
Key Town	County Town with large economically active services that provide employment for their surrounding areas and with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as growth drivers	Cavan Town	10,914
Self-Sustaining Growth Town*	A sub-county town that has significant employment and service functions relative to its regional and local catchment has good regional transport links and has the capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining. It supports the regional driver role of Cavan, and acts as an important local driver providing a range of functions for its resident population and its surrounding catchment including housing, employment, services, retail and leisure opportunities. The town should grow at a sustainable level appropriate to its position in the settlement hierarchy	Virginia	2648
Self-Sustaining Towns	Self-Sustaining Towns with high levels of population growth but which require targeted 'catch up' investment to become more self-sustaining.	Ballyjamesduff	2661
		Bailieborough	2683
		Kingscourt	2499
		Cootehill	1853
Medium Towns	Towns with a varied employment base and can be reliant on other areas for employment and/or services but which play an important role in supporting the social, economic and cultural life within rural communities.	Belturbet	1369
		Mullagh	1348
		Ballyconnell	1105
Small Towns	Smaller Towns with local service and employment functions.	Ballinagh	936
		Ballyhaise	711
		Shercock	588
		Killeshandra	388
		Arva	411
		Kilnaleck	393
Villages	Villages that serve their local area and have serviced land (lands that are able to connect to existing development services, i.e. road and footpath access including public lighting, foul sewer drainage, surface water drainage and water supply, for which there is service capacity available, and can therefore accommodate new development).	Swanlinbar Butlersbridge Blacklion Lough Gowna Bawnboy, Crossdoney, Crosskeys, Dowra, Kilcogy, Mounnugent, Redhills, Stradone	1137
Rural Community Nodes	Rural Community Nodes: un-serviced rural nodes with limited social and community infrastructure.	Rural Community Nodes	44,532
Rural Remainder	Remaining Rural Areas	Remaining Rural Areas	

*Place of Strategic Potential



2.8 Population Estimates and Projections to meet Regional Population Targets

The NPF Implementation Roadmap states that “As the six-year City and County Development Plans approved in 2020/21 will commence review in 2025/26, this will require demographic data for the period beyond 2026 and the next iteration of RSESs will address the period to at least 2031”. As such, the critical population projection periods are to 2026 and 2031, with a particular emphasis on the initial six-year period to 2028 for this Development Plan. The Roadmap provides transitional population projections for these milestones at a regional and county scale, in order to inform Development Plans for the period 2026 and 2031.

These transitional population projections plot a growth trajectory set approximately mid-way between what is currently being planned for in statutory Development Plans if projected forward to 2031, and the more likely evidence based and nationally coherent projected scenario to 2031 and 2040. These ‘adjusted’ transitional figures will apply to 2026 and will also inform the period to

2031. By 2031 the NPF states that the population of Cavan is to be in the range of 86,000-88,000. At the higher projected growth rate, this means that the population of the county will grow by approximately 12,000 people from its 2016 base (or approximately 10,000 people at the lower rate). By 2026, it is envisaged that the population of Cavan will grow by 8,500 people at the higher projected rate to reach 84,500 (or 7,000 people at the lower rate).

In addition, the RSES for the Northern and Western region envisages that population of Key Towns will grow by 30% to 2040 (from their 2016 base). In the context of Cavan Town, this relates to a minimum increase of 4,366 people, with the town thus reaching a total population of 15,280 by 2040.

In addition, the RSES for the Northern and Western region envisages that population of Key Towns will grow by at least 30% to 2040 (from their 2016 base). In the context of Cavan Town, this relates to a minimum increase of 3,274 people, with the town thus reaching a total population of approx. 14,190 by 2040. The NPF First Revision estimates a population growth of the NWRA area by 2030 to be an additional 85,000 persons and by 2040 to be an additional 150,000 persons.

Table 6: NPF / RSES Population Targets to 2026 and 2031. Source: Amended from NPF Implementation Roadmap

	Census 2016	2026 NPF/RSES Target	2031 NPF / RSES Target	2040 NPF/ RSES Target
NWRA Region	847,442	942,500-986,500	961,500-1,014,500	N/A
Mid Border	137,500	150,000-152,500	155,000-159,000	
Cavan (County)	76,000	83,000-84,500	86,000-88,000	
Cavan Town	10,914	N/A	N/A	14,190 (~>30% uplift)

2.8.1 Population Scenarios at Settlement Level

As outlined previously, the NPF and RSES set out population targets for the county as whole and Cavan Town as a Key Town. In seeking to determine a settlement strategy for Cavan which achieves these targets and aligns with the national and regional objectives, a series of demographically projected population scenarios have been developed. In total, six scenarios were developed, with a seventh being the interpolated NPF High for comparison. Each of the scenarios vary by their migration assumption and are elaborated in table 7.

Table 7: Population Scenarios

Category	Description
Scenario #1: Current and Growing	This scenario looked at the impact of a sustained and growing level of high net inward migration. It adapted the CSO's core M1 assumption to grow above 30,000 people per annum, increasing to just over 56,500 nationally by 2031. This figure is in line with historical comparatives for the early 00's from ~40,000 in 2002 to 105,000 in 2007 – and is closely linked with a continuation of buoyant economic circumstances. It presented a robust basis for assuming a continuation of current trends as of February 2020.
Scenario #2: Current and Growing – Covid Adjusted	This scenario assumes a Covid adjustment to Scenario #1 by reducing net inward migration in 2020 by -50% and recovering by 20% in 2021, to realign with CSO M1 and then continue to grow
Scenario #3: Current and Stable	This scenario looked at the impact of a sustained and stable level of net inward migration at 30,000 people per annum, lower than the latest available information indicating 33,700 in 2019. It aligns with the CSO's core M1 in this respect by adjusting growth to a fixed 30,000 per annum throughout the lifetime of the projection. This figure is in line with a stable but continued consideration of buoyant economic circumstances as of February 2020.
Scenario #4: Current and Stable – Covid Adjusted	This scenario assumes a Covid adjustment to Scenario #3 by reducing net inward migration in 2020 by -50% and recovering by 20% in 2021, to realign with CSO M1 and hold fixed for the duration.
Scenario #5: Lower Migration Outlook	This scenario looked at the impact of a sudden drop towards a lower net inward migration assumption of 10,000 people per annum, aligning with the CSO's M3 assumption; cutting net inward migration from 2019's 33,700 by half in 2020 to align with M3 in 2021 – holding fixed thereafter. This assumption represents a sudden but stable drop in migration and reflects a sustained low. However, this is not held to be representative of true growth potential over the period, even considering current Covid impacts.
Scenario #6: Lower Migration Outlook – Dublin Inflow	This scenario also looked at the impact of a sudden drop towards a lower net inward migration assumption of 10,000 people per annum (fixed), aligning with the CSO's M3 assumption. However, it also looked at a reversal of Dublin's net outward flow of migrants, to the effect of aligning with the CSO's +2,100 net inward assumption. As this reflects an even more severe base reduction on migration, it is not held to be representative of true growth potential, even considering the current Covid impacts



In assessing the above scenarios, it was determined that Scenario 4 'Current and Stable – Covid Adjusted' reflects Cavan's current development trajectory. This scenario broadly envisages stable growth to 2028 in line with current trends, with adjustments made to consider impacts stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic (but assuming recovery in 2021). However, this scenario projects a county population of 88,409 by 2028. This figure exceeds that set out in the NPF Implementation Roadmap (see Section 2.2), which envisages a county population of 85,500 by 2026 and 88,000 by 2031 (NPF high).

