

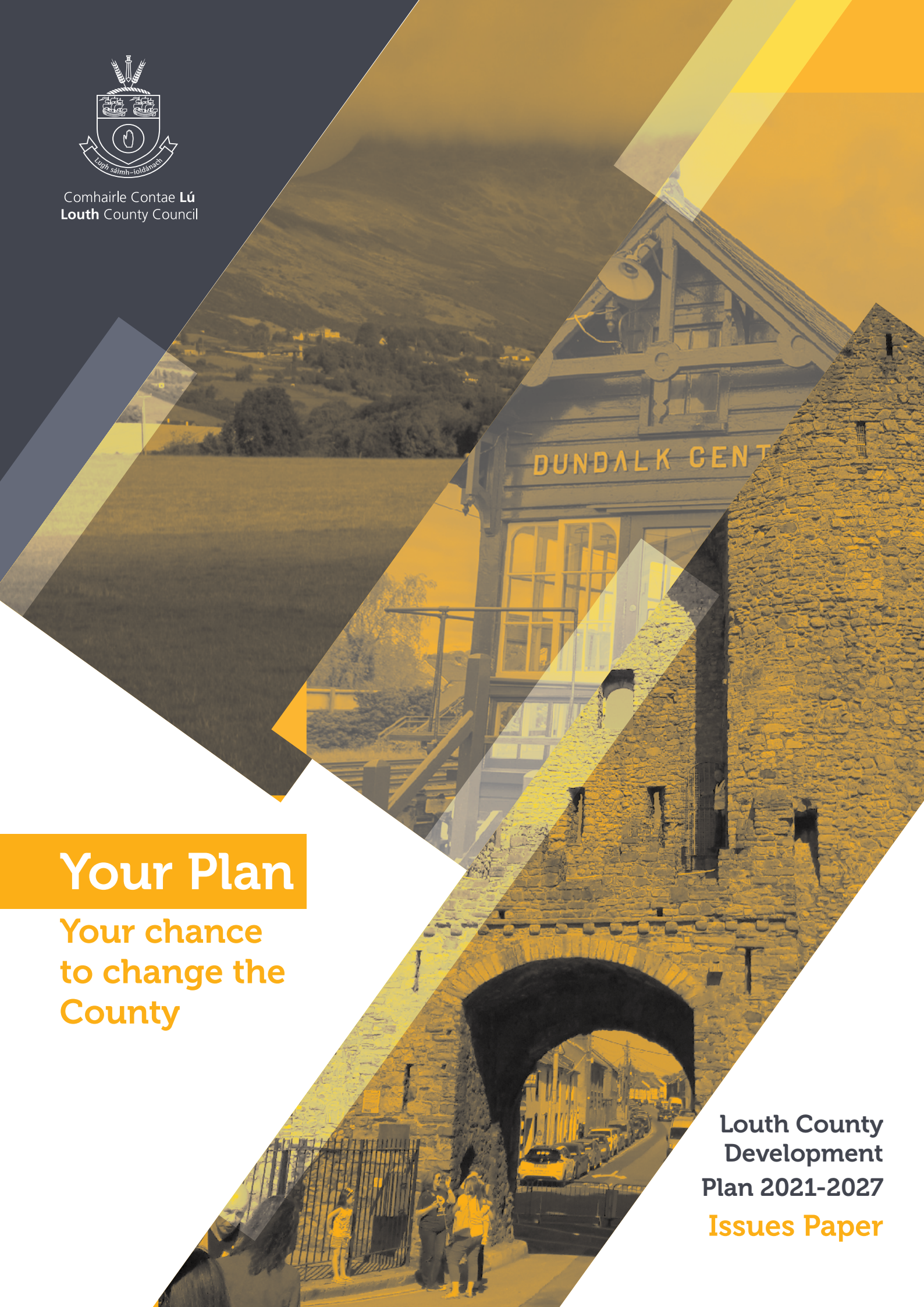


Comhairle Contae **Lú**
Louth County Council

Your Plan

Your chance
to change the
County

Louth County
Development
Plan 2021-2027
Issues Paper



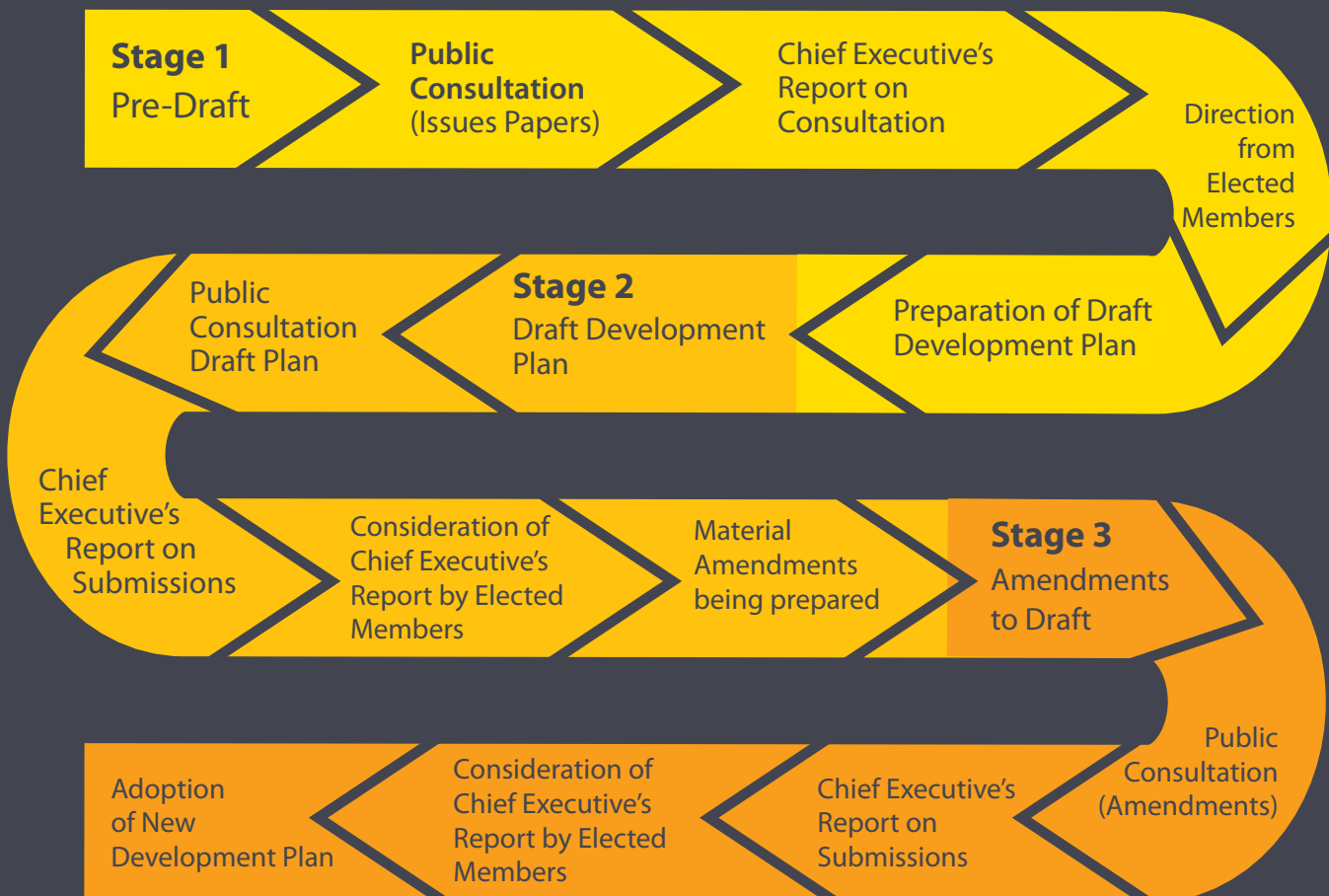
What is a County Development Plan?

The County Development Plan sets out the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County over a six year period, within the context of the national and regional framework of strategies and guidelines. Louth County Council is commencing the process of preparing the

new Development Plan 2021-2027. Every 6 years a Planning Authority is legally obliged to make a new County Development Plan under the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended). This Plan will set out the strategic spatial vision and future direction for the county from 2021 to 2027.

Stages of a Development Plan

There are various stages involved in the preparation of a Development Plan. This current stage is considered to be Stage 1 'Pre-Draft' and includes for the preparation of an Issues Paper. During this and the subsequent stages, as outlined below, the Planning Authority will consult with the public to encourage and facilitate public participation in the preparation of the new Development Plan.



