



Your Local Area Plan

What do you think?

ISSUES PAPER

Ardee's New Local Area Plan 2010 – 2016

Open for Business

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Your Area Plan – *What do you think?*

Louth County Council is starting the process of preparing the new Ardee Local Area Plan. Formal notification of this process was advertised recently in the local paper.

Presently we are at the 'pre-draft' stage which is followed by the preparation of a Draft Plan and then the making of the Local Area Plan. At both this stage and subsequently to the preparation of a draft plan, the planning authority undertakes a public consultation exercise and invites your comments.

This Plan has to have regard to national and regional strategies and guidelines and must be consistent with the objectives and policies of the Louth County Development Plan 2009 -2015. However, in order that it is relevant to your concerns and requirements, it is important that you convey your views to us right from the beginning so that everyone (elected members, council officials, the wider public, statutory agencies, service providers, businesses and interested groups) work together in building ownership of this Local Area Plan and its implementation.

The aim of this issues paper is to clarify the areas and topics which the Local Area Plan covers and to stimulate public thinking and debate on the future planning of the town. We would welcome your views on any issues identified in this paper or any other issues that you would consider important and relevant to the future planning and sustainable development of Ardee.

Your submissions may be made in a number of ways listed below:

- By post to the Economic Development and Future Planning, County Hall, Millennium Centre, Dundalk.
- By email to the designated email address:
ardeeplan@louthcoco.ie
- By using comment cards available at the public workshop meeting to be held on Monday 1st February, from 7:00pm - 9:00pm at the Mid Louth Civic Centre, Fairgreen, Ardee, as advertised in local papers.

Only submissions that are signed, addressed and received by the **Friday 12th March 2010** can be accepted.

All submissions received during this period will accordingly be considered by the Council in the drafting of the proposed Local Area Plan.



Plan Area

Ardee with an estimated population of some 4,500 is the third largest town in County Louth after Dundalk and Drogheda.

It is located some 20km south west of Dundalk and 20km north west of Drogheda on the intersection of the N2 Dublin – Derry route and N52 Ardee - Nenagh route. The N33 Ardee link road provides direct access from Ardee to the M1 motorway. The town stands to benefit from its strategic location with regard to road accessibility and transport both nationally and regionally.

Ardee town has an important role as a source of employment, place to reside and as a local service centre providing retail, health, education and community facilities for its own population and an extensive rural hinterland. The Plan Area covers the statutory town boundaries of Ardee.

It is the policy of the Louth County Development Plan 2009 – 2015 to:

‘promote the development of Ardee as a medium sized town for urban strengthening to serve the needs of the local community and drive development within the locality’.

What do you think?

- 1 How do you think the Plan can promote the development of Ardee to serve the needs of the local community and drive development?
- 2 What policies or strategic objectives should be included in the Plan to secure the development of Ardee?

Issues

The main issues to be addressed are included under a number of headings:

- Population and Town Development
- Community Facilities and Amenities
- Built and Natural Heritage
- Transport and Access
- Utility Services and Communications
- Economic Development, Employment and Tourism
- Design standards for new Developments
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)





Population and Town Development

The 2002 and 2006 census figures in the table below, revealed an upward trend in population from 3,568 persons in 2002 to 4,301 persons in 2006. This represents a 20.7% increase in population. This was mainly as a result of commuter derived demand for residential development facilitated by the improved road infrastructure, particularly the linkages to the Greater Dublin Area.

Population of Ardee Town

	1996	2002	2006	2010	2016
Pop	3440	3568	4301	*4,533	**4700
Increase	-	128	733	232	167
% Change	-	3.8	20.7	5.3	3.7

Source: CSO

**based on house count Jan 2010 and average household size of 2.69 persons*

*** target population as set down in County Development Plan*

Between 2006 and now, it is estimated that the population increased by a further 232 persons to 4,533, at a somewhat lower rate of 5.3%.

Ardee is a settlement centre on the second tier of the county settlement strategy as set out in the County Development Plan 2009 – 2015. A population increase of 399 persons is allocated to Ardee giving it a target population of 4,700 for the year 2016. This figure is based on the DOE and the Border Regional Authority's target population figures.

There are currently some 60 hectares (150 acres) of undeveloped residential zoned land which when developed could facilitate the growth of the population of Ardee to 10,000 persons. This is far in excess of what is required to accommodate the projected increase in population over this Plan period and consequently there is no need to zone any additional lands for residential purposes.

