



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

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Planning Department ,  
Leitrim County Council,  
Aras an Chontae,  
St Georges Terrace,  
Carrick on Shannon,  
Co. Leitrim,

11<sup>th</sup> August 2020

**Re: Leitrim County Development Plan 2022-2028**

Dear Sir/Madam,

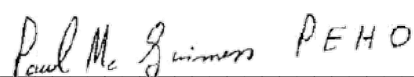
Please find enclosed the Environmental Health Service consultation report in relation to the Leitrim County Development Plan 2022-2028.

The following HSE departments were notified of the consultation request for this development plan on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

- Emergency Planning – Kay Kennington
- Estates – Helen Maher
- Assistant National Director for Health Protection – Kevin Kelleher / Laura Murphy
- CHO – John Hayes

If you have any queries regarding this report please contact me at Paul McGuinness Principal Environmental Health Officer, HSE, Leitrim Road, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim.

Yours sincerely,



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Paul McGuinness  
Principal Environmental Health Officer



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Health Service Executive

## **Preparation of New Leitrim County Development Plan 2022-2028: Stage One – Pre Draft Plan**

The Environmental Health Service is making this submission under the remit of Healthy Ireland and relevant health supporting strategies. We have reviewed the previous Leitrim Development Plan 2015-2021, The Leitrim Housing Strategy 2015-2021 and the Strategic Issues paper and make recommendations to Leitrim County Council to take this opportunity to incorporate the relevant health actions outlined below into the strategic planning of the spatial and built environment of the county, with the overall aim being to improve the health and wellbeing of the population of Leitrim. Leitrim County Council should consider ways strategic planning can protect population health and the built environment should be explored for opportunities that can maximise health gain.

### **Climate**

#### **The National Climate Action Plan 2019**

[https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/climate-action/publications/Documents/16/Climate\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2019.pdf](https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/climate-action/publications/Documents/16/Climate_Action_Plan_2019.pdf)

The National Climate Action Plan recognises that Ireland must significantly step up its commitments to tackle climate disruption. The decisive action required to confront climate change is a major challenge that will require fundamental societal transformation and behavioural change, the dedicated allocation of resources and sustained policy implementation by Leitrim County Council.

It is acknowledged that Leitrim is a sparsely populated, rural based county that faces unique challenges in tackling climate change. It is also acknowledged that rural housing makes a considerable contribution to the fabric of rural living. The dominance of 'one-off' housing in ribbon development and the absence of a multiple house construction sector in the county have been highlighted. Action should be taken to ensure this form of unsustainable development does not continue.

It is recommended that Leitrim County Council take a leadership role in influencing and promoting the behaviour change which is fundamental to achieving our

decarbonisation goals. The County Development Plan should play an important role in setting spatial policy that influences how people live, actively encouraging the grouping of housing around rural villages and nodes, while still acknowledging the need for rural based dwellings that form part of the fabric of the rural society. The County Development Plan should influence and greater use of restricting development in areas that are at risk of flooding. Climate actions, specifically tailored to the county's rural based population will need to be implemented. It is also recommended the key aims of Leitrim's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 are integrated into the Development Plan.

In Leitrim County Councils previous Development Plan it was a key aim to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions and reduce the use of non-renewable resources. I could not locate a progress report on the council's achievements in this regard in the review documents. It is recommended that Leitrim County Council set specific targets for greenhouse gas reduction and outline achievable actions that seek to combat, reduce or eliminate the emissions of greenhouse gases. Key indicators for monitoring of progress on climate action must be outlined to ensure progress is achieved.

### **Sustainable Development**

Our sustainable future – A Framework for Sustainable Development

<http://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/migrated-files/en/Publications/Environment/Miscellaneous/FileDownload%2C30452%2Cen.pdf>

Leitrim County Council should ensure that climate considerations are fully integrated into the planning of new projects and their design. All future development within Leitrim should have a green procurement approach, which incorporates carbon pricing and climate criteria into decision making. Environmentally friendly proposals such as building typologies that minimise the use of energy, the use of low carbon materials, increased SuDS management initiatives and green infrastructure, water recycling and conservation; green roofs, use of photovoltaic or rainwater harvesting and the integration and utilisation of open space should all be incorporated into the design stage of any development in the Leitrim area. It is recommended that all developments should document their climate action and energy efficiency proposals at the planning stage.