Issues Paper

This Issues Paper is intended to encourage dialogue on the key topics important to the County, as well as promote and support your involvement at this early stage. We want you to actively take part in shaping the future of your County. There will be further chances to participate in the Plan process at a later date, and we encourage you to take every opportunity to play your part – **AFTER ALL, IT’S YOUR PLAN!!**

With **you** active help and guidance the new Louth County Development Plan can create a more attractive, inclusive, competitive and sustainable county.

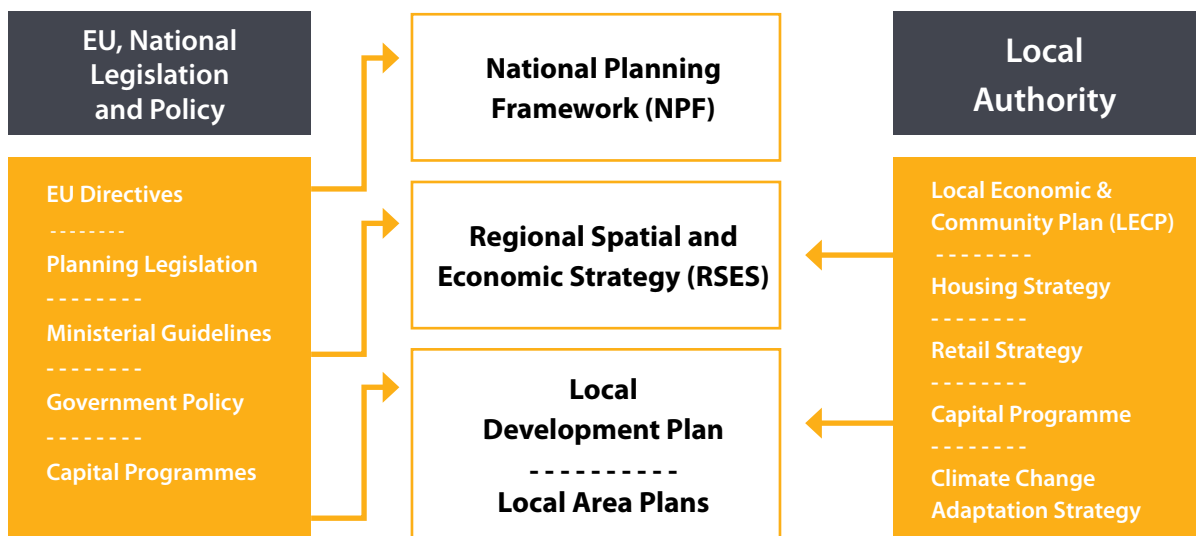
The new Plan should reflect the needs and ambitions of all communities in County Louth, so it is essential that you have your say right from the start. Louth County Council welcomes the views of individuals or groups on the content of the new Development Plan. We really want to know what **you** think are the main issues facing County Louth in the future.

