

Please note that this is the Original Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (adopted on the 22nd September, 2021). Following the adoption of Variation No. 1 & Variation No. 2 on the 13th May, 2024 and Variation No. 3 on the 27th January, 2025, this Plan has now been superseded by the Consolidated version.

The Consolidated version of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (incl. Variations 1, 2 & 3) is available to view at this link [HERE](#)

1.0 Introduction

This written statement will provide a brief description and development strategy for Duleek. A detailed Local Area Plan for the town will be prepared during the life of this Plan.

2.0 Town Context/Character

Located within the Laytown-Bettystown Municipal District, Duleek is an historical town situated in the east of the County, in close proximity to the border with County Louth. Strategically positioned and in proximity to larger settlements including Drogheda (Louth) and Balbriggan (North Dublin), the town is within easy reach of the M1, Dublin – Belfast Corridor via the R150.

The town functions as a local service centre. Its attractive and historical, rural setting aligned with its location within the Greater Dublin area, has resulted in significant commuter development and changes to the local community and character of the town. Originally developed around a central town green with attractive, narrow roads and streets, more recent development has seen the town expand to the north and west, with significant industrial and employment growth to the east.

The range of commercial and retail services on offer in the town are local in nature, reflective of its function as a local service centre and its proximity to the town of Drogheda. There is a notable business and industrial base operating within Duleek Business Park, on the eastern environs of the town, benefitting from proximity to the Drogheda Environs on the M1/E1 International Corridor. There are a number of other significant employers located outside of the town boundary, in the Carranstown/Platin area off the Drogheda Road (R152), which provides significant employment to Duleek and the surrounding area.

Position in Settlement Hierarchy	Self-sustaining Town
2016 Population	4,219

2011 Population	3,988
Percentage Change 2011-2016	5.40%
Housing stock 2016	1,484
Number of units completed 2016-2019	36
Committed units not yet built	85
Core Strategy Household Allocation 2020-2027¹	336 units
Population Projection 2027	4,719
Resident Workers 2016	1,692
Total Jobs 2016	501
Job – Workforce Ratio 2016	0.29
Education Facilities	1 primary school and 6 Childcare/Montessori facilities

¹ The unbuilt extant units have been included in this allocation

Community Facilities	13 including a health centre, library, post office, sporting and athletics clubs, Church, and allotments
Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)	None
Protected Structures	16
Zone of Archaeological Potential	There is a National Monument Services Zone of Archaeological Potential within the settlement area.
Natura 2000 Sites	<p>There are no Natura 2000 sites within the plan boundary.</p> <p>The River Nanny, which flows south of the town centre, is hydrologically connected to the River Nanny Estuary & Shore SPA (Site 004158) located approximately 12km downstream of Duleek.</p>
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	<p>Flood Risk Zones A & B have been identified within the town with areas subject to risk of flooding from the River Nanny.</p> <p>Existing development is protected by the OPW Duleek Flood Relief Scheme</p>
Water Services Infrastructure/Capacity	Capacity available at Duleek Waste Water Treatment Plant – some localised network constraints exist.

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Modal Share Targets for 2026	
Modal Share for Walking	6% (Increasing from 3% in 2016)
Modal Share for Cycling	4% (Increasing from 1% in 2016)
Modal Share for Bus	20% (No change from 20% in 2016)
Modal Share for Rail	1% (No change from 1% in 2016)
Reduction Target for Car Use	64% (reduction from 71% in 2016)

3.0 Vision

The strategic vision underpins the approach to and guides the future development of Duleek in a sustainable manner, in a way that reflects the existing character and amenities of the area and improves quality of life for the existing and future population. The vision seeks:

"To promote the sustainable growth of Duleek, consolidating and enhancing its rich, historic town centre and promoting its role as a self-sustaining town and a local service centre."