Thus, in seeking to fully align with the NPF Implementation Roadmap, this Core Strategy adopts an NPF high scenario in shaping its settlement strategy to 2028. In doing so, it envisages a county population of 85,900 in 2028. Table 8 provides an overview of this scenario across the plan period for each of the settlement hierarchy and also indicates the share of overall county growth allocated to each settlement.

Table 8: NPF High Scenario

Hierarchy	Settlement	Census (2016)	2022 (allocated)	2028 (allocated)	Share of County Growth % (2022-2028)
Key Town	Cavan Town	10,914	11,794	12,674	18.6%
Self-Sustaining Growth Town*	Virginia	2648	3,079	3,510	9.1%
Self-Sustaining Towns	Ballyjamesduff	2661	3,007	3,353	7.3%
	Bailieborough	2683	3,032	3,380	7.4%
	Kingscourt	2499	2,824	3,148	6.9%
	Cootehill	1853	2,094	2,335	5.1%
Medium Towns	Belturbet	1369	1,574	1,778	4.3%
	Mullagh	1348	1,549	1,751	4.3%
	Ballyconnell	1105	1,270	1,435	3.5%
Small Towns	Ballinagh	936	1,076	1,216	3.0%
	Ballyhaise	711	817	923	2.2%
	Shercock	588	676	764	1.9%
	Killeshandra	388	446	504	1.2%
	Arva	411	472	534	1.3%
	Kilnaleck	393	452	510	1.2%
Villages	Swanlinbar Butlersbridge Blacklion Lough Gowna Bawnboy, Crossdoney, Crosskeys, Dowra, Kilcogy, Mountnugent, Redhills Stradone	Est. 1,137	1,263	1,390	2.7%
Rural Community Nodes & Rural remainder	Remaining Rural Areas	44,532	45,746	46,695	20.1%
County Total		76,176	81,170	85,900	100%

*Place of Strategic Potential

2.9 Overview of the Settlement Hierarchy

2.9.1 Key Town – Cavan

As the RSES highlights, Cavan Town performs a regional function, being the largest town within the Cavan/ Monaghan/Leitrim sub-region. Moreover, it is the town which experienced the largest growth within the past 10 years. Over the course of the last Census period (2011-2016), the town grew by 6.9%, reaching a population of 10,914.

The town is of strategic importance within the Border Region, located in close proximity with County Fermanagh. It has excellent transport linkages nationally, regionally and locally. The town is on the main N3 road that links Dublin with Enniskillen, Ballyshannon and Donegal Town. As the County Town, it has strategic facilities such as an acute hospital, the Local Authority Headquarters, the Department of Agriculture, Cathedrals and Sports Stadium. The town also has a third level college, Cavan Institute, which is the largest provider of FETAC courses in the northeast region.

Appendix 2 of the NPF First Revision identifies population and jobs in all urban settlements in Ireland as defined by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), using data from the Census of Population 2022. Cavan Town has a very strong Jobs to Resident Workers ratio of 1.22. The town is also the location of the Cavan Business and Technology Park and the newly established Cavan Digital Hub.

Key Towns including Cavan Town are targeted to have a 30% population uplift in the RSES. In achieving this, the Council is committed to the delivery of sustainable, compact, sequential growth in Cavan Town by consolidating the built-up footprint. This will necessitate a focus on the development of town centre infill and brownfield sites, and encouraging regeneration of underutilised, vacant and derelict lands for residential and mixed-use development. In addition, the development of key opportunity sites such as the Abbeylands Cultural Quarter must be prioritised in the first instance. This site has received URDF funding of €14.49 million under the urban regeneration and development fund in 2021.





Key Town, Cavan Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**KTC
01**

Support the continued growth and sustainable development of Cavan Town to act as a growth driver in the region and to fulfil its role as a Key Town, focused on employment, retail, quality of life and economic investment.

**KTC
02**

Promote Cavan Town as an attractive investment location for the County, utilising Cavan County Economic Forum and building upon the towns proven track record as an excellent investment location, which is aided by the IDA business park in the town

**KTC
03**

Support the delivery of additional economic development lands to overcome significant recognised deficit that exists in the town.

**KTC
04**

Require sustainable, compact, sequential growth in Cavan Town by consolidating the built-up footprint through a focus on regeneration and development of town centre infill and brownfield sites, and encouraging regeneration of underutilised, vacant and derelict lands for residential development and mixed use to facilitate population growth.

**KTC
05**

Commence the preparation of a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Cavan Town in conjunction with the National Transport Authority (NTA) and other relevant stakeholders within one year of the adoption of the County Development Plan.

2.9.2 Self-Sustaining Growth Town – Virginia (Place of Strategic Potential)

Virginia is located in the east of County Cavan close to the border with County Meath. Over the last Census period, the town grew by a substantial 16%, reaching a population of 2,648 in 2016. Virginia is strategically located on the N3 giving it easy access by private car and public transport to Dublin City and towns such as Navan and Kells. The N3 along with the regional roads the R194, R195 and R178 makes the town one of the most accessible in the county providing direct linkages to Cavan Town, Ballyjamesduff, Mullagh and Bailieborough. Over the past 20 years Virginia has grown from a village, with a population of just 811 in 1996, into one of County Cavan's larger towns in 2016.

The RSES identifies Virginia as a "Place of Strategic Potential" of a regional scale. Specifically, referring to:

Virginia performing important sub-regional functions for employment, housing and services... being the hub for east Cavan.... being the main economic driver for wider highly populated catchments, where commuting out of the county is an issue that needs to be addressed by providing employment and support services,... being strongly positioned to attract businesses, that need access to the Belfast/Dublin corridor, available talent, quality of life and housing (RSES; p 139)

Virginia currently has a jobs to resident workers ratio of 0.66. The town has a good mix of professional, business, retail and other services within the town that provide employment. Indeed, the RSES states that the Agri-Food sector is vital to the Northern and Western region and particularly to Counties Monaghan and Cavan. It further acknowledges the importance of the agri-food cluster of Glanbia and AW Ennis feeds in Virginia. The town also boasts the Ramor Theatre and an abundance of natural assets which attract visitors.



Virginia Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**GT
01**

Promote sustainable growth and consolidation in Virginia coupled with targeted investment where required to improve local employment, services and sustainable transport options and to become more self-sustaining.

2.9.3 Self Sustaining Towns

Four settlements are designated as 'Self Sustaining Towns' – Ballyjamesduff, Bailieborough, Kingscourt and Cootehill. These are towns with high levels of population growth, but which require consolidation and targeted 'catch up' investment to become more self-sustaining.