At this stage, we need to hear from you!

Context of the Plan (National & Regional Policy)

The Government recently published Project Ireland 2040 (National Planning Framework & National Development Plan 2018-2027). Since the previous County Development Plan was adopted, Louth has moved from the Border Regional Authority to the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA). The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for this

region came into operation on 28th June 2019, and includes the ‘Regional Growth Centres’ of Dundalk & Drogheda. It is envisaged that these towns, as part of the linear cross-border network, which includes Newry, will act as key drivers of economic growth and development along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, and in the wider region.



The diagram above illustrates the position of the Development Plan in the Irish planning system hierarchy. This Issues Paper is the first step in the preparation of the new Development Plan. The County Development Plan must be consistent with national and regional policies, guidelines and objectives.

The Vision for County Louth

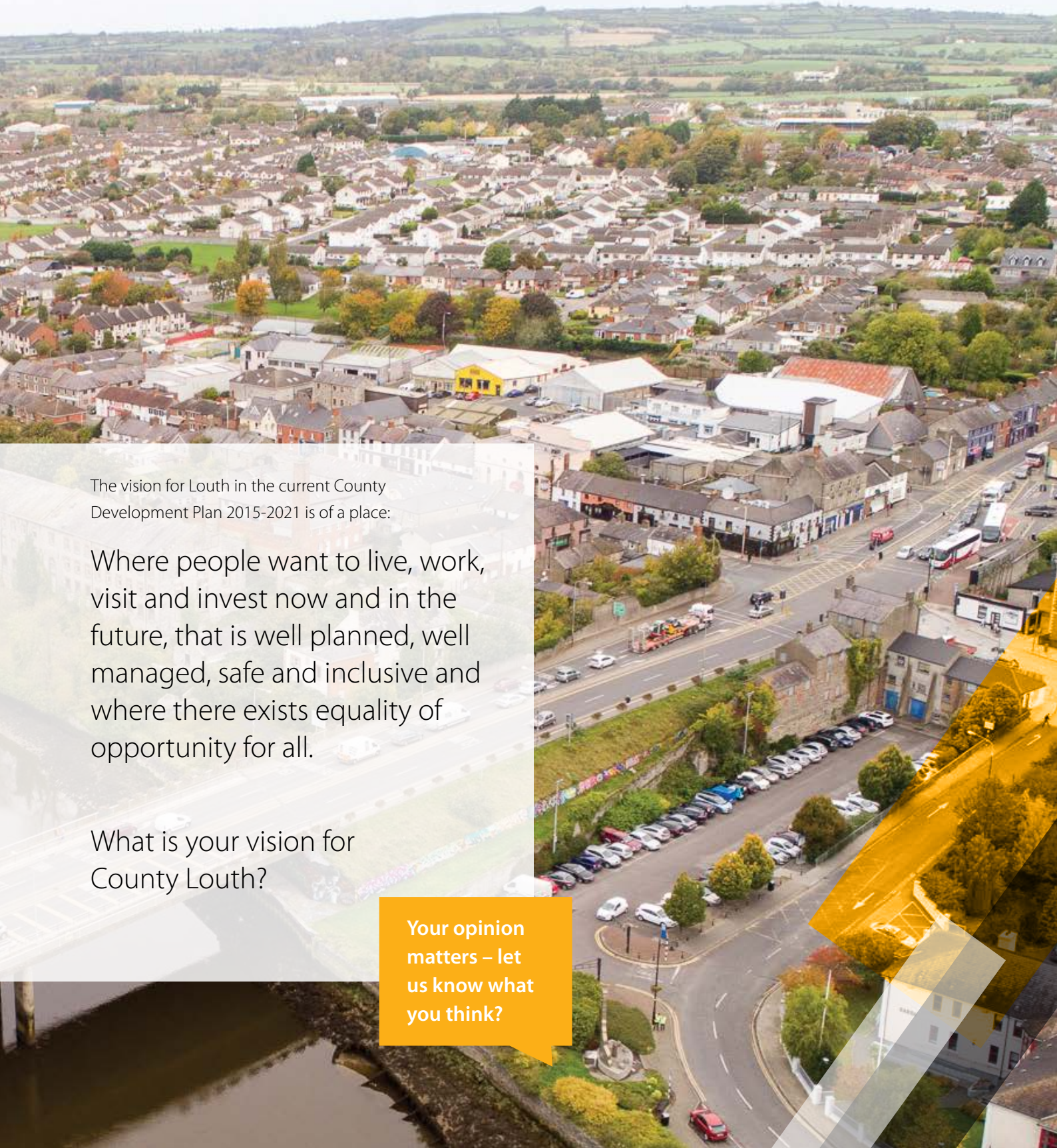
County Louth is one of the most urbanised and densely populated counties outside Dublin for a number of reasons including, but not limited to, the presence of two of the largest towns in the country (Drogheda & Dundalk), its key strategic border location along the primary Dublin/Belfast Economic Corridor and its excellent infrastructure in terms of road, rail, sea and air.

The vision for Louth in the current County Development Plan 2015-2021 is of a place:

Where people want to live, work, visit and invest now and in the future, that is well planned, well managed, safe and inclusive and where there exists equality of opportunity for all.