Leitrim County Council has the opportunity to be a leader in the promotion of innovative, low carbon, renewable energy design and technology in the provision of local authority housing. It is also recommended that Leitrim County Council carries out a carbon audit of its existing building stock and retrofit with more insulated building fabric and sustainable technologies.

### **Energy**

Ireland's Second National Energy Efficiency Action Plan to 2020

[http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Energy\\_Policy\\_Publications/Energy\\_Service\\_Companies/Ireland%E2%80%99s\\_second\\_National\\_Energy\\_Efficiency\\_Action\\_Plan\\_to\\_2020.pdf](http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Energy_Policy_Publications/Energy_Service_Companies/Ireland%E2%80%99s_second_National_Energy_Efficiency_Action_Plan_to_2020.pdf)

The Climate Mitigation actions as outlined in Leitrim's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 should be implemented. Dedicated funding should be provided to invest in upgrading BER Ratings, the provision of heat pumps and roof solar panels, all with the aim of reducing energy consumption.

The creation of remote working hubs in rural towns and villages should be a priority with the aim to reduce the need for commuting to and from work. All new developments should have open access fibre connections.

The Development Plan should:

- a) Promote and facilitate the incorporation of energy efficient design into projects.
- b) Develop and implement an energy management programme for all public buildings.
- c) Develop new key skill sets in areas such as green procurement, carbon accounting, carbon management and energy management.
- d) Support and promote the Better Energy Communities Scheme to enable communities around the country develop new and innovative, locally-based solutions to energy poverty.

It is stated a Renewable Energy Strategy is to be prepared to investigate the potential for further renewable energy production in Leitrim. In order to avoid an over reliance on wind energy other renewable energy options such as solar, hydropower, biomass and geothermal energy should all be explored and facilitated.

## **Transport**

It is acknowledged that sustainable public transport is not always going to be economically viable in a dispersed, sparsely populated county like Leitrim. Initiatives like the Rural Transport Scheme are of vital importance to Leitrim given its age profile and sparsely distributed population and every effort should be made to extend and further integrate the scheme. It is recommended that the council identify small scale projects that can achieve significant gains i.e. segregated pedestrian & cycle paths to connect industrial estates/workplaces to towns and residential areas to schools, local neighbourhood centres and public transport stops.

Traffic issues have been identified in Carrick On Shannon. It is recommended that Leitrim County Council investigate how much of this traffic is due to local traffic undertaking journeys of under 2k. Pedestrian and cycle facilities should be provided that would encourage a modal shift away from the car to walking or cycling. A portion of the councils transport budget should be allocated to providing a comprehensive network of safe, well-lit footpaths and cycle lanes. This is essential to promote active travel.

It is recommended that an audit be carried out of existing pedestrian and cycle facilities in the county to fully establish the existing infrastructure. Permeability and shorter connectivity route options for pedestrians throughout towns and villages should be explored and improved by creating new pedestrian linkages, through housing estates if necessary. It is also recommended that a programme of works is drawn up on a needs basis, to ensure that specific infrastructural works that improve connectivity will obtain funding. Pedestrian and cycle facilities should not be viewed as just for tourism or recreational purposes but considered as sustainable modes of travel that will reduce traffic congestions and reduce greenhouse gasses.

It is noted that Leitrim currently has a 44% outbound commuter rate. The main employment centres people are travelling to should be identified and measures implemented to promote the uptake of public transport. Leitrim County Council should consider proposals for enhanced bus lane provision, the provision of more park and ride facilities and infrastructure improvements to provide shelter and real time travel information at all bus stops. It is recommended an audit of the bus infrastructure is carried out and the council develop a priority list of necessary improvement works based on identified defects.