The population of Ballyjamesduff was 2661 in 2016, growing 3% from its 2011 baseline. The town has a Jobs to Resident Workers ratio of 0.49, one of the lower rates of the county towns. The main employers in the town include Gleneagle Woodcrafts, Liffey Meats and Cavan Box. Community infrastructure includes Ballyjamesduff Health Centre, tennis courts, the GAA pitch, Soccer Pitch, and numerous sports and social clubs and groups in the town. The town has a crèche, a primary and secondary school and a VEC. The Cavan County Museum in the town traces the history of the county from earliest times to the present day. It is an important resource for the county and as a tourist attraction

Bailieborough grew by 6% between 2011 and 2016, reaching a population of 2,683. The town has a Jobs to Resident Workers ratio of 0.70, with a number of employment providers including Lakeland Dairies and Terra Limited. The RSES acknowledges the role of the agri-food sector within the town, which should be further promoted and enhanced. The Bailieborough Business Centre at Barrack Street further aids in the creation of local enterprise in the area. The town has both primary and secondary schools as well as a number of crèche and childcare providers

Kingscourt recorded a population of 2,499 in 2016 and has a Jobs to Resident Workers ratio of 0.65. The town has a number of large and smaller employment providers including Kingspan, O'Reilly's Concrete, Gypsum Industries, Paramount Roller Doors, as well as, other services provided within the Town core area. The RSES highlights the following in relation to the town "The Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor and the Regional Growth Centres of Drogheda and Dundalk have a significant reach into the Central Border Counties, including into South Monaghan, and East Cavan, particularly influencing towns such as Carrickmacross, and Kingscourt within the NWR area". Thus, the town has potential to further build on its employment base. Cavan County Council secured €787,500 under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) for the Kingscourt Town Centre Regeneration project in 2020.

Cootehill has a Jobs to Resident Workers ratio of 0.78, one of the stronger rates in the county towns. There are a number of large and small employment providers within the town core. The retail and service function is strong with a good mix of comparison and convenience retailing and a number of professional and other services

well represented in the town. Cootehill has three primary schools, St. Michael's National School, the Darley National and the Holy Family School which provides primary schooling for children on the autistic spectrum and with moderate general learning disabilities. The town also has a secondary school and a number of crèches/playschools.



Self Sustaining Towns Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**SST
01**

Promote commensurate population and employment growth in the designated Self-Sustaining towns, providing for natural increases and to become more economically self-sustaining, in line with the quality and capacity of public transport, services and infrastructure available.

2.9.4 Medium Towns

Medium towns are towns with a varied employment base that can be reliant on other areas for employment and/or services but which play an important role in supporting the social, economic and cultural life within rural communities. Belturbet, Mullagh and Ballyconnell are designated as 'Medium Towns' within the settlement hierarchy.

Belturbet is located to the north west of Cavan Town near the border with County Fermanagh and sits overlooking the River Erne. The town's population declined slightly (-2.9%) between 2011 and 2016. Belturbet Business Park is home to a number of smaller scale businesses. Belturbet has a Jobs to Resident Workers ratio of 0.48. The town has a number of social and community facilities including the Belturbet GAA Grounds, Belturbet Health Centre, Morrissey Park and Turbot Island, the Riverside Park, a playground, and significant riverside amenity areas. There are three primary and one secondary school in the town and a playschool which caters for afterschool services.

Mullagh is located in the south east of County Cavan, near to the border with County Meath. In contrast to Belturbet, the town grew by a significant 18% between 2011-2016. Mullagh has a Jobs to Resident Workers ratio of 0.59. Local employment opportunities within the town comprise mainly of Wellman's International, retail and services provided within the Town Core and agriculture. There are a number of community,



social and leisure facilities in the town which act as local attractions and amenities for inhabitants. These include, Mullagh Health Centre, Saint Killian's Heritage Centre, the Edwin Carolan Community Park, The Fair Green and playground. The town has one primary school as well as creches/playschools.



Medium Towns Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**MTD
01**

Promote consolidation coupled with targeted housing and investment in Medium Towns where required to improve local employment, services and sustainable transport options and to become more self-sustaining.

2.9.5 Small Towns

Small towns provide local service and employment functions. Within the settlement hierarchy, these include Ballinagh, Ballyhaise, Shercock, Killeshandra, Arvagh and Kilnaleck. These smaller towns range in population size from 393 (in the case of Kilnaleck) to 936 (in the case of Ballinagh). Support for housing and population growth within rural towns and villages in County Cavan will help to act as a viable alternative to rural one-off housing, contributing to the principle of compact growth. The availability of serviced sites, in tandem with schemes such as the Irish Water Scheme for Small Towns and Villages, will help to enable this.



Small Towns Development Objectives It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**STD
01**

Promote consolidation coupled with targeted rural housing and investment policies in Small Towns where required to improve local employment, services and sustainable transport options and to become more self-sustaining.

To ensure that 20% of lands zoned 'whitelands' for which permission for the development of houses is granted, be reserved for social and affordable housing in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and national guidance and regulations.



2.9.6 Village

The 'Villages' tier encompasses rural areas with serviced land (lands that are able to connect to existing development services, i.e. road and footpath access including public lighting, foul sewer drainage, surface water drainage and water supply, for which there is service capacity available, and can therefore accommodate new development) but have more limited community facilities and services. Swanlinbar, Butlersbridge, Blacklion, Lough Gowna, Bawnboy, Crossdoney, Crosskeys, Dowra, Kilcogy, Mountnugent, Redhills and Stradone are designated as 'Villages' in the Settlement Hierarchy.



Villages Development Objectives
It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**VC
01**

Promote Serviced Villages as an attractive housing option for rural areas of the county through the promotion of quality of life, placemaking, and sufficient local service and infrastructure provision.

**VC
02**

To ensure that 20% of lands zoned 'whitelands' for which permission for the development of houses is granted, be reserved for social and affordable housing in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and national guidance and regulations.

2.9.7 Rural Community Nodes and Rural Remainder

Rural Cavan is home to a diverse range of land uses including agriculture, local food production, recreational and tourist activities, established