What is your vision for County Louth?

Your opinion matters – let us know what you think?





Key Challenges We Face!

- 1 Developing a unique identity and building on the strengths of the County
- 2 Growing Dundalk & Drogheda within their current footprints to achieve compact growth
- 3 Living in the future and how it will be different
- 4 Reducing our carbon footprint and achieving national target of net zero emissions by 2050
- 5 Living sustainably without compromising future generations
- 6 Improving mobility and accessibility for all, within and through the County in a sustainable manner
- 7 Accommodating the needs of an ageing population
- 8 Creating town centre living, with increased densities in multi-storey buildings
- 9 Promoting town centre vibrancy and vitality with multi-functional uses including entertaining, living, gathering, working, shopping, etc
- 10 Creating high quality urban and rural environments
- 11 Building on the provision of high quality employment and economic opportunities at appropriate and sustainable locations
- 12 Delivering a balance between social and private housing

Core Strategy

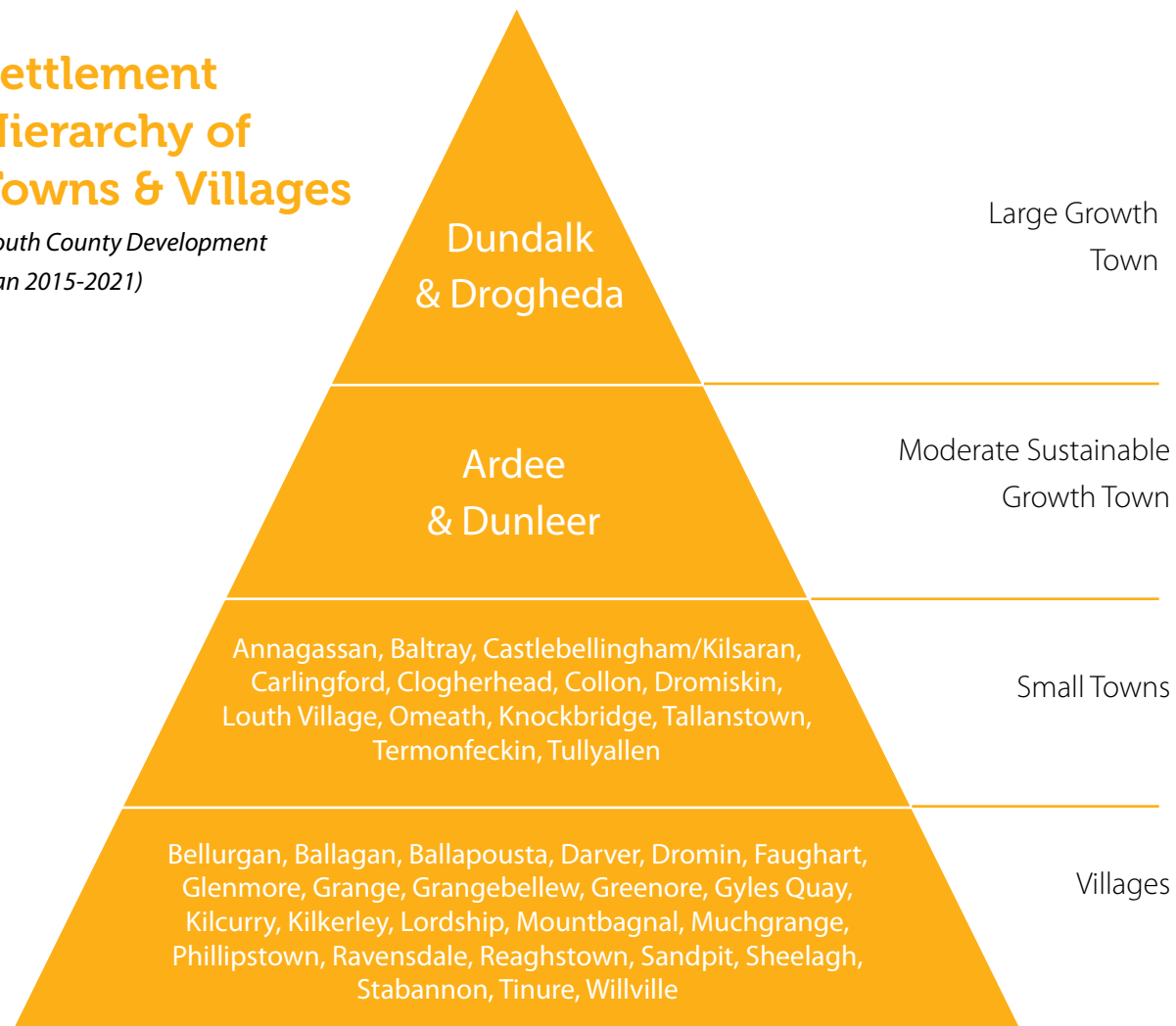
The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 introduced the requirement for an evidence-based 'Core Strategy' to be included in County Development Plans. The Core Strategy of the Louth County Development Plan will aim to identify where any future residential development should be prioritised and reserve an appropriate amount of land in those locations to meet housing and population targets. The Plan will support this Core Strategy through a range of services and the provision of appropriate infrastructure in areas identified for growth. The Core Strategy will respond to, and be consistent with, other policy documents, guidelines and plans such as Project Ireland 2040, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), the Water

Framework Directive, etc. The 'settlement strategy' will form part of the Core Strategy of the Development Plan, which will provide a framework for the development of the urban centres in the county.