### **Smarter Travel Policy**

[http://www.smartertravel.ie/sites/default/files/uploads/2012\\_12\\_27\\_Smarter\\_Travel\\_english\\_PN\\_WE\\_B%5B1%5D\\_0.pdf](http://www.smartertravel.ie/sites/default/files/uploads/2012_12_27_Smarter_Travel_english_PN_WE_B%5B1%5D_0.pdf)

The Strategic Development Plan should:

- a) Set targets requiring a minimum percentage of new residential and mixed-use development to take place on brownfield/existing sites to consolidate urban growth and enable organic development of urban areas from the centre out. The National Planning framework strategy specifies that 30% of new housing must be delivered on infill/brownfield lands.
- b) Specify a maximum permitted level of car parking for commercial sites, which have suitable public transport facilities and are within walking/cycling distance to amenities.
- c) Set a general restriction of the future development of out-of-town retail centres except in exceptional circumstances and consideration of a similar requirement that parking charges be introduced for most existing centres.
- d) Require developments above a certain scale to implement viable travel plans which promote public transport and modes of active travel and which reduce reliance on the car. All development should be required to show a route map showing safe cycling and walking routes to schools, shops and public transport.
- e) Establish e-working centres to provide opportunities for people in rural areas and satellite towns to work from a location closer to home. This is of critical importance based on the current settlement patterns of the county.

- f) Set a target that every school in Leitrim has a school travel plan to encourage students to take alternatives to the car. This should be supported with a strategic aim to develop safe walking and cycling routes to and from schools and other educational institutions as well as providing disability access.
- g) Provide facilities such as secure bike parking and changing/showering facilities at places of employment in public authorities to encourage staff to cycle.

To support smarter travel there should be a strategic aim to:

- h) Reprioritise traffic signals to favour pedestrians instead of vehicles, reducing waiting times and crossing distances at junctions.
- i) Create level grade crossings for pedestrians across junctions. Create larger traffic-free areas in urban centre. Ensure that 30 km/h zones are designated in central urban areas which accommodate motorised traffic.
- j) Widen footpaths where there are high pedestrian flows, particularly close to public transport nodes. Improve the surface quality of footpaths Provide appropriately designed safe, well-lit, direct, continuous facilities for pedestrians.
- k) Ensure State-owned lands such as canal towpaths, former rail lines, Coillte estates, etc. are made available for the development of walking and cycling trails.
- l) Support private and public sector initiatives to establish car club schemes in Ireland. Provide on-road parking spaces to be designated for car clubs through appropriate signage.
- m) Establish park and ride facilities along major public transport nodes, at the periphery of major urban areas and at key public transport locations and nodes.

The EHS welcomes Leitrim County Councils proposals for the creation of physical bus-stops, the provision of park-and ride carparks and the provision of commuter train services to facilitate public transport uptake.

### **National Cycle Policy Framework**

[http://www.smartertravel.ie/sites/default/files/uploads/2013\\_01\\_03\\_0902%2002%20EnglishNS1274%20Dept.%20of%20Transport\\_National\\_Cycle\\_Policy\\_v4%5B1%5D%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.smartertravel.ie/sites/default/files/uploads/2013_01_03_0902%2002%20EnglishNS1274%20Dept.%20of%20Transport_National_Cycle_Policy_v4%5B1%5D%5B1%5D.pdf)

There is a need to improve the safety of cycling in County Leitrim and make it more attractive for users. The Strategic Development Plan should include the needs of cyclists, and in particular:

- a) Implement measures to reduce the volumes of through-traffic, especially HGVs, in town centres and especially in the vicinity of schools and colleges.

- b) Introduce traffic calming measures / enforce low traffic speeds in urban areas, make junctions safe for cyclists.
- c) Support the provision of dedicated signed rural cycling networks building on Fáilte Ireland's Strategy to Develop Irish Cycling Tourism.
- d) Segregate cycle paths if possible. Ensure that all surfaces used by cyclists are maintained to a high standard and are well lit and signposted.
- e) Provide secure cycling parking at all destinations of importance to the cyclist and aim to integrate cycling and public transport and the provision of cycling parking at all appropriate public transport interchanges.
- f) Ensure that the urban road infrastructure (with the exception of motorways) is designed / retrofitted so as to be cyclist-friendly. Link up all existing cycle lanes.

It is recommended that a 'quality audit' is carried out of pedestrian routes in towns and villages in the county, to ensure they are safe, well lit and enticing for users. It is essential that attractive, safe and secure pedestrian walkways/cycleways are provided in order to influence behavioural change in the population and promote greater take up of active travel. As highlighted previously in this report any opportunity for 'greening' of these routes should be considered. This will also have the added bonus of increasing biodiversity and providing additional drainage capacity.