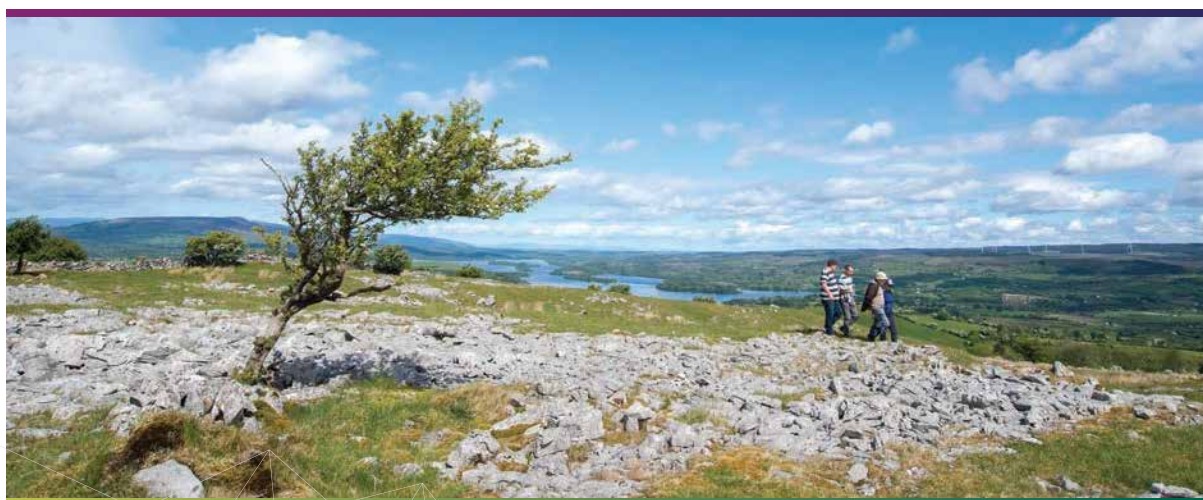
villages and rural housing. It is a goal of this plan to respect the long tradition of people living in rural areas in County Cavan and promote sustainable rural settlements as a key component in achieving strong and vibrant rural communities. Within the settlement hierarchy, 'Rural Nodes' and 'Rural Remainder' are identified and can be described as follows:

Rural Community Nodes

Rural housing needs of those members of the rural community who are not part of the agricultural/horticultural community will be facilitated in the extensive network of rural smaller community nodes. These are largely un-serviced rural areas with limited social and community infrastructure. These are designated for limited development at a sustainable scale for immediate local need through development of clusters. It is anticipated that each smaller community area can cater for a small population increase from their current population base over the period of the plan. Examples of these smaller community areas include Ballymagovern, Ballymahugh, Bunnoe, Canningstown, Cloverhill, Corlough, Cross, Drung, Finnea, Glangevlin, Killinkere, Killydoon, Larah, Lavey, Maghera, Maudabawn, Milltown, Mountainlodge, Munterconnaught, Tierworker and Tullyvin.

Rural Remainder

In support of the overall pattern of rural and small town development in Ireland, the NPF seeks to protect areas that are under strong urban influence from unsustainable over-development on the one hand, and to encourage population to be sustained in more structurally weak areas, that have experienced low growth or decline in recent decades, on the other, while sustaining vibrant rural communities. However, the NPF, through National Policy Objective 28 requires a clear distinction to be made between areas under





urban influence and elsewhere in providing for the development of rural housing.

National Policy Objective 28:

Ensure, in providing for the development of rural housing, that a distinction is made between areas under urban influence, i.e. within the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment, and elsewhere:

- *In rural areas under urban influence, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area and siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements;*
- *In rural areas elsewhere, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.*

In accordance with the NPF First Revision and the 'Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines', it is necessary to identify rural area types within the county that require tailored settlement policies in the development plan. These are:

1. Areas under Strong Urban Influence
2. Stronger Rural Areas
3. Structurally Weak Areas

Cavan County Council is sensitive to the needs of the rural community and recognises the need to facilitate housing development for people who are an intrinsic part of a rural community. The HNDA, as set out in Appendix 1, accounts for the potential demand for single rural dwellings over the lifetime of this Development Plan. In establishing rural area typologies for County Cavan, analysis was undertaken at Electoral Division (ED) level and incorporated a combination of socio-economic indicators and an assessment of demand for one-off housing across the county as well as considerations around proximity to the commuting catchment of large cities and towns. Specifically, the following core areas were examined:

- Population change between 1996-2016

- This is deemed a core consideration in the determination of rural typology areas according to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines (2005)

- Projected population change between 2016-2026⁵

- This analysis was undertaken to determine if population trends over the past two decades are likely to continue to 2026

- Economic Structure of the County

- The relative strength of the economic structure of the county's ED's was established through three core strands of analysis: CSO Annual Estimates of Income; the Pobal Deprivation Index⁶ (ED analysis for 2011 and 2016); and area designations under the CLAR Programme

- Housing Demand

- Planning applications for one-off housing between 2014-2019 were assessed and mapped to determine which areas were under greater demand for development and those which were experiencing little or no demand.

The spatial extent of the three rural typology areas are shown in the Core Strategy Map (see Figure 6). Chapter 12 Rural Strategy contains further detail around rural housing objectives.



Rural Development Objectives It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

RA
01

Support the servicing of rural villages (serviced sites) to provide an alternative to one-off housing in rural Cavan

RA
02

Support rural community nodes in offering attractive housing options to meet the needs of the established rural communities and to support existing local community facilities such as schools, post offices, recreational facilities, shops and community facilities like childcare.

RA
03

Implement the development objectives relating to the three specified rural area types of Co. Cavan as outlined in Chapter 12 Rural Strategy.

⁵ Population projection analysis was undertaken to 2026 utilising the "Demographic Component Method" that integrates the dynamic components of population change namely, mortality, fertility and migration, and enables age cohort analysis

⁶ The index provides a method of measuring the relative affluence or disadvantage of a particular geographical area using data compiled from various censuses.