What do you think?

- 1 Where do you think additional population growth should be best accommodated in a sustainable fashion?
- 2 Given the amount of undeveloped residential zoned land in Ardee town, how do you think its development can be reconciled and managed having regard to the target population for Ardee of 4,700 persons in 2016?

Community Facilities and Amenities

Community facilities and amenities ensure a good quality of life and inter-action for all residents of the town and its hinterland. These include childcare and educational facilities, nursing homes and health centres, libraries, facilities for older people and community halls. Recreational facilities and open spaces are also amenities which contribute to the character of an area and can include passive and active areas, formal landscaped and natural areas.

An expanding population generates increased demand for the provisions of these services and amenities and it is of the utmost importance that these are provided in tandem with new development.



What do you think?

- 1 What type of community facilities and local services are currently needed in Ardee and in new residential communities?
- 2 How can the Plan utilise and enhance existing amenity areas in the town and provide for adequate open space and recreational facilities for both passive and active recreation?
- 3 How do you think the Plan can provide for good connectivity for recreational walking and cycling purposes? Is there any specific location that you feel this Plan can address?
- 4 Are there any specific views, areas of local interest of special amenity value in Ardee that you consider should be protected from inappropriate development?





Built and Natural Heritage

Ardee is a medieval wall town rich in architectural and archaeological heritage. This is evident in that an Architectural Conservation Area covers the length of the main street and includes the majority of the town's 90 protected structures. A wider Area of Special Archaeological Interest also includes the entire town centre and extends eastwards. The Record of Monuments and Places has identified 32 recorded monuments within the Plan area.

The town also contains a wealth of natural assets, particular trees and woodlands located in the grounds of the Red House, Ardee Golf Course, St Josephs and the Rectory. The grounds of the Red House are also a proposed Natural Heritage Area and listed as a Heritage Garden and Designed Landscape by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.

What do you think?

- 1 What aspects of the built and natural heritage in Ardee do you consider important and should be protected from inappropriate development?
- 2 How can a balance be achieved between protecting our heritage and at the same time provide for the development and future needs of the town?
- 3 How can the Plan encourage the protection and enhancement of species and habitats?



Transport and Access

In terms of road accessibility and transportation Ardee is strategically placed on the intersection of the N2 Dublin – Derry route and N52 Ardee - Nenagh route and in close proximity to the M1 motorway. On completion, the new roundabout junction off the N33 Link Road and Sean O’Carroll Street will improved access and facilitate the development of lands zoned for industrial and residential development to the north and south of the Link Road. The proposed by-passes on the N2 (Dublin to Derry) and N52 to the east and west of the town will further alleviate traffic congestion in the centre of the town.

Other forms of transport available in Ardee include taxis, bus, cycling and walking. Bus routes include services to Letterkenny, Derry, Monaghan, Drogheda, Dundalk, Slane and Dublin. Improved access to these alternative sustainable modes of transport and improved facilities for travellers reduces reliance on private cars and will have environmental, social and health benefits.

What do you think?

- 1 How can we provide for better coordination and integration between land uses, maximising the potential of Ardee’s transportation network?
- 2 Have you any specific suggestions to encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking?
- 3 How do you think the Plan could facilitate improved access for people with impaired mobility?



Utility Services and Communications

Under the Mid Louth Regional Water Supply Scheme the water treatment plant is to be upgraded to address quality and supply issues. The capacity of the local sewerage plant was increased to 8,000 population equivalent (PE) in 2008. A preliminary report has been prepared for the further upgrading of the plant and collection system. However any upgrade will likely be on an incremental manner consistent with growth patterns in the area, given the current economic situation.

The Plan needs to address issues in relation to surface and ground water quality. The quality of the water in the River Dee is of poor status. It is a requirement of the River Basin Management Plan for the Neagh Bann that it be brought up to good status by 2015.

Flooding is a natural event that can be exacerbated by man-made development and climate change. The Plan needs to address how to manage development in any areas that are susceptible to flooding.

In terms of broadband, the Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) programme has seen the roll-out of broadband infrastructure to Ardee. Such communication networks can provide a better quality of life for residents and act as an important incentive in attracting economic development and investment to an area.



What do you think?