4.0 Opportunities

- Consolidated growth – the availability of serviced lands within the urban core of the town presents opportunities for the consolidation of future development on lands within walking distance of the town centre.
- Strong Economic Sector - Establish a positive and flexible framework for economic development and job creation based on local strengths with appropriate measures to promote the further development and enhancement of Duleek Business Park.
- Tourism Growth - The River Nanny and links to the Battle of the Boyne is a largely untapped resource in Duleek that has potential to attract visitors and tourists to the town through sensitive development.
- Potential for enhanced connectivity - Enhance the existing transport network, including the provision of a bypass south west of the town centre, to increase permeability and connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, in order to enable access to key land uses such as community facilities and zoned lands and to enhance movement through the narrow and historic town streets.
- Potential for Green Infrastructure network - Integrate 'Duleek Commons', the River Nanny, the Paramaddan River and Duleek Heritage Trail into a multi-functional Green Infrastructure network and facilitating a healthy town by building an interconnected network of parks, open spaces, hedgerows, grasslands and watercourses.

5.0 Land Use Strategy

The development strategy for Duleek will focus on supporting the continued development of the town as a local service centre.

Duleek Business Park is performing well and benefits from connectivity to Navan and Drogheda and the wider region via the national and regional road network. There is capacity available in the Business Park to accommodate further enterprise and employment. This Plan will continue to support the expansion of the Business Centre which will strengthen the economic base of the town.

Residential growth in the town will be reflective of the designation of Duleek as a Self-sustaining Town in the settlement hierarchy. There are a number of centrally located parcels of land in proximity to the town centre and Business Park that would create a link between the established residential areas and the urban core of the town whilst also ensuring any development takes place within the existing built up envelope.

In addition to the larger infill sites there are also a number of smaller infill opportunities on existing residential properties or disused brownfield lands that have the potential to accommodate residential accommodation.

5.1 Settlement and Housing

Residential development in Duleek consists of a concentration of small developments on the approach roads to the town. Between these developments and the town centre are individual houses on large plots of land in addition to large parcels of undeveloped greenfield lands.

At the time of writing there were approximately 85 extant units in the town remaining to be built, with two residential developments under construction in the town.

Future residential development in the town will take a more sequential approach to development with priority given to lands closer to the town centre and Business Park in addition to under-utilised infill and brownfield lands.

Any development should include an appropriate mix of housing that meets the needs of the entire community.

5.2 Economy and Employment

Duleek is identified as a Level 4 retail centre in the County Retail hierarchy. Its function is to deliver local / neighbourhood retail services, serving the immediate population only. The emphasis on retail development will focus on consolidation rather than expansion.

Commercial and retail activities are primarily located along the Main Street, with two clear and distinct areas. The traditional town centre is in the centre of the town adjacent to the village green, while a more recent mixed-use development consisting of retail and

residential uses is further along the Main Street opposite 'Mill Race' residential development. In order to consolidate the traditional town core and reduce vacancy levels, new retail and commercial development should be directed to the traditional town core, its existing vacant units and its identified infill sites. This would aid consolidation and strengthening of the existing retailing base of Duleek.

Identified as a Local Employment Centre serving the wider East Meath area, Duleek has a role in providing for the employment needs of local hinterlands. Manufacturing and related activities are the strongest sectors in the town with a notable business and industrial base in the Business Park in the north-eastern part of the town. The Irish Cement Plant at Platin and the Indaver Waste-to-Energy facility at Carlanstown are also significant employers located close to Duleek.

Duleek's rich historic fabric and attractive rural setting can further contribute to the enhancement and development of a sustainable tourism product. The town also has the potential to further enhance and contribute to the image of Meath as Ireland's Heritage Capital, through further development of the Duleek Heritage Trail and the town's historical association with the Battle of the Boyne. The Planning Authority will promote, encourage and facilitate the development of sustainable tourism in Duleek through the conservation, protection and enhancement of the built and natural heritage.

5.3 Water Services Infrastructure

Water: Duleek is supplied with water from the East Meath Water Supply Scheme, which serves a large catchment area. The principal source of water is the Staleen Water Treatment Plant near Donore. Capacity in the water supply is limited as regard must be had to the significant extant planning permissions for multiple residential units permitted in Drogheda Environs, Ashbourne, Ratoath, Laytown / Bettystown and Stamullen in particular. Some localised network constraints existing in Duleek.

Wastewater: A major capital upgrade and expansion of the Duleek Sewerage Scheme was successfully completed in 2010. This Plant is considered to have adequate capacity to serve the development and growth provided for in this 2021-2027 CDP. Some localised network constraints exist.