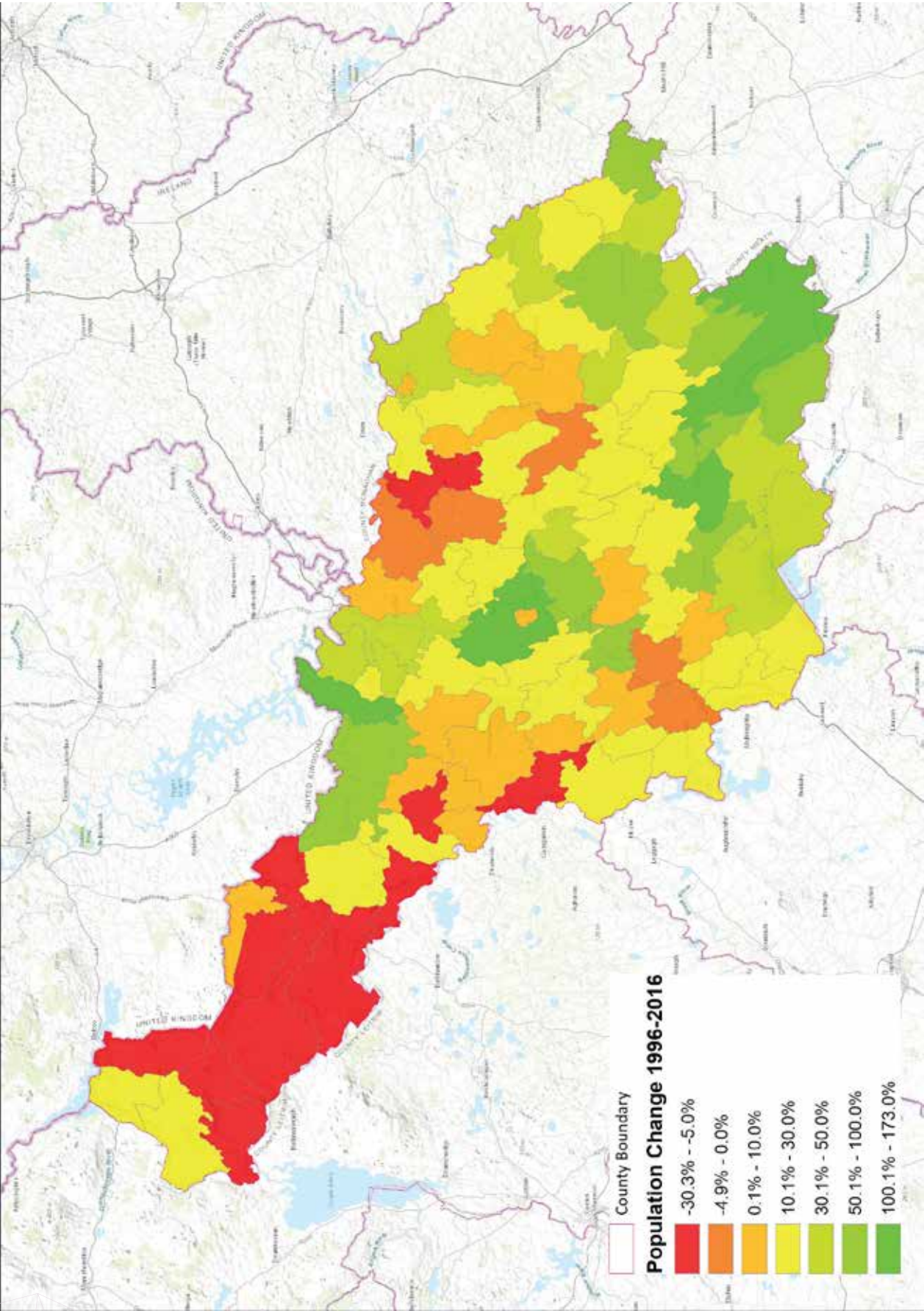


Figure 4: Population Change in Cavan 1996-2016

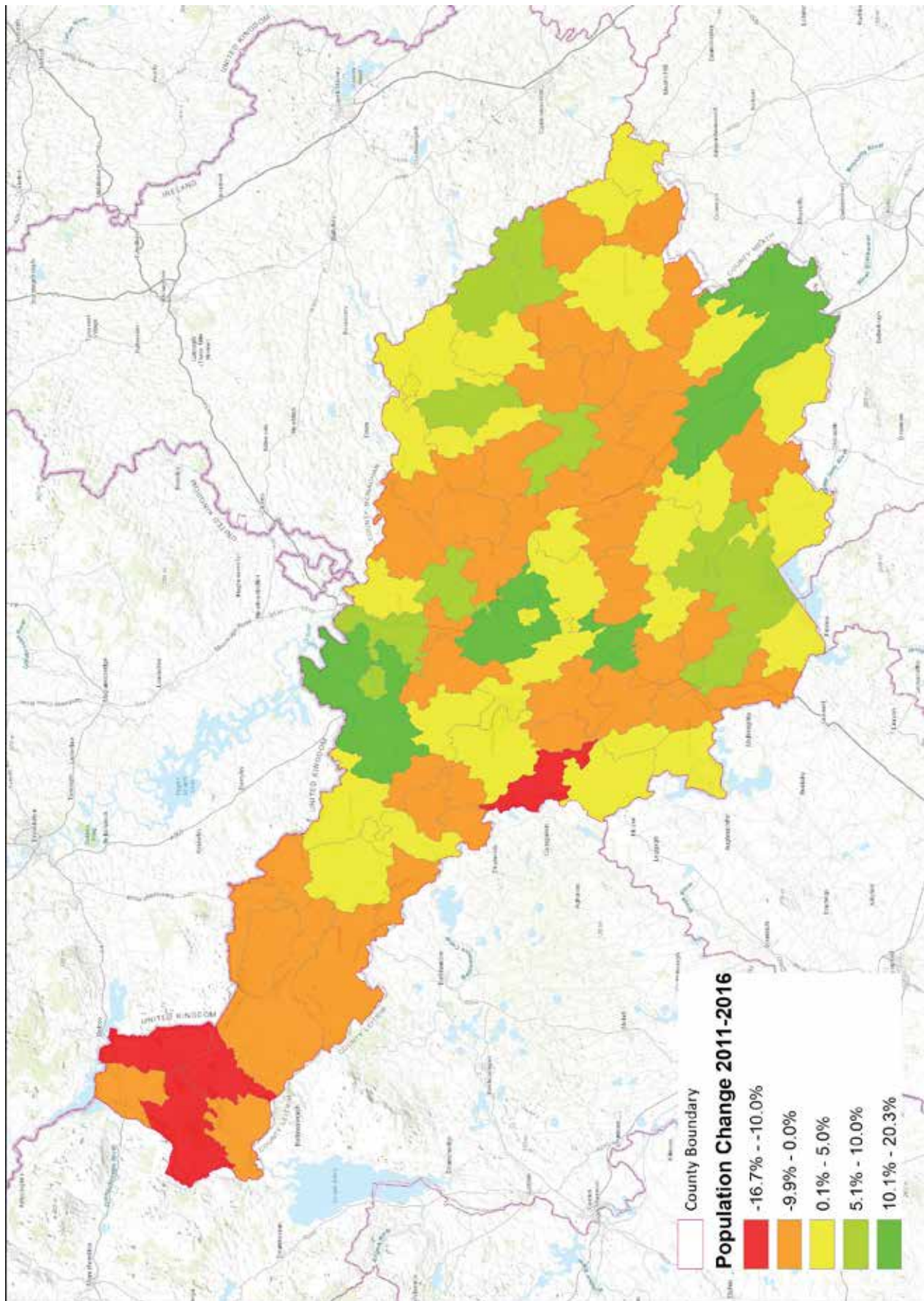


Figure 5: Population Change in Cavan 2011-2016

2.10 Housing Stock and Capacity

Census 2016 results record a total housing stock of 33,585 units in County Cavan, which represents a marginal decrease of 126 units on 2011 levels. The number of vacant units in 2016 stood at 4,829 (excluding holiday homes and those dwellings deemed to be temporarily absent). The 2011 Census data does not distinguish between categories of vacancy and indicates that there were 7,867 unoccupied dwellings in 2011. In contrast, the 2016 data illustrates the number of temporarily absent dwellings, unoccupied holiday homes and other vacant dwellings. For comparison purposes, the total number of vacant dwellings across these three categories in 2016 is 6,660. As such, there is an overall decline in the number of vacant dwellings of 1,207 between 2011-2016. This indicates the existing vacant stock absorbing much of the growing need for housing in the county. A summary of the information on the existing housing stock is provided in Table 9.

Home ownership remains the dominant tenure in Cavan with 71.5% of households within this category in 2016 (compared to a State average of 67.6%). 31.7% of households pay a mortgage. 15.6% of households were in the private rental market; an increase of 7% or 278 households since 2011. 8.6% (2302) of households in the county resided in social housing.

2.10.1 Housing Land Requirements

This section sets out key considerations in relation to residential land requirements for this plan period as set out in the NPF and RSES. The NPF notes that the concept of headroom based solely on zoned land provision does not account for housing yield arising from the re-use of existing housing stock, mixed-use development, urban intensification or infill or brownfield development. Indeed, projected population growth must be planned in accordance with NPF First Revision National Policy Objectives 7, 8, 9, which target infill and brownfield development within the existing built footprint of urban settlements, in particular the objective to target at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements other than the five Cities and their suburbs, within their existing builtup footprints.