Leitrim County Council has made a commitment to achieve the target set out in the National Cycle Policy Framework of 10% of all trips by bicycle by 2020. I could not locate any measurement carried out by the council to show if this was achieved. It is recommended that new targets for trips by bicycles are set and progress on achieving these targets is monitored throughout the lifetime of the new development plan.

### **Get Ireland Active – National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland**

<http://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Get-Ireland-Active-the-National-Physical-Activity-Plan.pdf>

A key aim of the National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland is compiling a directory of publicly accessible sports/recreational and amenities facilities. The Strategic Development Plan should include a strategy for meeting this aim for County Leitrim. All new facilities should be added to this directory and an audit should be carried out to ensure that all existing sites/facilities are entered.

A strategic aim for County Leitrim should be to increase the active school flag programme to at least another 20 schools in the county.

A strategic aim for Leitrim County Council should be to develop and establish processes that enable consultation with children and young people in the

development and implementation of programmes in which they are involved, ie. playgrounds, activity centres and public spaces. Suitable facilities that cater for all age ranges, including teenagers, should be provided.

A strategic aim for development in Leitrim should be that all plans and development for Nursing Homes or Residential Care Facilities should include proposals for gardens and recreational activities. Physical activity should be integrated into long term care planning and practice.

Strategic development of Leitrim County should include:

- a) Opportunities for physical activity in the development of the built environment
- b) All development should promote cycling and walking. A network of cycle routes and footpaths should be planned and developed which aim to promote connectivity of housing/employment to town centres, park and recreational amenities
- c) Develop local and regional parks and recreational spaces that encourage physical activity.
- d) Prioritise the planning and development of walking and cycling and general recreational/physical activity infrastructure.
- e) Explore opportunities to maximise physical activity and recreation amenities in the natural environment.
- f) A framework for workplace health and wellbeing, including physical activity should be developed. Any possible health gain for employees should be explored and developed.
- g) The smarter travel workplaces initiative should be promoted. Sustainable or active modes of travel should be facilitated.
- h) Ensure planning makes provision for recreational facilities for staff in industrial estates and ensures connectivity of work to park and recreational activities.
- i) Support and develop 20 new walking groups in the County through funding of signage, upgrade of paths and lighting and resolving safety issues.
- j) Developing a standardised framework for publicly funded programmes designed to increase physical activity levels. Use public money to leverage private funding to promote and develop physical activity and sport programme

## **Employment**

The 2016 Census figures indicated a significant fall in the number of jobs available in Co. Leitrim. The extent of residents commuting out of the county for employment is increasing whilst the number of people from outside the county who work here is falling reflecting the decrease in the number of jobs available. Leitrim County Council has a challenge to reverse these trends.



It is essential that planning of any large scale employment sites/industrial estates also takes into consideration the health and wellbeing of workers. A travel plan, which promotes and facilitates sustainable and active modes of travel, should be implemented for any of these sites. There should be strong cycle and pedestrian links to town centres and to parks and/or recreational facilities to improve connectivity. There should be secure bike parking facilities provided and shower facilities for staff on site should also be considered.

## **Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity**

### **Rejuvenating Irelands Small Town Centres**

[https://www.scsi.ie/resources/pdf/2018/scsi\\_rejuvenating\\_irelands\\_small\\_town\\_centres](https://www.scsi.ie/resources/pdf/2018/scsi_rejuvenating_irelands_small_town_centres)

With the continued growth and dominance of online shopping it is essential that Leitrim County Council adapts to the changing commercial landscape. Innovative ideas to rejuvenate Leitrim's small town and village centres must be developed. Issues like improved broadband connectivity, improved public transport links and facilities, cycle lanes to link small towns and villages, secure bike parking facilities, measures to improve the public realm and streetscape, improving marketing and placemaking, promoting destination shopping, measures to tackle vacant units and proposals to increase housing in town/village main streets should all be considered to try and revitalise declining towns and villages in the county.

The EHS recommends that facilities that are essential for daily needs are provided in each town and village and that the necessary infrastructure, facilities and amenities are provided in conjunction with any residential development. A diversity of housing types should also be provided, thereby creating a range of lifestyle, affordability and lifespan choices.