At Census 2016 Drogheda was the largest town and Dundalk the third largest town in Ireland, with population growth rates of 6.2% and 3.1% respectively. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA) sets target populations for Dundalk and Drogheda to grow to 'city scale' of 50,000 people each by 2031 to consolidate their key roles as **"Regional Growth Centres"**.

Settlement Hierarchy of Towns & Villages

(Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021)



People & Places

Despite being Ireland's smallest county, Louth had the sixteenth largest county population in the state in Census 2016 at 128,884. This was a 4.9% population increase on Census 2011. The distribution of population growth throughout the county will be influenced by the settlement strategy and the need to accommodate additional compact growth primarily within the larger towns. Future population growth in Louth is determined by the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA), within which Dundalk and Drogheda are each projected to grow to 'city scale' of at least 50,000 people. Louth was the most densely populated county in Ireland outside Dublin with a density of 156 people per km², more than double the national average of 70 people per km².

We would like to have your thoughts on the future of people, population and settlement in the County and how best they can be managed.

Key Questions

- How can County Louth contribute to addressing national housing issues?
- Where in the County should population growth be directed to achieve balanced growth as per the RSES?
- How can we best meet the housing needs of all sectors of our community e.g. youth, elderly, students, less-abled, travellers, etc?
- Is there a deficit in the provision of a particular type of housing that should be addressed e.g. apartments, duplex, etc?
- What contributes to an attractive residential environment?
- Are there too many one-off houses in Louth's countryside and should they be restricted to those with rural generated housing needs?
- How can the Plan best address increased residential densities?
- How should social housing be delivered and do we have the right balance between social and private housing?

Economic Development & Employment

County Louth occupies a key strategic position within the primary Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. Dundalk and Drogheda have been designated as 'Regional Growth Centres' as part of the cross-border network in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) to act as key economic drivers for the wider region. Louth benefits from outstanding road, rail, sea and air transport linkages, making it a prime location for all companies to access international markets. Nevertheless, Louth strives to build further on its strong enterprise ethos and create a vibrant local economy with the creation of new and sustainable employment at its centre. This is particularly important given the challenging and uncertain international economic climate that currently exists.

Louth County Council wants to know what you think about the County's economic prospects and job creation potential into the future.

Key Questions

- What are County Louth's strengths and weaknesses regarding future enterprise and employment growth and how can we maximise the strengths and overcome the weaknesses?
- What impacts, both positive and negative will Brexit have on County Louth?
- How can the Plan promote inward investment and job creation in the County and where should it be directed?
- How can the Plan best support new and evolving work patterns which reduce the demand to travel to work, including e-business and home based economic activity?
- How can the Plan support new and existing indigenous rural based enterprises and how can they be facilitated in un-serviced rural areas?



Dundalk & Drogheda

Dundalk and Drogheda are designated **Regional Growth Centres**. A key priority is to promote the sustainable and compact growth of Drogheda and Dundalk, as a regional driver of city scale with a target population of 50,000 each by 2031. This will be aided through compact, planned and co-ordinated growth of the town centre and its hinterland, as well as enhancing each town's role as self-sustaining, strategic employment centres on the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor.

Each town centre provides a focus for commercial, retail, residential, social and cultural uses. Whilst retailing generally forms the basis of a town centres function, a good mix of other supporting uses is essential to a vibrant and energetic town core. Dereliction, vacancy and under-use of property can have a severe adverse impact on the attractiveness of these town centres.

The quality of these urban places is a significant factor in determining economic growth and regional development, so it is essential to ensure there is a range of quality places where people will choose to live, work and invest. We aim to ensure that Drogheda and Dundalk are attractive, liveable, vibrant, well designed urban places that have diverse and integrated communities enjoying a high quality of life and which promote a sense of place and personal well being.

We want to know your opinion on the future development of Drogheda and Dundalk and the following questions relate to both towns.

Key Questions

- How do you see the future of the town centre?
- What do you like most/least about Dundalk and Drogheda?
- How can we future-proof our towns?
- How do we increase residential living in the town centre?
- How can the towns be best promoted as strategic employment centres and where are the most suitable sites for such development?
- Are there specific areas that would benefit from regeneration and if so where and how?
- How can we encourage the reuse of vacant properties and address dereliction?
- How can public transport be improved in both towns?
- How can we better promote the towns as tourism destinations?
- What public realm improvements would benefit the town?
- How can we revitalise our town centres so that they are vibrant, welcoming, attractive to live in, work in, visit and shop?
- Is there a changing role for our town centres so they remain viable?
- How can the Plan promote a vibrant culture and sustainable night-time economy in our town centres?



Towns & Villages

In addition to Dundalk and Drogheda which are key economic drivers in the County, there is a network of smaller settlements (Ardee, Dunleer, remaining towns and villages) all of which collectively support the sustainable economic and social development of the County. The aim of these smaller towns and villages is to create sustainable and vibrant communities which will act as local development and service centres facilitating development commensurate with the nature and extent of the existing settlement and availability of public services and facilities. These centres will provide for improved quality of life by promoting economic potential, high quality housing, improved accessibility and public realm whilst protecting the natural and built environment.

We want to know your opinion on our smaller towns and villages and how they can be managed, improved and made more appealing.

Key Questions

- How can we make our town centres more attractive, vibrant and welcoming for all?
- Is there an adequate range of uses available in the town centres (retail, commercial, social, cultural, etc)?
- How can we encourage the reuse of vacant properties and address dereliction?
- How can we retain vibrancy in our town centres?
- Which towns and villages would benefit from improvements to the public realm?
- Which rural towns or villages have the capacity to accommodate new development?