The average occupancy rate in Cavan in 2016 was 2.80 compared to a state average of 2.75. However, the NPF states that this is expected to decline to around 2.5 by 2040, while also acknowledging that household sizes in urban areas tend to be smaller than in the suburbs or rural parts of the country.

Moreover, the Revised NPF continues with the standardised methodology that addresses the differentiation between zoned land that is available for development and zoned land that requires significant further investment in services for infrastructure for development to be realised. In this regard, lands have only been identified for development where they are able

Table 9: Occupancy Status

County	Housing stock	Unoccupied Holiday homes	Temporarily Absent	Vacancy	% Vacancy ⁷
County Cavan	33,585	1046	785	4829	14.3%

Table 10: Tenure

	Households	Persons	Households %	Persons %
Social Housing	2302	5822	8.6%	7.7%
Rented (Privately)	4171	11625	15.6%	15.5%
Owner Occupied (All)	19164	55162	71.5%	73.4%

⁷ The percentage vacancy rate provided is based on 'Other Vacancy' category as a percentage of total housing stock and excludes vacant holiday homes and those temporarily absent.



to connect to existing development services, i.e. road and footpath access including public lighting, foul sewer drainage, surface water drainage and water supply, for which there is service capacity available, and can therefore accommodate new development. These lands are also positioned within the existing built-up footprint of established settlements or contiguous to existing developed lands.

2.10.2 Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) and the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF).

One of the key objectives of the NPF relates to the need for compact growth, with development being focused within and close to existing builtup areas. A core element of this approach is the regeneration of infill and brownfield sites. This is in line with the NPF targets of achieving at least 50% of all new homes within or contiguous to the builtup area of Dublin city and suburbs and a target of at least 30% for other urban areas. In this regard, it is a policy of Cavan County Council to promote measures to reduce vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within urban centres.

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

Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF)

The €2 Billion ten-year Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) was launched in 2018

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

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF)

The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund is a commitment of €1 billion by government to be invested in rural Ireland over the period 2019 to 2027. The purpose of the fund is to support job creation in rural areas, address de-population of rural communities and support improvements in our towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000, and outlying areas. Initial funding of €315 million has been allocated to the fund on a phased basis over the period 2019 to 2022. It will be administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development. This Fund provides an opportunity to support the revitalisation of rural Ireland, to make a significant and sustainable impact on rural communities, and to address de-population in small rural towns, villages and rural areas. It will be a key instrument to support the objectives of the NPF and to aid in the implementation of the RSES and the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028.

2.11 Core Strategy Map

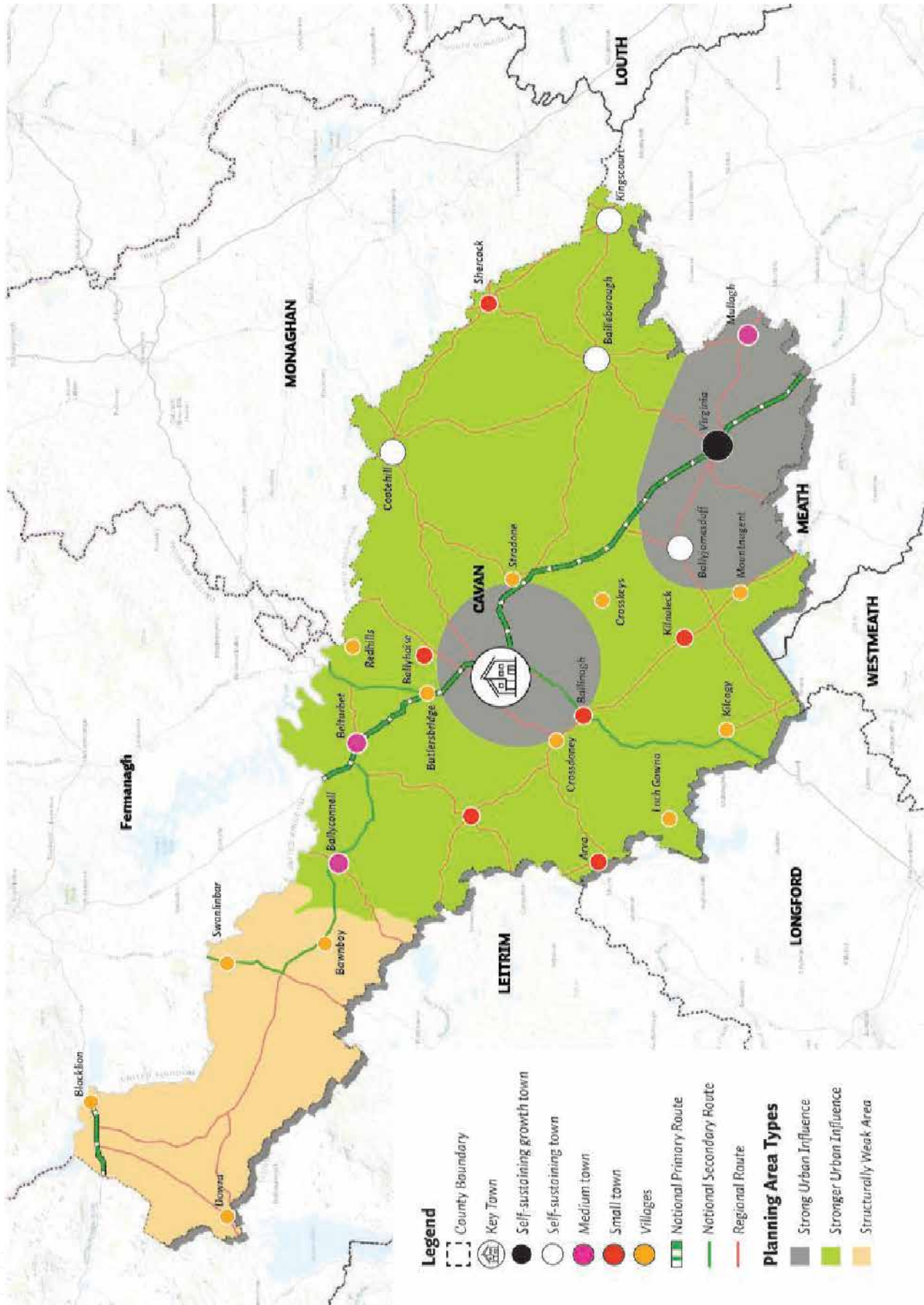


Figure 6: Core Strategy Map



2.12 Core Strategy Table

The Core Strategy Table sets out the target population and households at settlement level for County Cavan over the plan period and the land requirements that will arise. Following the population allocations set out in the Core Strategy Table, zoning maps are provided to reflect these figures and to indicate the quantum and locations of future development for the plan period. It is considered that the lands identified for residential development are sufficient to meet the population targets set out in the Core Strategy Table and reflect each settlement's role in the Settlement Hierarchy. The amount and location of zoned lands required in each settlement was determined using an evidence-based settlement typology and asset-based approach, as detailed in Section 2.8 of this chapter.