- 1 How best can we provide efficient and sustainable piped services for new development?
- 2 Are there any concerns with regard to water and sewerage or other infrastructural matters, which you feel the Plan could address?
- 3 How do we reconcile pressure for development and flooding / surface water considerations?
- 4 How can we utilise and develop the MAN telecommunication programme to ensure that Ardee has sufficient infrastructure to accommodate continued sustainable growth of the town?

Economic Development, Employment and Tourism

Ardee is a principle centre of employment, industry and commercial activity in the county. The completion of the M1 motorway and the town's proximity to the new roundabout off the N33 Link Road has the potential to provide enormous economic benefits to the town. There are currently some 70 hectares (170 acres) of undeveloped lands zoned for a variety of commercial, industrial and associated uses.

The 2006 Census of Population revealed that there is an unemployment rate of 13.4% in Ardee compared to 8.5% in the State. The census also detailed that 18.3% of the persons at work were employed in building and construction, 16% in manufacturing, circa 23% in commerce and trade and almost 19% in professional services. Given, the deteriorating economic climate that has emerged in late 2008 and is continuing it is likely that the unemployment rate is now significantly higher.

The Louth Retail Strategy details that there is 8,758m² of retail floor space in Ardee. The strategy advocates that the town should develop its convenience retail offer in tandem with its expanding population and that there is a current need for an additional convenience retail store up to 2,500 square metres.

The Economic Development of Ardee 2009 -2015 considers that in order to develop specific economic activities it is

important to support existing businesses and entrepreneurs, secure higher levels of inward investment and acquire skills for the local labour force and unemployed.

In terms of tourism, buildings such as Ardee Castle and Hatch Castle, which date back to the 15th Century, together with the street pattern, give Ardee a distinctive medieval form that adds to the town's attractiveness and unique character. Other amenity assets include its market town integrity, its independent shops, specialist goods, traditional shopfronts and attractiveness of its public open spaces. Tourism can make an important contribution to the local economy and has the potential for growth.



What do you think?

- 1** How can a range of employment opportunities be provided locally so as to reduce unemployment and reduce dependency on the private car?
- 2** What type of enterprises would enhance the economic development and create local job opportunities?
- 3** Do you think there are any deficiencies with the existing provision or location of retail in Ardee?
- 4** In addition to current provision, what are the additional opportunities for developing sustainable tourism in Ardee?



Design Standards for New Developments

All planning applications for new development will be required to comply with the development management standards for residential and commercial development as set out in the relevant sections of the Louth County Development Plan, 2009-2015. The County Plan also stipulates that new residential developments are consistent with the DoELG guidelines and Urban Design Manual.

In addition to these, this Plan can stipulate design criteria particular to Ardee which are mindful of the character of Ardee, seek to integrate new development with the existing built up area and with the established character of the town.

What do you think?

- 1 Do you think that there is a need for any specific design parameters in Ardee, for example in regard to height, materials used, etc in the design, siting and construction of new residential or commercial developments?
- 2 In relation to the design and layout of existing developments in Ardee, are there any areas you consider the new Plan should seek to improved?







Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is concerned with the environmental impacts of implementing a new plan. It is a process that aims to ensure that significant environment effects are taken into account prior to the adoption of the Plan.

An SEA screening process will be carried out to assess whether the implementation of the Local Area Plan would have significant effects on the environment.

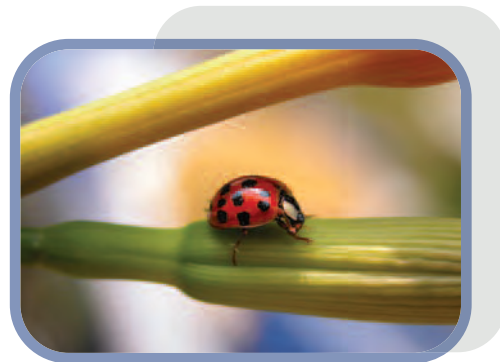
It concerns itself with the following issues:

- Population
- Biodiversity
- Human health
- Flora/Fauna
- Soil
- Water
- Climate Factors
- Material Assets
- Cultural Heritage

The screening process will determine if an SEA of the Ardee Local Area Plan is required. If so this assessment will commence jointly with the preparation of the Draft Ardee Local Area Plan.

What do you think?

- 1 What are the most important parts of Ardee's environment?
- 2 What do you think are the big environmental issues (strengths and threats) facing Ardee?



Notes