Rural Development & Natural Resources

Louth County Council will try to balance the need to accommodate rural generated residential development for a growing population, support rural communities and increase rural based commercial activities against the equally important need to protect its unique countryside from excessive and inappropriate development. The Plan will also need to provide for the careful and sustainable management of all existing natural resources in the rural area, such as our high quality sand and gravel reserves.

We want to know your thoughts on the rural area of the County and the protection and management of our natural resources.

Key Questions

- How can we manage our natural resources to ensure that rural economies and communities prosper in a sustainable manner?
- How do you think the Plan can support sustainable agriculture and other rural based enterprises such as forestry, quarrying and renewable energy?
- What options are there regarding economic diversification in rural areas, such as those incorporating 'Smart Farming' principles?
- What services are required in the countryside to support vibrant rural communities?
- How do we achieve a sustainable balance between granting one-off houses in the countryside and maintaining viable rural towns and villages?
- How can the Plan improve the siting and design standards of new houses and other buildings in the countryside in order to protect its visual amenity?





Transport & Connectivity

There is an excellent road and rail network in County Louth providing key cross-border connections linking Dublin and Belfast. Transport and land-use planning are fundamentally linked, and uses should be structured so that the need for travel and reliance on the private car is minimised. High quality transportation is critical to sustain, promote and improve our economy and standard of living. New infrastructure such as cycleways and walkways are also significant as a means of improving sustainable connectivity within and between communities in the County. Therefore future infrastructural needs and priorities should be identified in the new Plan, within a policy framework which will provide scope for new development.

We want to find out your thoughts on how transport, mobility and accessibility can be developed and improved upon in the Plan.

Key Questions

- How can the Plan promote integration of land use and transport?
- How can we best promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport?
- Do you think our greenways and cycleways are successful and what improvements would you suggest?
- How can the Plan improve transport and connectivity for older and less-abled people and children?
- Do we need park and ride facilities in proximity to the Motorway?
- How can the concepts of "Smarter Travel" be incorporated into the Plan to reduce dependence on the private car?
- How can rural transport and accessibility be improved?

Community, Recreation, Amenity & Social Inclusion

Louth County Council recognises that high quality, easily accessible community, sports, education, health, childcare and recreation facilities throughout the County are vitally important in the functioning of sustainable and liveable communities, and contribute enormously to the overall quality of life. All citizens of the County should have easy access to these facilities in order to reduce issues of social exclusion and inequality and prevent socially disadvantaged areas from developing. We are seeking to create 'healthy places' based on the principles of lifetime adaptability supported by Universal Design, improved urban amenities and better community facilities.

We need to know your ideas on what facilities are required and where they should be located.

Key Questions

- Are the needs of different cultural, ethnic, youth, elderly and less-abled groups being adequately accommodated in our community? If not, how can they be addressed?
- How can the Plan promote and facilitate community development in areas of need?
- Are there adequate healthcare facilities accessible to those in need?
- How can we work with educational stakeholders to ensure future educational requirements in appropriate locations?
- How can the Plan promote social inclusion and equality for all our citizens?
- Do you consider Louth to be an Age Friendly County?