In addition to the factors set out in table 4, consideration was also given to; ground and surface water vulnerability and any potential environmental impact (including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Habitats and Birds Directives (HABD), EU Water Framework Directive, River Basin Management Plans and Flood Risk Management) requirements; availability of services and

infrastructure; potential for economic and social development of the settlement; the sequential test; ground and surface water vulnerability; planning history and market availability/choice.

The amount and location of zoned lands required was also guided by the NPF and RSES requirements to promote consolidation of existing settlements and promote more compact forms of growth. The achievement of this, the NPF notes, has the potential to make a transformational difference. It can bring new life and footfall to existing settlements, contribute to the viability of services, shops and public transport, increase housing supply and enable more people to be closer to employment and recreational opportunities, as well as supporting a more sustainable transport mode shift.

In some instances, there may be very slight variations in terms of zoning provided as a result of the physical characteristics of sites on the ground, however in line with the NPF and RSES the release of lands will be prioritised in a sequential manner and monitoring will be employed to promote development patterns in line with the Core Strategy.



Table 11: Core Strategy Table

Settlements	Pop 2016	Pop 2022	Pop 2028	Pop 2031	Population Change 2016-2028	Combined lands zoned for low density and proposed residential 2022-2028 (Ha)	Low Density (Ha)	Lands for proposed residential up to 2028 (Ha)	Low Density Yield ⁸	Proposed Residential Yield	Total Yield Low Density & Proposed Residential	Housing Supply Target ⁹	Town Core, Mixed Use and Brownfield/ Mixed Use and Brownfield/ infill Sites & existing residential Yield	Surplus or Deficit of Proposed Residential Land (Ha)
Cavan Town	10,914	11,794	12,674	13,053	1,760	54.95*	5.06	47.15	40	943	983	829	137	+14.55*
Virginia	2,648	3,079	3,510	3,726	862	15.23	3.51	11.72	28	211	239	364	148	+1.2
Ballyjamesduff	2,661	3,007	3,353	3,525	692	14.16	1.38	12.84	11	205	216	292	75	0
Bailieborough	2,683	3,032	3,380	3,555	697	14.63	2.13	12.52	17	200	217	295	78	0
Kingscourt	2,499	2,824	3,148	3,311	649	16.30	3.4	13.06	27	209	236	274	57	+1.18
Cootehill	1,853	2,094	2,335	2,455	482	9.8	1.4	8.36	11	134	145	203	68	+0.62
Belturbet	1,369	1,574	1,778	1,867	409	7.8	1.61	6.19	13	87	100	173	49	-1.7
Mullagh	1,348	1,549	1,751	1,838	403	9.44	2.65	6.17	21	86	107	170	57	+0.42
Ballyconnell	1,105	1,270	1,435	1,507	330	9.03	1.33	7.65	11	107	118	140	22	0
Ballinagh														
Ballyhaise														
Shercock	Total:	Total:			Total:	Whitelands	Whitelands	Whitelands	Whitelands	Whitelands	Whitelands	Total:	Whitelands	
Killeshandra	3,939	3,939			3,939							433		
Arvagh														
Kilnaleck														
Swanlinbar														
Butlersbridge														
Blacklion														
Lough Gowna														
Bawnboy,														
Crossdoney	Total:	Total:	Total:	Total:	Total:	Total:	Whitelands	Whitelands	Whitelands	Whitelands	Whitelands	Total:		
Kilcogy	1,137	1,263	1,390	1,453	253	1,390						174		
Crosskeys														
Mountnugent														
Redhills														
Stradone														
Rural Cavan	44,532	45,746	46,695	46,966	2,163	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	650	N/A	

8 Density of 8 units per ha

9 As derived from Table 2.

*Refer to Section 2.14 below 'Provision of Additional Lands'

**Table 12: Core Strategy Footnote on Consolidation Sites**

Town	Consolidation Sites in Hectares	Yield from Consolidation Sites (zoned as Proposed Residential)
Cavan Town	13.07	261
Virginia	3.11	56
Ballyjamesduff	5.01	80
Bailieborough	3.91	63
Cootehill	3.58	57
Kingscourt	3.01	48
Ballyconnell	4.57	64
Belturbet	1.04	15
Mullagh	2.75	39

2.13 NPF Implementation Housing Growth Requirements, July 2025

In accordance with Section 2.3 of the Implementation of Housing Growth Requirements has noted the provision in the Development Plan Guidelines for an additional 25% headroom for housing targets in local authorities. This recognises that a degree of choice in development sites to be provided locally is desirable to avoid restricting the supply of new housing development through inactivity on a particular landholding or site.

For the purposes of the NPF implementation Guidelines, planning authorities are sought to

address the scope for additional provision of up to 50% in excess of the baseline housing growth requirement set out in Appendix 1, in light of the urgent need to increase housing delivery and to optimise the ability to deliver on the housing requirements of the Revised NPF. This additionality as per the changes to land use zoning maps comprises of amendment to 9 towns in the County. Additionality arising from Small Towns, Villages, Rural Community Nodes and Rural Remainders are allocated to the 9 towns as per Table 9A below. The additional land for Proposed Residential zoning arises from changes from Proposed Low Density Residential, Residential Strategic Reserve, Mixed Use and some lands currently unzoned.

Table 12A: Additional Provision in excess of Baseline Housing Growth Requirement (NPF Implementation Housing Growth Requirements, July 2025)

Settlements	Proposed Low Density Ha (revised total)	Output as per development plan density of revised totals of low-density zoning	Additional Lands for Proposed Residential (Ha)	Density Range *	Housing Output of Proposed Residential Zoned Land (additional lands subject to Variation) *	Mixed Use zoning Ha (revised total)
Cavan Town	5.06	40	47.729	30-50	1440-2400	0.48
Virginia	3.51	25	7.217	25-40	180-289	22
Ballyjamesduff	1.38	11	3.281	25-40	80-128	
Bailieborough	2.13	16	9.44	25-40	235-376	
Kingscourt	3.4	27	3.093	25-40	75-120	
Cootehill	0		9.222	25-40	225- 360	
Belturbet	1.083	8	4.576	25-40	113-180	

Settlements	Proposed Low Density Ha (revised total)	Output as per development plan density of revised totals of low-density zoning	Additional Lands for Proposed Residential (Ha)	Density Range *	Housing Output of Proposed Residential Zoned Land (additional lands subject to Variation) *	Mixed Use zoning Ha (revised total)
Mullagh	2.22	18	4.115	25-40	102-164	
Ballyconnell	0.283	2	7.031	25-40	175-280	
	3.606	147	95.7		2625-4297	22.48

*Density and Housing Output provided in this table outlines the density appropriate to the Settlement to comply with the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities. The topography of County Cavan is such that the minimum of this range may not be achievable on certain sites and it is deemed acceptable to deviate from the densities outlined in this table at planning application stage on a case-by-case basis.