### **Research 195: Health Benefits from Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure**

<http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/research/health/research195.html>

Recreational, green spaces are a fundamental part of any development as they promote the health and wellbeing of residences who will occupy the accommodation and indeed the wider community. Leitrim County Council should ensure the provision of quality, recreational green space if they wish to encourage more people to live in urban environments.

It is recommended that all future developments in County Leitrim are examined for the opportunity to integrate green infrastructure into the design at planning stage.

Any potential for health gain should be explored and incorporated into all development and the built environment.

It is recommended that the following proposals are considered when planning for parks and recreational areas:

- a) Green biodiverse spaces should be designed so that there is at least one within walkable distance from people's homes.
- b) Green spaces should be co-designed with communities and reflect local needs.
- c) Areas should be as large as possible with connections through flowery verges or linear habitats alongside paths and roads.
- d) Areas should be relatively open, but grass does not all have to be the same length. This design could suggest careful, rather than a lack of, management. Interpretative signage can explain the practice and highlight signs of nature to look out for.
- e) A few scattered trees or clumps of trees are preferable to dense planting of trees.
- f) Paths, recreational areas and places to relax and engage with nature should be incorporated from the start, to promote use and maintain a feeling of safety. It is recommended all proposed green areas are provided with paths for walking.
- g) Exercise areas, trails and paths need to provide maximum contact with green space, as this made exercise accessible and nature contact motivated people to walk more.
- h) Not all areas should be managed to the same intensity. Some parts near paths could be managed more to look tidy, whereas stakeholders recognised the value of incorporating wild areas, which could be further away from paths.
- i) Biodiversity areas can be designed to accommodate playgrounds and other amenity areas.

### **Biodiversity & Green Areas**

It should be a strategic aim of the Leitrim Development Plan to bring biodiversity into the planning decision making process. A Biodiversity Action Plan should be developed which aims to conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside. Guidance on managing Biodiversity in strategic planning and urban areas is found in:

[http://www.uep.ie/pdfs/guidelines\\_complete.pdf](http://www.uep.ie/pdfs/guidelines_complete.pdf)

Nature based solutions for the better management of urban problems such as flooding, biodiversity loss etc should be explored and integrated into the design of

public areas. Existing green areas should be preserved and utilised to their full capacity. New green areas should be provided. The provision of pedestrian and cycle routes through green areas should be a key provision of the design. The landscaping or 'greening' of these pedestrian/cycle routes should be considered at design stage, not only in the interest of making them more attractive for use but also to facilitate the movement of fauna, creating ecological corridors and thus having a positive effect on biodiversity. Towns and villages in Leitrim should be explored to identify areas where biodiversity can be integrated into the urban fabric. All towns and villages in the county should commit to a pollinator plan.

It should be noted that the quality of green areas is key and the on-going need for maintenance should always be factored into any decisions at the design stage.

## Older People

### **The National Positive Ageing Strategy**

[http://health.gov.ie/wpcontent/uploads/2014/03/National\\_Positive\\_Ageing\\_Strategy\\_English.pdf](http://health.gov.ie/wpcontent/uploads/2014/03/National_Positive_Ageing_Strategy_English.pdf)

As detailed in Section 4.2.1 of Housing Strategy, Leitrim has a relatively high proportion of the population in the older age dependent category, compared with national figures. It is estimated that the number of older persons will almost double in all regions of Ireland over the period 2006-26 so therefore is it essential that County Leitrim makes provisions to accommodate the needs of the elderly population.

A strategic aim for the development of County Leitrim should be to enable people as they age 'to get out and about' through the provision of accessible, affordable, and flexible transport systems in both rural and urban areas. This should include:

- a) Provision of age-friendly public transport,
- b) Promotion of the integration of the Rural Transport Programme with other local transport services,
- c) Provision of public transport linkages to major health facilities and personal social services.
- d) Supporting the design and development of age friendly public spaces, transport and buildings.
- e) Designing age friendly urban environments (street lighting, footpaths, roads, public seating)
- f) Promote access (in terms of affordability, transport availability, accessibility of venue) to a wide range of opportunities for continued learning and education for older people.