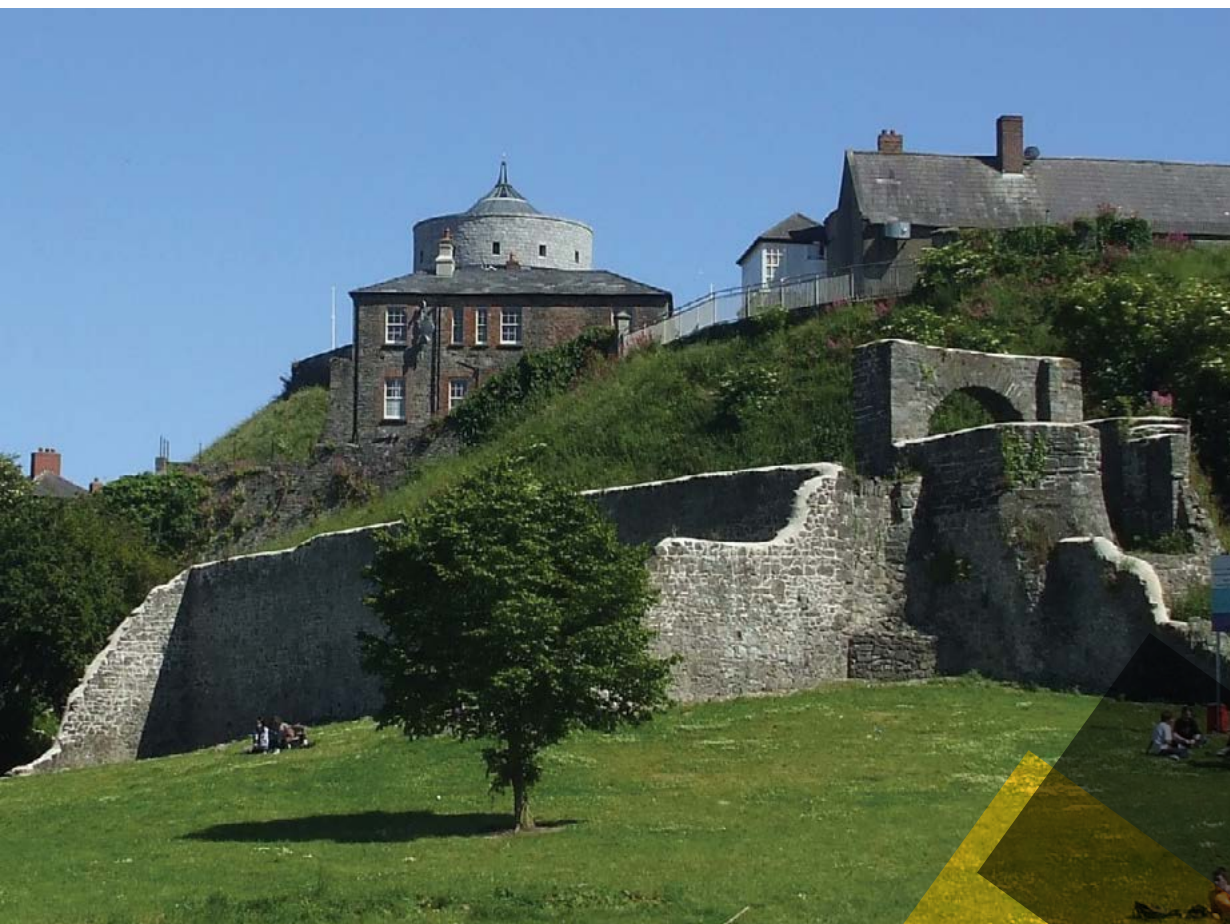
Tourism, Culture & Art

County Louth has a strong tourism base which is primarily founded on our unspoilt natural environment and a wealth of historic towns and archaeological sites such as those in the Cooley Peninsula, Boyne Valley, Monasterboice and Mellifont Abbey, amongst others. In the future, Louth will seek to capitalise on the further significant potential of our tourism assets to attract additional visitors for longer stays, particularly international tourists, whilst protecting these tourist assets from overdevelopment.

We want your opinion in relation to the future of tourism development in the County.

Key Questions

- What are Louths' key tourist assets and how can we capitalise on these without damaging our rich built and natural landscape?
- How can the Plan better support tourism and what are the constraints to the development of tourism in the County?
- What can Louth do to attract more domestic and overseas tourists and lengthen their stay?
- How can the Plan increase development of County wide cultural and arts facilities?
- Are there potential tourist attractions including experiential tourism which remain to be developed?
- How can we best manage the Battle of the Boyne site and the Brú na Bóinne UNESCO World Heritage Site and should this be in conjunction with Meath County Council?



Climate & Environment

We recognise and understand the importance of protecting our precious natural environment and the potential adverse impacts climate change could have on our way of life, and we want to reduce these risks to a minimum. The Plan will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) to consider its potential effects on the natural environment and on EU protected sites (Natura 2000 sites) and their networks. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) will also be carried out.

We need to find out what you think of our environment and climate change issues, and how they should be managed into the future

Key Questions

- What are the main environmental issues facing Louth and how can the Plan address these?
- How can the Plan achieve a balance between the growth of the county and the protection of the environment?
- How can the Plan best address climate change?
- How can the Plan facilitate the transition to a low carbon society?
- How can we increase awareness and help reduce the impacts of climate change in Louth?
- How can we manage pressure for development in areas at risk of flooding?



Infrastructure, Energy & Communications

The provision and maintenance of high quality service infrastructure is vital to attracting and retaining economic development and keeping up the quality of life in the County. Investment in areas such as drinking water, waste water, energy, recycling and telecommunications will attract both commercial and residential development into the County.

We need to know what new infrastructure works relating to water, waste water, broadband, waste and recycling facilities and other services are needed and where it should go.

Key Questions

- How can the Plan support agencies in the provision of:
 - Electricity
 - Water & wastewater
 - Renewable Energy
 - Telecommunication & broadband infrastructure
 - Gas
- Are there significant factors leading to deterioration in the water quality of groundwater or rivers and how can these be addressed?
- What towns or villages should be prioritised for water/wastewater improvements?
- How can the Plan tailor its policies on renewable energy to support this industry but also protect the landscapes amenity and ecology?
- What renewable energy do you consider most efficient?
- What is your opinion on commercial on-shore / off-shore wind farms and their location?
- How can we promote conservation of energy and minimise usage?
- How can we encourage a reduction in waste and increase in recycling?
- Which Settlement areas would benefit from becoming a 'Sustainable Energy Community'?