2.14 Residential Density

Generally, the number of units to be provided on a site should be determined with reference to the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2024 or any update thereof and the Smarter Travel policy. The concept of 15–20-minute walkable communities will be sought and created, and accordingly appropriate residential densities will be encouraged within walking distance to town centres and public transport infrastructure. Due to the difficult topography of County Cavan, there are many instances where specified densities cannot be achieved.

2.15 Core Strategy Development Objectives

Cavan County Council will pursue the future spatial and economic development of Cavan through a plan-led approach, directing development to locations in the settlement hierarchy in accordance with national and regional policy. This will favour development in places with sufficient carrying capacity, and development which can support investment in public infrastructure and services, and which is sensitive to the character of the built and natural environment. In order to deliver this, the following Core Strategy Policy Objectives will be pursued.



Residential Density Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**RD
01**

Encourage the densities in accordance with the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2024

**RD
02**

In Villages and Community Nodes any development shall take cognisance of the prevailing scale and pattern of development and services availability.

**RD
03**

Ensure densities of proposed developments reflect the key attributes and character of the surrounding/ adjoining area.



Core Strategy Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**CSD
01**

Ensure that the future spatial development of Cavan is in accordance with the Revised National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF) including the population targets set out under the Implementation Roadmap, and the Regional, Spatial and the Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032.

**CSD
02**

Restrict development in areas at risk of flooding in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG/OPW 2009).

**CSD
03**

Facilitate the delivery of sustainable, compact, sequential growth and regeneration of town and village centres by consolidating the built footprint through a focus on regeneration and development.

**CSD
04**

Implement all land use planning policy and objectives in a manner which takes account of and is consistent with the Core Strategy in order to accelerate a transition to a greener, low carbon and climate resilient county with a focus on reduced travel demand through the promotion of sustainable settlement patterns.

**CSD
05**

In the assessment of development proposals, to take account of transport corridors, environmental carrying capacity, availability and/or capacity to provide waste water and water supply services, potential to conflict with Water Framework Directive objectives, potential to impact on the integrity of European sites and Annexed Habitats and species, features of biodiversity value including ecological networks, impact on landscape and visual characteristics, education and other socioeconomic objectives. Development proposals may require screening for Appropriate Assessment and there shall be no net loss in Biodiversity from development proposals in the lifetime of the plan.

**CSD
06**

Promote the integration of land use and transportation policies and to prioritise provision for cycling and walking travel modes and the strengthening of public transport.

**CSD
07**

Promote new homes in rural settlements and villages as an attractive alternative to one-off housing in the open countryside, and to provide for one-off homes in the countryside only where consistent with national policy and the rural area designations of this Core Strategy.

**CSD
08**

Support the regeneration of underused town centre and brownfield / infill lands along with the delivery of existing zoned and serviced lands to facilitate population growth and achieve sustainable compact growth targets of 30% of all new housing to be built within the existing urban footprint of targeted settlements in the county.

**CSD
09**

Promote measures to reduce vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within urban centres and targeted settlements in the county.

**CSD
10**

Incorporate, in the content of the County Development Plan, measures in accordance with section 10 (n) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended) for the promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas including the promotion of measures to— (i) reduce energy demand in response to the likelihood of increases in energy and other costs due to long-term decline in non-renewable resources, (ii) reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, and (iii) address the necessity of adaptation to climate change; in particular, having regard to location, layout and design of new development.

**CSD
11**

Monitor and manage the delivery of Residential development in County Cavan to ensure that it is in line with the Core Strategy. The Planning Authority shall maintain a record of residential developments permitted in individual settlements, as well as residential development permitted as single rural houses in order to ensure compliance with the populations allocated in the Core Strategy Table.

2.16 Monitoring and Evaluation

The NPF Implementation Roadmap states that the transitional level of population growth detailed to 2026 will provide sufficient scope to enable City and County Development Plans to be reviewed,

land zonings to be prioritised and Local Area Plans and planning permissions to be worked through, *'while also allowing for agility and ambition, as well as monitoring and review, as we move towards full implementation of the NPF and NDP'*. In line with this, it is a policy of Cavan County Council to monitor

and review the operation and implementation of this Plan and to adjust as needed to ensure the effectiveness of its alignment with National and Regional policy and objectives. This will also ensure that any new statutory guidelines delivered under National Policy Objective 46 are fully incorporated.

2.17 Summary and Conclusions

This Core Strategy for County Cavan 2022-2028 will guide the development of the county over the plan period. The revised NPF states that new statutory guidelines, supported by wider methodologies and data sources, will be put in place under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act to improve the evidence base, effectiveness and consistency of the planning process for housing provision at regional, metropolitan and local authority levels. Cavan County Council will monitor the development of upcoming guidance and will review the operation and implementation of this Plan accordingly, including adjustments as necessary to ensure the effectiveness of its alignment with National and Regional policy and objectives.

2.18 Climate Change

In accordance with the format set out in Chapter 5 Climate Change of this Plan the following is an assessment of the content of this chapter in a climate context and associated actions.

Careful planning, quality construction, good design and appropriate density remain constant for the successful delivery of our current and future housing needs. Ensuring existing homes are more energy efficient and that new homes produce less emissions (during construction and over their lifetime) will prove equally critical in reducing our

carbon footprint. Irish homes use 7% more energy and emit 58% more CO₂ than EU averages, with 70% continuing to rely on fossil fuels alone.

From 31st December 2020 the European Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) Recast 2010, requires all new buildings to achieve the 'Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB)' standard, which closely translates to an 'A2' Building Energy Rating (BER), and a 'B2' BER for extensions and/or refurbishments greater than 25% of the total surface area, or cost optimal equivalent. Ireland is meeting this requirement through its revised Building Regulations. Improving the fabric of buildings first (i.e. 'Fabric First'), including increased insulation and upgrading to triple glazed, air-tight windows, has been identified as the most successful and cost-efficient means of reducing the carbon emission of Ireland's housing sector.

The Revised National Planning Framework (NPF) has outlined the construction of an additional 50,000 new homes per year. National Policy Objective 69 seeks to reduce our carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system.

Notwithstanding self-sustainable one-off housing, the concept of 'compact growth' as set out in the Revised NPF is seen as the most considered means of achieving NPO43 and NPO9. Compact growth aims to "make better use of under-utilised land and buildings, including 'infill', 'brownfield' and publicly owned sites and vacant and under-occupied buildings, with higher housing and jobs densities". The successful delivery of same minimises car usage and its associated costs (e.g. pollution, congestion, wellbeing, etc) while simultaneously allowing for the provision of more public infrastructure and transport and facilitating more people to walk and cycle.



Climate Change Development Objectives It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**CSCC
01**

Facilitate the delivery of sustainable, compact, sequential growth and regeneration of town and village centres by consolidating the build footprint through a focus on regeneration and development.

**CSCC
02**

Focus on sustainable settlement patterns along public transport corridors, thus minimising the need to travel

**CSCC
03**

Review the Cavan County Council's Development Contribution Scheme and incentivise for incorporation and delivery of climate change measures

**CSCC
04**

Ensure that 20% of new rural housing is developed on brownfield sites in rural areas