5.4 Flooding

The OPW Duleek Flood Relief Scheme seeks to protect the town of Duleek from the River Nanny and its associated flood risk. The River Nanny is joined by a watercourse that approaches from the north and flows into the Nanny in the centre of the town. Notwithstanding the presence of flood defences, the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment undertaken for the County, has identified a substantial area of land within the town development boundary, as being within Flood Zone A & B.

A risk-based approach to flood management in accordance with the provisions set out in *“The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities”* (2009) will be implemented in order to prevent or minimise future flood risk.

5.5 Movement

The accessibility of Duleek has been a significant influencing factor regarding employment and business operations in the town and environs, with proximity to Junctions 8 & 9 of the M1 Motorway (Dublin – Belfast Corridor) a key contributor. Such accessibility needs to be complimented with enhanced movement and permeability within the town.

The R150 travels through the town centre resulting in significant volumes of traffic. Enhanced traffic calming / traffic management proposals have been prepared to improve the quality and experience of the public realm in the short term and these shall be implemented during the lifetime of this plan. In the longer term there is a need to divert heavy traffic from the town centre, with a new bypass link to the southwest a possible option.

Within the historical core, a traffic management and improvement strategy is required to address traffic difficulties arising within the area known as ‘Lanes District’. This area is dominated by narrow lanes with a winding alignment and whilst the lanes contribute to the character of the area, they are unsuited to the modern needs of the pedestrian and vehicles.

Continuous and enhanced permeability within the town centre and between the town centre and adjoining residential areas is a key priority of the plan. Adequate footpaths, public lighting and the provision of new cycle lanes remain to the forefront of village enhancement works.

5.6 Cultural and Natural Heritage

The origins of Duleek dates back to an early Christian monastic settlement. Due to its early monastic origins, there is a rich history of archaeological features in the town. There are two identified 'Zones of Archaeological Potential', one centred around St. Cianan's Church and the Main Street and the second close to the River Nanny at Prioryland.

The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) identified a total of 16 no. structures in the town. This Plan seeks to preserve and enhance the character and setting of protected structures and areas of archaeological interest.

In terms of natural heritage, there is one proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) known as Duleek Commons (site code: 001578). Any planning application that proposes development within or adjacent to the area of Duleek Commons pNHA will be required to be accompanied by an ecological impact assessment, assessing the impact of the proposal on the area with the conservation designation.

5.7 Green Infrastructure

A key challenge for Duleek is to manage growth so that the town's natural assets are maintained in a way which protects the town's natural and cultural resources for the future.

Within Duleek there are a number of green infrastructure features which can be categorised into different themes, including biodiversity; parks, open space and recreation; sustainable water management; archaeological and architectural heritage; and landscape. A number of the features have been identified in previous sections of the plan, including Duleek Commons, River Nanny, Paramadda River, floodplain, Duleek Heritage Trail, protected structures, archaeological features, designated sites and the Village Green.

This plan seeks to integrate the provision of green infrastructure with infrastructure provision and replacement, including walking and cycling routes, as appropriate, whilst protecting biodiversity and other landscape resources, including Duleek Commons and along the River Nanny. It also seeks to ensure that a net gain in green infrastructure is achieved throughout the plan period, through the planting of trees and the provision of green roofs and walls within the town centre. Other practical measures such as accommodating the requirements of functional flood storage, linking biodiversity, providing for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and provision of parks and open space will all contribute to the building of sustainable green infrastructure for the town.

5.8 Social Infrastructure

Community groups and organisations are the most important social infrastructure in the town and Duleek is fortunate to benefit from many active groups and associations. Two recent initiatives including provision of the first community-based CCTV system in the country and the proposed Duleek & Bellewstown District all-inclusive Community Facility at the GAA grounds, demonstrates the vibrant community scene on the ground. The recently established Duleek Revival Programme, aims to visually enhance and improve the appearance of key areas of the town through volunteer and other community programmes.

Duleek has a significant number of community and sporting facilities and it is essential that these community facilities are maintained and augmented to cater for all age groups.

5.9 Urban Design and Public Realm

The Plan advocates a high quality, well designed, well landscaped development that is capable of providing an appropriately scaled environment, in keeping with the historic character, amenity, environment, heritage and landscape of the town.