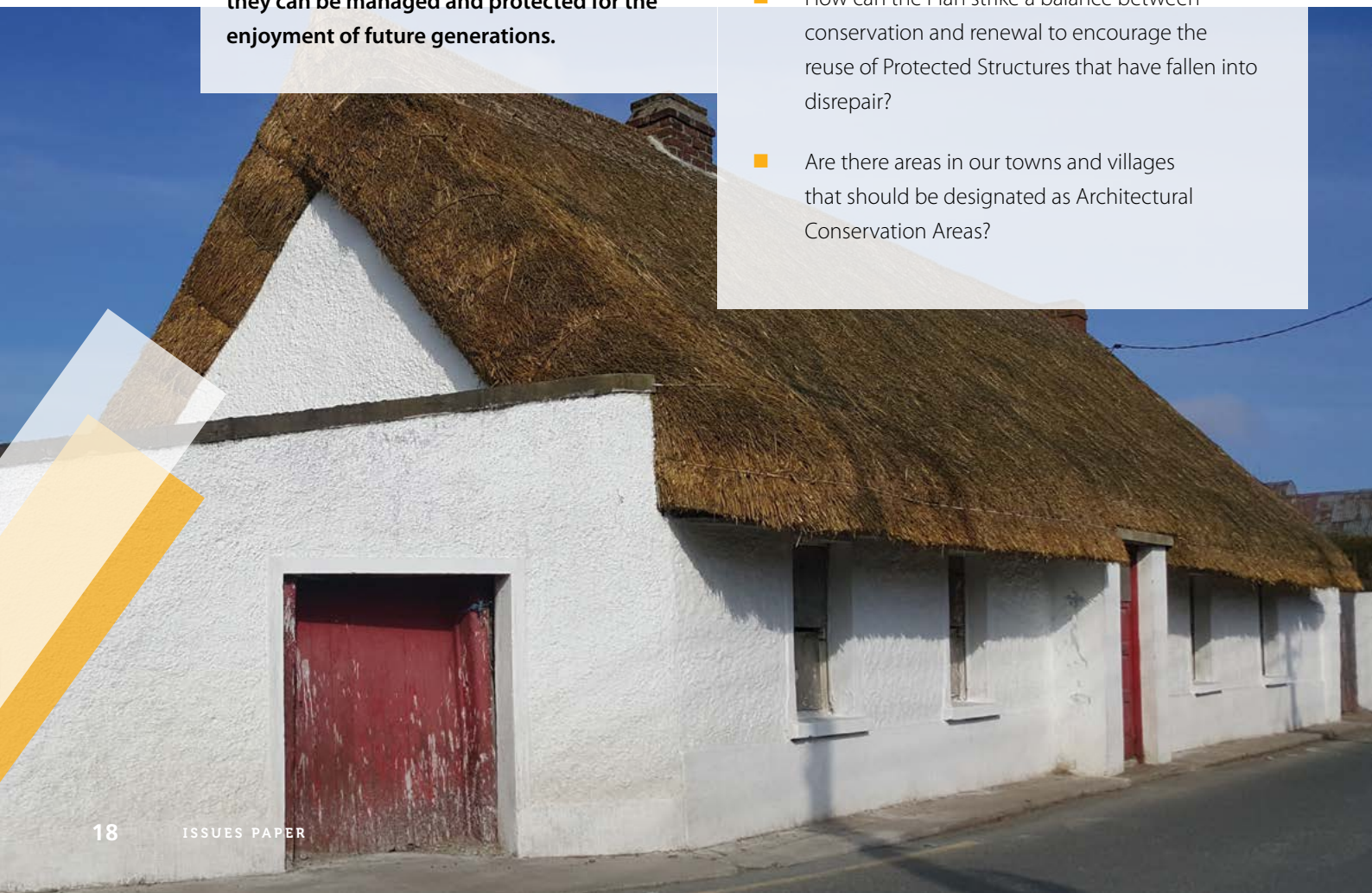
Built & Natural Heritage

County Louth has a rich natural and built heritage, which contributes substantially to its character and identity, the preservation and enhancement of which is critical to creating a better future for all. The natural heritage includes important ecological sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) containing habitats with a wide diversity of plant and animal species, proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA), Trees and Woodlands, Geological Sites and scenic routes and views. In addition, the County also boasts a rich archaeological and architectural heritage and particularly so in its many historic towns and villages including Drogheda, Dundalk, Ardee and Carlingford. Many of these buildings and monuments are designated as Protected Structures (PS), Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA) or located within Zones of Archaeological Potential.

We want to know your opinion on all built and natural heritage assets in the County, and how they can be managed and protected for the enjoyment of future generations.

Key Questions

- What are the most important aspects of Louth's natural and built heritage worthy of protection?
- How best can we conserve the quality and character of our unique landscape and are there specific policies we need to introduce?
- How can natural heritage and biodiversity be enhanced?
- How can we balance the protection of our heritage whilst providing for the development and future needs of the County?
- Are there additional polices needed to safeguard the built and natural heritage of the County?
- Are there buildings that should be added to the Record of Protected Structures?
- How can the Plan strike a balance between conservation and renewal to encourage the reuse of Protected Structures that have fallen into disrepair?
- Are there areas in our towns and villages that should be designated as Architectural Conservation Areas?



Making a Submission

All submissions should include your name, address, and, if applicable, details of the organisation or group you represent. Further information & updates are available on Louth County Council Twitter & www.louthcoco.ie

Please note that requests or proposals for the zoning of particular land for any purpose cannot be considered at this stage of the process.

The Forward Planning Team will be holding a series of informal public workshops, so you can come and talk to us directly about what you think the new County Development Plan should include.

Location	Date	Time
Dundalk Library, Roden Place, Dundalk	Thursday 17th October, 2019	6pm -8pm
Ardee Library, Market Square, Ardee	Tuesday 22nd October, 2019	6pm -8pm
Drogheda Library, Stockwell Lane, Drogheda	Thursday 24th October, 2019	6pm -8pm
Carlingford Library, Newry Street, Carlingford	Tuesday 29th October, 2019	6pm -8pm
Dunleer Library, Station Road, Dunleer	Tuesday 5th November, 2019	6pm -8pm

Where do I Send my Submission?

In Writing: Frank Pentony

Development Plan Review
Forward Planning Unit
Town Hall, Crowe Street,
Dundalk, Co. Louth, A91 W20C

✉ louthcdp@louthcoco.ie

In your email submission the subject line should read: Development Plan Review

Remember!

Submissions/observations can only be made between **27th September and 26th November 2019**

The deadline for receipt of all submissions is **4.30pm on Tuesday 26th November 2019**

Submissions received after this date cannot be accepted.



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Cuirfeair fáilte roimh chomhfhreagras Gaeilge - Correspondence in Irish is welcome