- g) Promote the concept of active citizenship and the value of volunteering, and encourage people of all ages to become more involved in and to contribute to their own communities.
- h) Promote the development of opportunities for engagement and participation of people of all ages in a range of arts, cultural, spiritual, leisure, learning and physical activities in their local communities.

Suitable housing is a key aim in the National Positive Ageing Strategy and a key strategic aim for County Leitrim should be to:

- a) Carry out an assessment of housing need and provision and consider all housing options in development (i.e. social housing, sheltered housing; retirement villages). Housing for the elderly should not focus solely on the provision of Nursing Homes.
- b) All residential development should incorporate the 'Universal Design' Principal to ensure housing can meet the needs of the occupants regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. This will also ensure that the houses provided will meet their changing needs over time so that people can continue living in their own homes and communities as they get older or become disabled.

**Universal Design Guidelines For Homes In Ireland**

<http://universaldesign.ie/Built-Environment/Building-for-Everyone/>

This will also assist in implementing the Older People Remaining at Home (OPRAH) strategy.

Implement a strategy that facilitates older people to live in well-maintained, affordable, safe and secure homes, which are suitable to their physical and social needs. Development should incorporate the principals outlined in the 'Design Out Crime' Document.

## Social Inclusion

### **Time to move on from congregated settings – A strategy for community inclusion**

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/congregatedsettings/congregatedsettingsreportfinal.pdf>

The Strategic Development Plan for County Leitrim should:

- a) Improve community inclusion of people with disabilities in their local community and community based services.
- b) Improve greater connectivity between generic community based services and disability specific organisations. Facilitate their engagement as stakeholders.

- c) Focus on meeting the housing and accommodation needs of people with disabilities through a combination of purchased housing, new-build housing, leased housing or rented housing. A local re-housing plan should be prepared and jointly co-ordinated with the HSE, in collaboration with service providers. The plan should be based on best practice in including people with disabilities in local communities and should facilitate dispersed housing with personal supports.
- d) All residents in congregated settings should be assessed by the local authority to establish their eligibility and need for social housing support.
- e) Consideration should be given to reserving a certain proportion of dwellings for people with disabilities.
- f) Focus on supporting and sustaining people with disabilities to live in their own homes in the community through the provision of housing grants.
- g) Support people with disabilities to access employment and education opportunities.
- h) Support people with disabilities to access mainstream community services.

### **Steering group report on a national substance misuse strategy**

[http://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Steering\\_Group\\_Report\\_NSMS.pdf](http://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Steering_Group_Report_NSMS.pdf)

The Strategic Development Plan for Leitrim should include:

- a) Develop the provision of alcohol-free venues for young people, (e.g. Youth cafés, alcohol-free music and dance venues and sports venues) with:
  - a. the young people being centrally involved in the development and management of the programmes and venues;
  - b. late night and weekend opening; and increased access to school facilities in out of- school hours.

All community facilities provided should have shared services making them more sustainable.

## **Tobacco**

### **Tobacco Free Ireland**

<http://static.rasset.ie/documents/news/tobacco-free-ireland.pdf>

A strategic aim of the Leitrim County Development Plan should be to:

- a) Implement the tobacco free playgrounds initiative.
- b) Promote tobacco free environments, parks, beaches, and public campuses and grounds

With regard to the protection of people from second hand tobacco smoke all plans for development that include a designated smoking area should be forwarded to the Environmental Health Service prior to the planning decision.

## **Food**

### **Healthy Ireland - A Healthy Weight For Ireland**

<http://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/A-Healthy-Weight-for-Ireland-Obesity-Policy-and-Action-Plan-2016-2025.pdf>

Rising levels of overweight and obesity are placing an increasing burden on individuals and society. Currently, in Ireland, six in ten adults and one in four children are overweight or obese (Department of Health, 2013; Layte and McCrory, 2009; 2011). According to World Health Organization forecasts, Ireland could top the European league tables in the coming years (WHO, 2015).

There are 10 action steps outlined in the document above which aim to tackle obesity. Step 2 is to regulate for a healthier environment. Leitrim County Council can influence the built environment to improve health and reduce the extent to which it promotes obesity. An assessment of food outlets in towns and villages in Leitrim should be carried out to ensure that choices of healthy food options are equally available and to prevent a proliferation of fast food outlets. Providing easy access and choice to healthier food options should be promoted as outlined in government policy.