All new development in Duleek must facilitate the provision or improvement of key infrastructure or community facilities. High quality design, the use of appropriate materials and a quality layout are considered essential in order to ensure that new development contributes positively to Duleek and helps to create an attractive and sustainable settlement.

6.0 Town Development Objectives

As a point of clarity, the Policies and Objectives set out below are in addition to those included in the Written Statement in Volume One of the County Development Plan. To avoid repetition Policies and Objectives have only been restated where they have particular relevance to the settlement. These Policies and Objectives should therefore be read in conjunction with the Policies and Objectives and Development Standards in Volume One of the County Development Plan.

Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

DUL POL 1

To support the sustainable growth of Duleek in a manner that allows the town to fulfil its function as a local service centre, by promoting the consolidation of business and retail services in the town centre, employment growth in Duleek Business Park, and improving connectivity between residential areas and the town centre.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

Settlement and Housing

DUL OBJ 1

To secure the implementation of the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan, in so far as is practicable, by ensuring the household allocation for Duleek as set out in Table 2.12 of the Core Strategy is not exceeded.

DUL OBJ 2

To support and encourage residential development on under-utilised land and/or vacant lands including 'infill' and 'brownfield' sites, subject to a high standard of design and layout being achieved.

Economy and Employment

DUL OBJ 3

To facilitate the development of local business employment and enterprises within Duleek Business Park and to ensure that the Business Park is maintained for business and employment uses as per the specific land use zoning.

DUL OBJ 4

To promote the reuse and regeneration of vacant and derelict lands and properties in the town centre for appropriate uses that would consolidate and revitalise the town centre.

DUL OBJ 5

To promote, encourage and facilitate the development of sustainable tourism in Duleek through the further development and enhancement of Duleek Heritage Trail and the town's historical association with the Battle of the Boyne.

Infrastructure

DUL OBJ 6

To liaise with and support Irish Water to endeavour to provide adequate water services to meet the development needs of Duleek within the Plan period.

DUL OBJ 7

To manage flood risk and development in Duleek in accordance with policies and objectives set out in section 6.10 of Volume 1 of the County Development Plan 'Surface Water and Flood Risk Management'.

Movement

DUL OBJ 8

To examine the feasibility and progress the provision of the R150 bypass for Duleek to the south west of the town.

DUL OBJ 9

To undertake the following improvements in Duleek:

- i. To upgrade the junction of the R150 and Longford Roads
- ii. To provide/upgrade or extend as appropriate footpaths along Larrix Street extending from Larrix Court to Church Lane and the R150, and along The Steeples from Longford Road to Navan Road (R150) and towards The Hawthorns.
- iii. To provide for a footpath on the R150 between the junctions with Church Lane and The Steeples.
- iv. To prepare a traffic management and improvement strategy to address traffic difficulties arising within the area known as 'Lanes District'.

Cultural and Natural Heritage**DUL OBJ 10**

To encourage the reuse of Duleek's historic buildings where they lie vacant or underused and recognise the contribution that they can make to economic development, tourism, education and the aesthetic qualities of Duleek's landscape and town centre.

DUL OBJ 11

To maintain, and where possible enhance, the conservation value of the Duleek Commons pNHA, subject to satisfactory ecological assessment.

DUL OBJ 12

To support the development of a new pedestrian way from Ryan's Park to the Old Nanny Bridge that will connect existing and new development areas in the town.

DUL OBJ 13

To support the development of a linear walkway and associated amenity area along the River Nanny and Paramadda River, subject to the recommendations of any environmental assessments and resources being available.

DUL OBJ 14

To develop a 'green link' throughout the town, with a view to linking existing and proposed heritage and amenity trails in the town.

Social

DUL OBJ 15

To pursue the development of a civic amenity and ball sports area in the vicinity of Sampson's Field to the rear of the Millrace Estate and to link this into a network of walkways in the town.

DUL OBJ 16

To investigate the feasibility of providing a public park in Duleek, subject to the availability of funding.

Urban Design and Public Realm

DUL OBJ 17

To ensure that any development in the town centre contributes positively to and enhances the streetscape of Duleek.

DUL OBJ 18

To promote and investigate the provision of a post primary school for Duleek during the period of the County Development Plan.