The environment in which we live impacts on the choices that we make and Leitrim County Council should create environments that make the healthy choice the easy choice:

- a) Support community based initiatives that develop programmes that support healthy lifestyles and prevention of obesity in children and adults.
- b) Promote through planning and the built environment the benefits of healthy eating, physical activity and non-sedentary behaviour
- c) Improve availability of and access to healthier food choices. Support developments that aim to improve the health of the population.
- d) Support opportunities for increasing physical activity levels generally/ in the community through Local Sports Partnerships and supporting initiatives e.g. Parkrun.
- e) Facilitate community gardens/allotments through identifying and releasing suitable publicly owned land.

It should be a strategic aim from the Leitrim Development Plan to facilitate the production of more locally produced healthy, high quality food.

## **Waste**

### **A Resource Opportunity – Waste Management Policy in Ireland**

[https://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/waste/plans/Resource\\_Opportunity2012.pdf](https://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/waste/plans/Resource_Opportunity2012.pdf)

The Leitrim Development Plan should implement the Waste Hierarchy set out in the Waste Framework Directive and place prevention and minimisation at the forefront of any waste policy.

- a) Disposal of municipal waste to landfill should be a last resort.
- b) Implement waste prevention measures with local business and community groups. Develop reduction strategies for plastic, food waste and resource use.
- c) Include community waste prevention demonstration programmes, which provides skills to develop waste prevention within local communities.
- d) The use of easily accessible public recycling bins should be considered for public areas, paths and green spaces that will allow for adequate waste segregation and will encourage the use of the waste management hierarchy.
- e) A Reuse Policy should be developed in consultation with the national Procurement service and other relevant bodies, and implemented within public bodies in Leitrim to ensure that full consideration is given to feasible reuse options before embarking on the purchase of new goods.

## **Water**

The strategic aim of Leitrim County Council should be to ensure the provision of safe secure drinking water and promote the reduction in waste and over use of water.

Water usage audits of public buildings should be carried and water conservation measures implemented.

To protect the ground water quality in the County there should be a strategic aim of ensuring all waste water treatment plants can operate effectively with their current demand and future demand, and that private effluent treatment and domestic septic tanks are fit for their purpose.

## **Environmental Noise**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has identified Environmental Noise as an increasing cause of ill health and detrimental effect on health and wellbeing.  
[http://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/136466/e94888.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/136466/e94888.pdf)

It is recommended that a Noise Impact Assessment is carried out for any development proposals with the potential to give rise to significant noise impacts. Also new developments must consider the impact of noise from existing noise sources. We recommend that environmental noise should be considered in the context of:

- a) New roads, railways, airports, industry or recreational activities adjacent to residential properties or noise sensitive premises such as schools or hospitals, or recreational spaces,
- b) New residential properties or noise sensitive premises such as schools or hospitals, adjacent to existing roads, railways, airports, industry or recreational activities;
- c) The development of mixed residential/commercial use buildings, and multipart Residential buildings;
- d) Public house, night clubs, restaurants or other recreational activities; and
- e) Industrial operations, workshops and factories.

## **Air Quality**

The Strategic Development Plan should aim to reduce polluting emissions into air and increase the quality of air in County Leitrim by:

- a) Participating in, and facilitating national programmes of air quality monitoring,
- b) Working to develop and promote the Air Quality Index for Health,
- c) Develop Local Air Quality Management Plans that identify pollution 'hot spots' and aim to reduce pollution through local action on emissions.



## Implementation and Evaluation

Strategic Goals relating to Resources, Environment and Heritage, Economic Development, Transport and Infrastructure and Social Development were listed in section 2.2 of the Leitrim Development Plan 2015-2021. There did not appear to be a review carried out on the achievement of these goals.

Efficient implementation of the Leitrim County Development Plan 2022-2028 into clear and effective action is of the utmost importance. It is strongly recommended that progress is constantly measured throughout the timeframe of the plan.

The council should develop and publish specific measures or performance indicators which establish how progress is quantified and measured.

An evaluation of the delivery of all key aims should be carried out and Leitrim County Council should highlight and promote areas where progress is being made and should also examine areas where less was achieved and investigate the reasons why. Any barriers to implementation of the key aims should be identified.



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